

Netherthorpe Primary School

Netherthorpe Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S3 7JA

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good because different groups of pupils all make good progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils often achieve particularly well in reading. Writing has improved since the previous inspection and pupils now write with pleasure and confidence.
- Teaching is nearly always good or better. Teachers make learning enjoyable. They usually adapt lessons so that all pupils have work set at just the right level.
- Pupils say they 'never have to sit and struggle'. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that they always have the help they need.
- Pupils speak of their school with enormous pride and affection.
- One reason why behaviour is outstanding is the way in which pupils from different backgrounds work and play together so happily. They remark that 'everyone shows respect' and 'the school is like a family'.
- Pupils feel entirely safe here. Bullying is very rare.
- Leaders, managers and governors know their school very well and are quite clear about the next steps it needs to take. Their determination and the commitment of staff have enabled the school to move forward since the previous inspection.
- All aspects of the school, including achievement and teaching, have improved and are continuing to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching and a small amount requires improvement.
- Occasionally, work is not hard enough for some pupils.
- The comments teachers write in pupils' books are not always helpful enough.
- Achievement in mathematics tends to lag behind that in English, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills in order to solve problems. They sometimes lack understanding of the vocabulary used in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 13 lessons. Three observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documents were examined including records of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour and samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics.
- The inspectors took account of 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's most recent parental questionnaire and informal conversations with parents before the school day started.

Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Baljinder Khela

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language. Over 20 languages are spoken by pupils.
- Far more pupils than average join or leave the school at other than the usual times for joining and leaving. Many of these pupils have already attended a number of other schools in England or other countries. Some pupils have had long periods out of education.
- The school did not reach the government's current floor standards in 2012. These represent the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and ensure that all teaching is at least good. Focus particularly on checking that teachers always:
 - set work that is hard enough for all pupils in the class
 - use marking to inform pupils exactly how to improve their work and allow time for pupils to follow the advice they are given.
- Improve achievement in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are taught the vocabulary used in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in order to solve mathematical problems in a wide range of subjects and situations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery class with skills nearly always below those typical for their age. When pupils join the school at other times, up to and including Year 6, they are usually in the early stages of learning to speak English and are working at levels lower than expected for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically below average. It is influenced considerably by pupils' mobility. In 2012, for example, 27 pupils left at the end of Year 6 but 84 had been members of the year group for various periods of time as it moved up through the school. Only 11 pupils had attended the school throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The attainment of pupils who have attended the school throughout the primary years is broadly average.
- Pupils, regardless of their ethnic background and including those who join the school partway through their primary education, make good progress from their individual starting points. Above-average proportions make faster progress than expected in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because their language skills are checked immediately and the support they need is provided at once. They are each linked with another pupil who speaks their particular language. These 'buddies' do an excellent job by helping with communication issues and enabling pupils to settle quickly and start learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. They are taught well in class and leaders check that the programmes arranged, for example, to help with reading, are proving effective.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly similar to that of other pupils. Last year, owing to pupils' individual starting points, the attainment of the Year 6 pupils eligible for free school meals was not typical. In English these pupils were on average two years ahead of other pupils in their class and in mathematics they were one year ahead.
- The school successfully provides all pupils with equally good opportunities to learn. Teaching and the curriculum are adapted continuously to suit the constantly changing pupil population.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make particularly good progress in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. Staff place great emphasis on these areas because children typically find them difficult. Gaps in children's skills are picked up early and the help they need is provided quickly.
- Phonics (the sounds made by letters) is taught well and pupils learn to use their skills to help them read. Often, pupils' understanding of what they read is less well developed. The school is already tackling this through weekly special lessons and the use of a computerised reading program.
- The quality and quantity of pupils' writing have improved well in recent years and they set about their work with confidence. They enjoy writing because their tasks are often based on experiences such as a visit to a wildlife park and have a purpose, such as the production of an information booklet.
- Pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2 often have gaps in their knowledge of mathematics and are unused to solving mathematical problems. Pupils' understanding of the language of mathematics sometimes holds back their learning. The school has begun to group pupils in different ways in order to improve achievement in the subject and has clarified what pupils working at different levels are taught.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils very much appreciate the help and encouragement given by teachers and teaching assistants. They feel respected by staff and the warm working relationships between adults and pupils make them confident to tackle hard work or contribute to discussions.
- Teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding and to prompt them to think hard.

Questions are often tailored to suit individual pupils, for example, by rephrasing them so less-able pupils or those who speak little English are included in discussions.

