

Watercliffe Meadow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131082
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	334678
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	446
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	52
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lee Brammer
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Kingdon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Shirecliffe Road/Boynton Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S5 8DN
Telephone number	0114 2326603

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
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Fax number

0114 2852642

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. The new purpose-built school opened in September 2008 after the closure of two infant schools and a junior school. The present headteacher formally took up post in September 2008. The school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage to the north of Sheffield. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is more than double the national average. Most pupils are White British. Proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the term following their third birthday. The school works with Creative Partnerships as part of the 'Change Schools' programme.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher and all staff know pupils well and this creates a very caring and positive atmosphere in which everyone works well together. Parents are very supportive of the school and typically comment that it, 'Gives all children the opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and caring environment'.

Together the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a clear vision and motivational leadership. The headteacher has, in a very short time, successfully created a community in which pupils' attitudes reflect their pride and loyalty in their newly established school. The focus on increasing learning opportunities by improving behaviour and attendance and developing positive attitudes and respect for all, has been effective. The school has successfully developed strong links with parents, the local community and with outside agencies in order to enrich and support pupils' learning. Increasing numbers of parents are accessing the family and adult learning courses on offer, which are broadening their life choices and encouraging many to become more involved with their children's learning.

Inspection evidence and the school's assessment information indicate that pupils are achieving satisfactorily, as progress over the past months is showing clear signs of improvement. Standards, although at present exceptionally low, are beginning to rise. There is more to be done, to increase the proportion of pupils reaching average or above average levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and they make good progress. The needs of vulnerable pupils are very well met and, as a result, they too feel secure and make good progress.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. As a result of more effective teaching and learning in several classes, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for their age is increasing. However, not all teaching provides appropriate challenge, especially in English, mathematics and science. This means that the progress of some pupils is not yet as fast as it could be. Marking is inconsistent in informing pupils on how to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils respond well to each other and to adults. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They are well behaved and have learnt how to manage their emotions and find solutions to things that upset them. The curriculum is satisfactory. Effective steps are being taken to address gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The focus on extending pupils' learning through visits, visitors and additional activities provides wider opportunities for them to develop skills and experience the wonders of a wider world. As a result, pupils enjoy school, respond well to teachers and have an increasing enthusiasm for learning.

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been led very successfully through its early days and the senior leadership team is well placed to bring about further improvement. It has already proven track results in establishing a safe and caring environment in which pupils are ready to learn. Many new systems and initiatives have been put in place, which are already having some impact in the acceleration of pupils' progress and raising standards. However, the monitoring of teaching is not yet used well enough to ensure that all teaching is consistently challenging enough in all lessons and that pupils systematically build on what they already know. Governors are experienced and demonstrate considerable expertise

as they challenge the school towards continual improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children have an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although there is a spread of attainment, most children enter Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. However, by the end of Reception many have reached the nationally expected goals and some exceed them. Children make outstanding progress. As a result, children currently due to begin Key Stage 1, benefit from much higher starting points than was the case for pupils further up the school. The very strong team, led by a highly skilled and enthusiastic leader, has created a stimulating and safe environment in which children's learning flourishes as they thoroughly enjoy themselves both inside and outdoors. Teaching is excellent and stems from the detailed observation and assessment of children's achievement in all areas of learning from which the next steps are planned. A good balance of activities between those children choose for themselves and those to which they are directed by adults, provide exceptional opportunities for the development of children's communication, language and mathematical skills. Welfare requirements are fully met. The excellent relationships with parents and carers, which are quickly established through home visits and special activities, effectively engage parents in their child's learning. Parents are delighted with the high quality support their children receive in this new school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching, especially with regard to the level of challenge provided for all pupils and the consistency of marking.
- Sharpen the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure teaching effectively accelerates pupils' progress and enables pupils to systematically build on what they already know.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils joined this new school in September 2008 with exceptionally low standards. The school is currently working hard to identify and address gaps in their learning. Current data indicates that standards are well below average in both Year 2 and Year 6, with fewer pupils than expected nationally attaining at average levels and above. However, the progress pupils are currently making is improving and at present it is satisfactory. Similarly, low standards are evident across other year groups, although this is variable, as is the progress of different groups of pupils. In some classes, pupils are starting to make faster progress because they receive more effective teaching. Progress in reading and writing is better than in mathematics, because pupils are benefiting from more focused support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers quickly identify their individual needs. Appropriate support programmes of focused interventions help these pupils to make accelerated progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are growing into personable, confident young people who are proud of their school. They behave well and feel safe and secure in the new and exciting environment. In and out of class, they make a strong contribution to their own and the wider community. They readily take on roles and responsibilities around school as, for example, school councillors, the 'Green Team' and peer mediators. Pupils have a good understanding of moral values as they interact positively with each other and with an increasing range of people from the immediate locality and further afield. Through a range of additional activities, such as working with a writer in residence, developing the ethnic sculptural garden and writing to pen pals at a nearby school, they grow in confidence and develop a deeper understanding of other people and cultures. As a group of pupils agreed, 'If you don't respect yourself other people won't respect you'. Attendance is satisfactory and indicates some improvement over the year. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate a growing enthusiasm for learning. They show a positive response to the school's effort to boost their achievement, but the present low standards in their basic skills do not yet prepare pupils well enough for their future. Pupils engage in opportunities to be healthy through a good range of dance and sporting activities. They clearly know how to avoid unnecessary risks and understand the importance of a healthy diet as they make appropriate meal choices in the purpose built café.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The atmosphere in classrooms is positive due to the strong emphasis given to pupils' social and moral development. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. Classes are well organised. Clear classroom management systems throughout the school, alongside good behaviour, help pupils feel secure and develop positive attitudes to learning. Good lessons have a clear focus on learning and actively engage pupils in practical learning opportunities that reflect their different abilities. In these lessons, pupils progress well. Where learning slows, activities are less challenging, because they are not matched well enough to individual needs. Similarly, teachers' marking of work is inconsistent across classes and subjects. There is not always enough detail to inform pupils how well they are doing or to indicate their next steps in learning. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Intervention support is particularly effective in helping to improve the progress pupils make in reading and writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The personal, social and health education programme effectively promotes pupils' understanding of the need to keep healthy and safe, and deepens their understanding of other faiths and cultures. Steps have been taken to boost progress in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, much of the work is to address previous gaps in pupils' learning and the development of skills is not yet embedded across all subjects. In particular, there are not enough opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. Pupils have an increasing number of enrichment opportunities, such as learning Spanish, playing a musical instrument and investigating local history. Many extra-curricular activities, including street dancing and circus skills, and a wide

