

Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106928
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	356050
Inspection dates	9–10 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Millett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Hall
Headteacher	Mrs G Ramsay
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by five teachers, spent time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and looked at pupils' work. Meetings were held with parents and carers, the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at documents, including policies relating to safeguarding, the school's development plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of the governing body's meetings and the school's own assessment data. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 69 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- It looked at the impact of the partnership between the school and the pre-school setting on how well children settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- It investigated current levels of attendance and action being taken by the school to bring about improvement.
- It considered the extent to which small cohorts are responsible for the fluctuations in standards.

Information about the school

Kilnhurst St Thomas is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average as is the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has received Eco-Schools status, Healthy Schools status and Activemark Gold awards. The onsite provision for children of nursery age, Kilnhurst St Thomas Pre-school, is not managed by the governing body. It is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Kilnhurst St Thomas provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. However, personal development and pastoral care are strong. Pupils' contribution to the wider community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Partnerships with parents and carers are exceptional. The school provides a safe and welcoming environment where pupils feel valued. They are proud of their school and are keen to talk to visitors about their work. They have confidence in adults to help them sort out problems. Staff are mindful of pupils' safety and good safeguarding procedures are in place. Attendance is broadly average and improving strongly due to sustained efforts by the school to support the small number of pupils whose attendance is causing concern. Pupils' experiences of different cultures and beliefs are enhanced through the imaginative curriculum and their regular and meaningful links with a school in Uganda.

The strong links with the pre-school setting are having a positive impact on children's development and readiness to start school. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their attainment on entry to Year 1 is currently broadly in line with national averages. Progress is satisfactory from Year 1 to Year 6. Overall attainment is average at the end of Year 6. There have been year-on-year fluctuations in standards because of the differing needs and abilities of individual cohorts and how this impacts on test data in a school where cohorts are small. The school's own tracking system shows that there are signs of improvement in attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1. In mathematics some pupils have not yet acquired the basic skills to enable them to apply and perform calculations quickly. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good, although occasionally expectations are not high enough and tasks do not always match pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and, as a result, make similar progress to their peers. The marking of pupils' work provides them with satisfactory guidance. They do not always receive sufficient guidance on how to improve their work in mathematics. Assessment is regular and a new electronic system has been introduced to make analysis of outcomes easier. However, there is not yet rigorous analysis of performance of all groups of pupils by all staff.

The headteacher is supported well by staff and an effective governing body and all have a shared vision for further improvement. Senior managers and the governing body know what the school does well and make good use of self-evaluation to highlight areas for improvement. However, as the full impact of this is yet to be seen in pupils' progress, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - strengthening pupils' knowledge of basic skills such as counting and times tables
 - ensuring that practical activities have a sharp focus and adult intervention moves learning forward at a faster pace
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensuring that work set meets the needs of all, especially those of average ability
 - ensuring that marking, especially in mathematics, relates consistently to learning objectives, identifies areas for improvement and provides pupils with opportunities to respond.
- Ensure that leaders, managers and all staff refine their use of assessment information by using the new electronic tracking system to analyse thoroughly the performance of all groups of pupils in order to accelerate their progress.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and achieve satisfactorily. When they are fully engaged in lessons and challenged to learn they make good progress. When pupils are less actively involved their progress slows and is no better than satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress because teachers take account of their needs when planning lessons and extra support is provided for them.

Pupils work and play in a safe environment which encourages everyone to support and look out for each other. Pupils get on well with each other and with adults. In particular, pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are extremely well looked after. The school's values encourage pupils to think beyond themselves and to have a keen interest in ethical issues. This contributes much to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep fit and healthy, so much so that they organise their own activities such as their own Race for Life. Pupils respond extremely well to the responsibilities they are given and make many very positive contributions to the school and local communities. The school's samba band, for example, is in great demand at local functions and the school council has a high profile in the school. Pupils have a satisfactory grasp of basic skills, including information and communication technology. However, the school also provides them

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with many additional skills and experiences such as applying and being interviewed for their roles in school and frequent enterprise projects which all develop personal qualities ensuring their good preparation for future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that ensures that pupils respond positively to their work. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to provide pupils with appropriate individual and group support. These strong features have led to some improvement in attainment. Teachers try to ensure that pupils have opportunities to become actively involved in their learning, but sometimes practical activities do not have a clear enough focus, and occasionally work is too easy for pupils of average ability. Leaders are working hard to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Marking is regular with some reference to pupils' targets. Clear indications as to how to improve are not always consistent across all subjects.