- Recently, the school has invested in equipment that enables pupils' work to be projected onto the interactive whiteboard. Already, teachers are taking good advantage of these new resources to share examples of pupils' work and show them just how it can be improved.
- Teachers give clear explanations in order to make sure pupils understand new ideas. They often use activities such as role play, so that language becomes less of a barrier. For example, Year 3 pupils learned the meaning of 'stalking' by pretending to be animals following prey. In a few lessons, there is not enough attention paid to teaching mathematical vocabulary and this prevents some pupils from learning well.
- Teaching assistants make important contributions to teaching and learning. They are clear about their role during lessons, working as part of the class team, and do not do too much for pupils. Outside the classroom, assistants take responsibility for groups of pupils, for example, to prepare them for the class lesson by focusing on particular vocabulary or ideas.
- Activities are chosen carefully so pupils enjoy learning. Outdoor opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Children learn through stimulating activities such as pretending to serve food and drink to passengers on an aeroplane made from chairs or working out how to move water from one place to another.
- Teachers usually make sure that work is just hard enough for all groups of pupils. Just occasionally, tasks are not pitched at the right level for some. They find the work too easy, do not have to make an effort and so their learning slows down.
- Some teachers' marking is exemplary. In other instances, comments are too vague and pupils do not know exactly how to improve their work. Teachers do not all set aside time for pupils to learn from marking and follow the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are full of praise for their school. One boy commented, 'It is special in my heart'. They appreciate the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and consider that they learn from each other. Pupils are proud to help others to speak English and to understand how they should behave. Older pupils and those who have attended the school for some time set excellent examples to others.
- Attitudes to learning are very impressive. Pupils try exceptionally hard to be successful and show clearly that they want to learn. Because they are so keen, lessons are very seldom interrupted and pupils say that they are able to concentrate on their work.
- The playground is very small but pupils are extremely considerate so games of football, skipping and basketball do not interfere with those who prefer a quiet chat. Pupils from different backgrounds mix effortlessly.
- Incidents of unacceptable behaviour when pupils are playing almost always involve pupils who have recently joined the school and do not understand how to meet its very high expectations. The behaviour of these pupils improves significantly as they settle in.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently and calmly. Pupils play their part in promoting high standards of behaviour, for example by acting as trained peer mediators. Leaders manage the available play space very well and provide additional areas off-site to reduce the pressure.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and understand that it is not the same as arguing or getting cross. They say, 'We don't have that here. It's not acceptable'. Records confirm that bullying and racist behaviour is very rare. This is one reason why pupils feel so safe in school.
- Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe, for example, when out and about, and know just what to do if they have any concerns.
- Attendance is improving strongly year-on-year. The school is relentless in its efforts to inform parents that their children must attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's experience and expertise have enabled her to quickly get to know the school very well and hence take the lead in driving it forward. At the same time she has ensured that staff remain entirely committed to making sure that every pupil 'has a chance to shine'.
 - The views of staff, governors, pupils and parents are taken into account when deciding the school's priorities. The main factor, however, is the wealth of information gathered through a comprehensive programme of checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This work results in an accurate view of the school's strengths and where more improvement is needed.
 - The acting deputy headteacher and other senior leaders fulfil key roles and play a full part in checks on the school's performance. Some other leaders are still developing the necessary skills through arrangements that build on the expertise individuals have already.
 - There have been a range of improvements since the previous inspection, for example, in the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching and achievement in writing, and pupils' attendance. Determined to make this an outstanding school, leaders are building strongly on these successes, for example, by enabling teachers to learn from those whose work is of the highest quality.
 - The curriculum reflects pupils' interests and circumstances and contributes to learning and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils defined racist behaviour with reference to work on the topic of Black history.
 - At present, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in mathematics and other lessons or in real-life situations such as the exciting 'Winter Café' which encourages pupils to be enterprising.
 - The school actively seeks out links with other schools in order to share ideas and successful approaches. For example, several schools are working together to consider the most effective ways of supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
 - Safeguarding meets current requirements. Leaders are alert and responsive to changing circumstances. For example, the building firm currently replacing school windows led an assembly to point out hazards to pupils and explain how they could keep themselves safe.
 - The local authority has no concerns about the school but keeps an eye on its performance and points leaders to sources of help and advice. Its support can best be described as 'light touch'.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Governors now have a detailed understanding of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This enables them to ask searching questions, for example, about the reasons for pupils' below average attainment. They are well aware of the arrangements to manage staff performance, how teaching is improved and the ways in which the best teaching is rewarded. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent and have asked for more detail about the impact of each item of spending, so they can be sure of getting value for money.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107043
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	412546

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Bolster
Headteacher	Elizabeth Gray
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2010
Telephone number	0114 272 6834
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