range of sporting opportunities in which pupils link with other schools and providers add interest and enjoyment. Visits and visitors provide further opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons. New residential opportunities further support pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high quality of care and support for all pupils is evident in the inclusive ethos of the school. Safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements. Parents appreciate the way in which their children are helped to settle quickly into school. Pupils talk proudly of their school and say, for example, 'Everybody cares about you and teachers are always there for you.' The school works very well with a range of providers who help vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to gain confidence and, as a result, make good progress. Overall, academic guidance is improving throughout the school. Targets are set for individual pupils, although these are not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils understand the level at which they are working, and some are becoming more confident about what they need to do to improve their work. However, the overall quality of academic guidance is too inconsistent. The school has worked effectively with parents to promote and encourage regular attendance in order to increase learning opportunities for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders and governors have provided focused direction during the first year of this newly formed school. Strong leadership has been the key factor in establishing a school, with a positive and caring ethos. School leaders have quickly gained a good understanding of the school's strengths and have a clear view of how to improve further. As a result of effective actions, real strengths have been established. School targets are becoming increasingly challenging. Pupils' behaviour has improved and an environment conducive to learning has been successfully established. As a result, standards, while remaining too low, are beginning to rise and pupils are starting to make better progress. However, the monitoring by leaders, of how well teaching provides sufficient challenge to improve pupils' progress and ensure pupils build on what they already know, is not yet fully embedded. Community cohesion has developed well as a strength of the school with an identified team working effectively to generate links in the immediate and wider communities. Communication is effective and the views of parents and pupils are well considered as the school continues to develop and grow. Governors have a strong commitment to the school. They work purposefully together with the headteacher and other leaders to drive improvement towards their vision for the school. Strengths in leadership, shown in the successful union of three schools, alongside the good pace of improvement clearly indicate the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Watercliffe Meadow Community Primary School, Sheffield, S5 8DN

Thank you so much for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. Lots of you chatted to us and we enjoyed seeing your smiling faces which made us feel welcome. A special thanks to those who talked with us about the school and the new opportunities you have now.

Watercliffe Meadow is a satisfactory school with a warm and friendly atmosphere. It was good to find out that you now enjoy coming to school and that you consider that your views and ideas are listened to. You are really contributing to your school by being helpful to staff and pupils as you take on jobs around the school and through your school council. You clearly understand about keeping safe and healthy and have a good sense of what is right and wrong. Your behaviour is good. We can see that the number of pupils who attend school regularly is growing and this means that you have more opportunities to learn. We also know that children who start school in Nursery and Reception have wonderful opportunities to learn and they make excellent progress.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress in the things that you learn and the skills you develop, but the standards are still too low. I think that you can do even better which is why I have asked the school to:

- improve your standards of work at Key Stages 1 and 2
- make sure that teachers give you challenging activities which are really well matched to your individual needs and improve the quality of marking so you know how to improve your work
- make sure the leaders check the quality of teaching and learning carefully to help you make faster progress.

Thank you for a very enjoyable visit. I hope that you all do really well in the future.