The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on promoting basic skills, especially literacy.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Changes to the curriculum to make links in learning across subjects have been well thought out. They provide pupils with well-organised and imaginative opportunities for learning. Pupils are enthused by these opportunities, such as the whole-school Round the World topic which was enjoyed as much by parents and carers as by pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to learn some French and Spanish during their time in school. The curriculum also provides a broad range of enrichment opportunities through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.

St Thomas is a caring school that places great emphasis on extending knowledge and understanding of the world and developing self-confidence. Adults know pupils well and respond positively to their needs. The individual needs of pupils, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are quickly assessed and help given where needed by experienced staff. The successful links with external agencies further reinforce this good-quality care.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, particularly in teaching and learning, is satisfactory. However, members of the leadership team are united in their determination to improve outcomes for pupils. Systems for recording and analysing pupils' attainment have been upgraded recently but are not yet sufficiently embedded to provide a sharp focus on the achievements of different groups of pupils. The governing body understands the challenges the school faces and is working hard to bring about improvement. The skills and expertise that the governing body brings to its role ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are good. The school enjoys an extremely positive relationship with parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school. They are encouraged to be active partners in the education of their children and are warmly welcomed into school. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The governing body, headteacher and staff know the local community well. They have established strong links with other schools in order to develop pupils' understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the world in which they live. Community cohesion is strengthened on a more global level through the school's very practical links with a school in Uganda. The school's satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities is seen in the harmonious and inclusive atmosphere and the fact that all groups are achieving at

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least satisfactorily.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children thrive in a stimulating environment. Effective partnerships exist between the pre-school and school setting. Children from the school and the pre-school play happily alongside each other in the outdoor area. The youngest children benefit from the positive role models set by those in the Reception class. Children settle in quickly as they start school due to the warm relationships that adults quickly establish with them. Adults encourage children to be independent, make choices in activities and develop social skills that ensure good behaviour. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below age-related expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Good teaching and a well-organised curriculum ensure that the gap is closing by the end of Reception. Ongoing assessment ensures that individual children's progress is tracked regularly and well-targeted support given.

Achievements are recorded as 'learning journeys' which provide parents and carers with an ongoing record of their children's development. The bright and attractive learning environment enables children to have fun while making choices about their learning, such as whether to join in with a tea party role play or a group working together to discover their favourite fruits. Learning moves easily between the indoor and outdoor areas giving all the opportunities to have fun and learn from each other. Good leadership is focused strongly on continuous improvement. Staff are vigilant and

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children's welfare has a high priority. The Early Years Foundation Stage is fully incorporated into school life which ensures a smooth transition from Reception into Year 1. Very strong links are developed with parents and carers, who speak appreciatively of the 'friendly, helpful staff'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately half of the school's parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Some did not respond as their children had only been in school a few days and they felt unable to comment. However, of those who did respond all agreed that their children enjoyed school, were kept safe and were very happy overall. A very large majority believed that the school kept parents and carers informed about progress being made. Very few felt they would like more help in supporting their children's learning. Inspectors found that relationships between the school and parents and carers are very strong. The school is working extremely hard to engage all parents and carers and is happy to meet with them to discuss any matter. A few parents and carers raised individual concerns and these were followed up by the inspectors. It was found that the school has effective procedures in place in relation to the issues raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	65	23	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	71	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	64	24	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	61	23	33	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	65	23	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	59	24	35	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	28	41	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	57	28	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	59	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	46	32	46	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	59	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	65	23	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	68	21	30	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kilnhurst St Thomas C of E Primary School, Mexborough, S64 5UA

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do. You were very friendly, helpful and keen to tell us about all the things you like about your school.

This is what we found out about your school.

- Your behaviour is good both in the classroom and around school.
- You have a good understanding and appreciation of other cultures.
- You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and you make satisfactory progress overall during your time in school.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average, but they are rising in English.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe.
- Teaching is satisfactory and teachers try to make lessons fun.
- Your contribution to the life of the school and the local community is outstanding.
- Your school is helping you prepare for the next stages in your education.
- Parents and carers have told us that they are pleased with the school and we found that there is a very strong partnership between them and the school.

Your school is satisfactory. To make it better we would like it to help you reach higher standards, especially in mathematics, so we have asked your teachers to:

- help you make more progress in mathematics, including improving your times tables
- mark all your work carefully and let you know what you have to do next to make your work better
- ensure that work is at the right level for you and that you know exactly what you have to do in practical activities
- track your progress very carefully so they know how well all of you are doing.

I know that you are proud of your school and will do your best to help your teachers make it even better. Very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Christine Millett

Lead Inspector

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