



Office for Standards
in Education

INSPECTION REPORT

CARR HILL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Unique Reference Number: 122732

LEA: Nottinghamshire

Inspection Dates: 6 - 8 July 2004

Reporting Inspector: Sue Barkway HMI

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INTRODUCTION

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Carr Hill Primary and Nursery School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1	Very good
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Not adequate

Description of the school

Carr Hill Primary and Nursery School is a large primary school with 456 pupils, of whom 82 are in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception). The school serves a mixed community where there is some disadvantage. A large number of pupils join the school in Year 3 from another local infant school. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is similar to that found in most primary schools and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language. When pupils enter the nursery their standards are below those expected of three and four year olds.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a good school that is rightly proud of its achievements. A major reason for this is the driving force of the headteacher. He has a clear vision for the school which is communicated well and shared by all members of the school community. Teaching and support staff are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. Morale is high. Pupils make good gains in knowledge and skills, and particularly good progress in the nursery and Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations and, although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average, the school has identified weaknesses and has successfully implemented strategies to secure improvement. All pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Most impressive is the way in which pupils are encouraged to support each other and to take responsibility for ensuring that other pupils are happy and feel safe and secure. Teaching is good overall, but there is room for further improvements. The school provides very good value for money.

Grade: 2

Effectiveness of the school's foundation stage

The quality of provision in the reception and nursery classes is good. Children settle quickly to school life and make good progress. Teaching is good overall, and in the nursery department there is some very good teaching. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the youngest children but occasionally the purpose of an activity is not clear. Children are very well cared for and, as a result, they are happy and enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is very good and they quickly learn to co-operate with each other.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Targeted groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 have improved in reading and mathematics. The school has developed its procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity. For example, there are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievements. There have been significant improvements over the last three years to accommodation and resources, particularly those for ICT.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school is extremely well placed to improve further. The governing body and headteacher are united in their intentions to take the school forward and have shown foresight and determination, for example, in improving the creativity in the curriculum and the quality of the learning environment. The school's self-evaluation is reliable and based securely on evidence based on the monitoring of performance, analyses of data and the views of parents and pupils. The leadership is aware of what needs to be done to improve standards and pro-actively seeks strategies to ensure success.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

To build further on its successes, the school should:

- improve further the quality of teaching to ensure that it is consistently good or better
- make better use of targets to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve
- ensure that teaching assistants and support staff are used even more effectively.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Standards of achievement are above average overall and the most able pupils achieve particularly well. Pupils often make good progress. The school's analysis of its performance is thorough and weaker aspects have been successfully targeted for improvement.

Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below average but pupils make good progress, particularly in the nursery class. At the end of the Foundation Stage, the evidence suggests that standards are still slightly below national expectations. Last year's test results at Key Stage 1 were below the national average when compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. However, the pupils' work this year is generally of a good standard and test results have improved for pupils of average and higher ability in reading and mathematics.

At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in national tests at 2003 were above average for English, average for mathematics and below average for science. Over Key Stage 2, the pupils made good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. However, this year's unvalidated results show more pupils have reached the higher levels in mathematics and science. The trend of attainment over time is above the national trend.

In the lessons seen pupils achieved particularly well in some foundation subjects. Their work in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and art, for example, was of a high standard.

Grade: 2

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The pupils' personal development is very good. Standards of behaviour are high. The pupils clearly know how they should conduct themselves and that the staff value very good behaviour. They recognise that both staff and pupils can play their part in encouraging the few who find it more difficult to conform. The lunchtime club is a popular venue for the pupils who need a more supportive environment and has effectively enabled them to develop a sense of belonging. There are good opportunities for all pupils to take some responsibility in a range of practical ways, including being a good buddy to others who need a friend.

In the Foundation Stage, the personal development of pupils is very good. They are learning to share and play co-operatively with other children and they are generally confident when talking to adults.

Typically, in lessons seen in both through Key Stage 1 and 2, the pupils tried hard and they worked sensibly together. They responded quickly to the teachers' requests and handled resources carefully. The oldest pupils read their partners' writing and give them feedback. Learning to give and receive constructive advice is a particularly useful skill to have mastered at this age and illustrates the good attitudes to learning that have developed.

