



Wickersley Northfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106909
LEA Rotherham
Inspection number 277658
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Ralph Higgs CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Northfield Lane
School category	Community		Wickersley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 2HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 543704
Number on roll	472	Fax number	01704 731174
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Greaves
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs M Blackburn

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large, popular primary school serves a widespread suburban community in Rotherham. Pupils come from a wide range of family circumstances and almost all are white British. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average, although the number with statements of special educational need is higher than average. The school was amalgamated in 2003 and is undergoing extensive refurbishment. It recently gained the Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory education with several good features and makes outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage. The school judges its overall effectiveness as good, but inspectors do not agree as the quality of provision and pupils' achievement are satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Children make rapid progress from entry to surpass the standards expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Although progress is good in Key Stage 1, it is not sustained in Key Stage 2. However, standards are rising and are broadly average, representing satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and enjoy learning. Their knowledge of how to keep healthy is good. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They attend regularly and punctually. Parents have great confidence in the school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is excellent in the Foundation Stage, good in Key Stage 1, but lacks consistency in Key Stage 2. Here in particular, pupils have limited understanding of their own progress. The curriculum is outstanding in the Foundation Stage, meets pupils' needs well in Key Stage 1, but has weaknesses in Key Stage 2, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

The headteacher provides good leadership and has an effective partnership with governors. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is good. Although the right steps have been taken to amalgamate the school, the impact of change has been slow at Key Stage 2. The school has sufficient capacity to further improve, as shown by the rise in standards this year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 to a consistently good level.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding about what they need to do to improve their work, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Use ICT to extend learning in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, but with uneven progress across the school and across Key Stage 2. Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage from their broadly average attainment on entry to exceed the standards expected. They build well on this excellent start so that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average.

Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory although it is uneven across classes. The school has made determined efforts to ensure that the inadequate progress and below average

national test results in 2005 are not repeated. Standards are now once again broadly average. A range of effective measures, including more challenging targets for each year group, has brought better progress. In Year 6, teaching groups have been reorganised, and the school intervened swiftly to provide additional teaching to boost performance. Pupils' progress has been monitored more closely and improvements made to teachers' planning. As a result, most Year 6 pupils are now reaching the standards expected from their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls, partly because new teaching methods make learning more appealing to boys. Pupils with LDD make generally good progress from their starting points due to well focused support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. They enjoy school, as demonstrated by their positive attitudes to learning and their considerate behaviour. 'My children are relaxed and happy,' commented one parent. Attendance rates have improved and are now average. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and having a healthy lifestyle. Pupils and parents enjoyed the recent 'Health Week', which included a variety of sporting activities.

There is a good community spirit and pupils play an important part in running the school. They readily take responsibility, acting as monitors and playground 'buddies' and helping to produce a school newspaper. School councillors take their roles seriously. They understand they have been elected to help improve their school. They have raised funds to purchase new playground equipment and met governors to persuade them to help develop the highly popular 'Tyre Park'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to understand their feelings from entry to the Foundation Stage, quickly becoming independent. Pupils generally act with maturity, following school rules founded on 'respect and responsibility'. They are developing valuable life skills, such as problem-solving, working as a team and listening to others. These prepare them well for their future well-being. They develop good cultural awareness, enjoying events such as 'Africa' Week.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but it varies across the school. The quality of teaching is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent across classes.

Teaching has a number of good features, which are particularly well developed in the Foundation Stage. There is a common approach to planning, and activities are designed to suit all ability levels. The needs of pupils with LDD are met well, due to the good partnership with teaching assistants. Teachers identify lesson objectives and share these with pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Pupils enjoy taking part in the regular opportunities for discussion, recently introduced. However, in Key Stage 2, there is inconsistency in the challenge and pace of lessons and in classroom management. Some planning is not sharply defined and pupils' learning is not checked frequently enough. Activities are sometimes uninteresting and pupils do not learn well as a result.

In the Foundation Stage, assessment is excellent. Many opportunities are provided to help children understand their progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and set targets for improvement. However, particularly in Key Stage 2, the marking of pupils' work is not consistent and pupils do not have a sufficient knowledge of how well they are achieving. Expectations that pupils, with the help of teachers, should keep a check on their own progress are not firmly established.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge the curriculum to be satisfactory, whereas the school views it as good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding, as it is very stimulating and sharply tailored to children's needs. In Key Stage 1 the curriculum is good and it is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. A new curriculum plan seeks to bring greater coherence to provision across Key Stages 1 and 2, and to raise achievement by making learning more purposeful and interesting. This is working more effectively in Key Stage 1, as it is building on firmly established practice.

A positive feature is the provision for personal development and citizenship, which promotes pupils' understanding of health and safety issues well. Weakness exists in the use of ICT for learning across the curriculum, partly due to delay in introducing a new computer suite. Clubs and activities before and after school add to the good range of enrichment provided by visits and visitors, and a residential visit for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are in place, organised and applied well. Pupils are confident that they would find someone to talk to if they had a problem. Support when they start school is excellent and is effective when they move on to the next phase of education. Good strategies are in place to help pupils with LDD, utilising teaching assistants and outside agencies well. Considerable efforts are made to involve parents in their child's learning.

Relationships are positive. 'Teachers really boost your confidence. They make you think you can do it, and then you find you can,' commented one pupil. For the most

part pupils' progress is effectively monitored. Those who make the best progress are encouraged to think about what is good about their work and how they could make it even better. This does not happen consistently, however, and older pupils are not sure about how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are good in several respects, but, because improvement in Key Stage 2 has been slow to occur, are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has led the school well during the recent amalgamation. The high quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has been sustained whilst necessary changes have been introduced to Key Stage 2. There has been a clear focus on important priorities, such as extending the skills of senior and middle leaders, establishing a new curriculum and improving the quality of teaching. Staff have responded positively to higher expectations, and a culture of improvement is being established. However, these developments have yet to impact fully on pupils' learning in Key Stage 2.

A good partnership exists with governors who are developing their role. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and improving. It includes the canvassing of the views of parents and pupils but data is not fully utilised to analyse performance. Nonetheless, senior leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have intervened vigorously to improve progress across Key Stage 2. The re-focusing of the school improvement plan on a small number of success measures is beneficial. These factors demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvement.

The school runs smoothly and financial management is good. The quality of professional development has been recognised by the award of Investors in People. Resources are sufficient and additional staff are effectively deployed to raise standards and to support vulnerable pupils. The accommodation is being extensively refurbished to meet the needs of the new primary school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspection team during our recent visit. We were impressed by your friendliness and by how confidently you expressed yourselves. The information you gave helped us a great deal to understand your school. These are the main things we found out during the inspection.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education with several good features, and we judged your personal development to be good. We were impressed by your behaviour and by how well you get on with one another. You have coped well with the difficulties caused by the building work taking place. We noticed that you usually work hard and try to do your best in lessons. You obviously feel part of the school and take pride in it.

We agree with you that school is enjoyable because many lessons are interesting and there are clubs and teams to take part in. Teachers carefully plan activities for you to learn, so you can improve your work and acquire useful skills. You clearly know how to keep safe, healthy and fit as the school cares for you and supports you well. We were impressed by your willingness to share your views and act upon them, for example, in the school council.

Although your headteacher, governors and staff are working hard, there are a few other things that could be done to help you learn even better. Your teachers will be working on ways to ensure all lessons are good, helping you understand your progress better and to use ICT more for learning in all of your subjects.