The pupils have curiosity about other lifestyles; they enjoy meeting visitors to the school, participating in outside visits and have raised funds for charity, such as children in need. In assemblies the pupils contributed to the quiet, reflective and uplifting ethos. Citizenship skills are developing well. The pupils play an active part in the school council understanding this democratic approach to sharing their ideas and consulting about proposals.

Attendance rates are below the national figure but the school has identified the major contributory factors and is working to reduce their impact. Unauthorised absence has reduced this year and is below the national figure.

Grade: 1

QUALITY OF PROVISION

Teaching is good overall, but with some variation across the school. The school's self evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate and clearly shows that the senior managers are very aware of where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Teaching at Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is strong. In all the lessons seen relationships were very good. In the most effective teachers had high expectations of all pupils, activities provided many opportunities for pupils to work independently and more able pupils made rapid progress because they were given time to be creative, for example in literacy. Teachers provide targeted support to pupils who needed extra help and these pupils achieve well. Resources, including the use of ICT, are well chosen to illustrate the topic in hand, for example in science. In less effective lessons learning objectives are not sufficiently clear and activities do not meet the needs of all pupils. Resources, although available, are not always easily accessible in the classroom, particularly to support the learning of less able pupils at Key Stage 1. Overall the quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good. Effective systems are in place for monitoring pupils' progress and for identifying the next steps in their learning.

Teachers know their pupils well and there are examples of very good marking and feedback, but this is not always consistent across years and groups. Although senior managers use formal tests to track pupils' progress and set annual targets, they recognise that pupils do not have clear learning targets and therefore pupils are not sufficiently aware of the specific skills and knowledge they need to improve. The curriculum is good. Planning to develop effective cross-curricular links and to promote creativity in learning are strengths. There have been significant improvements in the application of ICT and literacy skills across all subjects. The school is rightly proud of its art provision. In the Foundation Stage, appropriate emphasis is given to all areas of learning. Curriculum planning is done by teachers working as a team. This is effective in ensuring consistency across groups. However, the focus for the work of teaching assistants is not integrated enough at the early stages of planning. Consequently, the support that teaching assistants provide to pupils in lessons is not exploited fully. A very good range of enrichment activities broadens opportunities for all pupils.

The quality of care is very good. Improvements to the accommodation are of the highest quality and demonstrate exceptional concern for the pupils' welfare. Procedures to safeguard the pupils' welfare at lunch and break time are very good and pupils who receive minor injuries are well cared for by trained staff. The arrangements to support pupils and

their families joining the school in Year 3 are good and the pupils transferring to secondary schools have a strong induction programme.

The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure the health and safety of its pupils. Communication is good and thoughtful, and records are well maintained. The school meets its statutory obligations for health and safety. An internet policy safeguards users. The pupils report that bullying is rare and that the personal and social education programme teaches them to look after themselves and each other. They recognise and appreciate the care which is given to them and are proud that their views are sought and that the staff are prepared to respond to their suggestions. The school's routines are well established and the support systems encouraged the pupils to ask for help. As a result of the very good systems, including circle time, and the excellent role models provided by the staff, the pupils show concern for each other and their environment.

Grade: 2

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is a very effective leader. He has articulated a clear, well-reasoned vision for the school and has worked purposefully to ensure that all know the most important improvements required. The coherent strategies for monitoring and evaluation are used productively to focus the improvement agenda, concentrating rightly on raising standards in tandem with promoting vibrant learning approaches across a broad curriculum. There is a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. The analysis of the pupils' past performances in national tests has led to successful initiatives focused on improving specific skills for particular groups of pupils.

Performance management arrangements are effective and highly respected. The management structure has been thoughtfully constructed. The team leaders, who are on the senior team, play an active part in performance management. Subject co-ordinators are increasingly involved in auditing standards and evaluating initiatives. The year leaders are helping to bring greater consistency into planning for classes in the same year group.

The governors are well organised. They regularly check that they are fulfilling their statutory duties. They receive relevant information about developments and also meet with staff to discuss progress. Spending is clearly linked to improvement priorities and money spent on resources and accommodation has provided very good value. The school has forged good links with other providers, including the infant school attended by many of the pupils.

Grade: 1

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