



West Melton Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 106917
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287648
Inspection dates 11–12 September 2006
Reporting inspector Philip Cole

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stokewell Road
School category	Community		Wath-upon-Dearne, Rotherham
Age range of pupils	3–11		South Yorkshire S63 6NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 760538
Number on roll (school)	115	Fax number	01709 760837
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Mrs Madelaine Burkett
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 September 2006	287648

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Melton is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage entitled to free school meals is twice the national average and the local area is socially and economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. More pupils move in and out of the school during the year than is usual. Since the last inspection, the school has suffered from a considerable turnover in its teaching staff due to illnesses, maternity leaves and career moves. There have been several changes of headteacher during this time, including three temporary appointments to cover the period from the retirement of the previous permanent headteacher until the present headteacher took up her post in September 2005. During this time the number of pupils on roll fell.

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 school. After some difficult years during which it failed to move forward, it is now making significant improvements. Achievement is now satisfactory, although by Year 6, standards are below average. Until recently, pupils in infant and junior classes have not made as much progress as they could. They are now making up the deficits in their learning in English, but progress in mathematics is still too slow. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress, but those who are higher attaining are not yet pushed hard enough to achieve their best. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well due to good teaching. They reach nationally expected levels from starting points that are below average.

Good quality care and support, much enhanced by the learning mentor's work, means that pupils now thrive in the school. They behave well and enjoy what they do. Their personal development is good. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and continues to improve as the initiatives that have been taken begin to take effect. Lessons have a clear focus and pupils know what is expected of them, which leads to purposeful teaching and learning. However, teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are actively involved and on these occasions the progress of some pupils is slower than it could be. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and provides stimulating activities across all the areas of learning. There are good systems for tracking the progress of pupils throughout the school. This information is used well to plan what is taught. The targets pupils are given enable them to understand what they need to do to make their work better and this is helping them to learn more effectively.

Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher over the last two years has transformed staff morale. The school has regained the support of parents and the community, which in turn has led to a significant increase in the number of pupils. The headteacher empowers both teachers and support staff. She has set her sights high and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of the robust monitoring and evaluation systems she has put in place. The impact of this can be seen in the improvements that have been made in teachers' effectiveness. There is a good collective spirit which underpins the good capacity to bring about further improvements. The governing body is not effective and has not held the school to account. Despite this, the school is now in a strong position to move forward. It currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Years 1 to 6, in mathematics and for higher-attaining pupils.
- Ensure that teaching enables all pupils in Years 1 to 6 to be actively involved in lessons and challenges the higher-attaining pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body so that it holds the school to account for its performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average. The progress now being made in lessons is satisfactory as a result of the improvements in teaching. Results in the 2005 tests in both Year 6 and Year 2 were in line with national averages and showed a marked improvement over those in 2004. In 2006, results in all subjects in Year 2 and Year 6 were disappointing in terms of the school's targets and were below those for 2005. However, a larger proportion of the pupils who took the Year 6 tests in 2006 had learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school continues to work with the local authority on implementing programmes from the Primary National Strategy and this is having a dramatic effect on accelerating the progress made in English, which has been the priority for action. However, the school's data show that some pupils have not yet made up for earlier deficits in their learning. For example, some of the higher-attaining pupils are not yet working at appropriate levels, especially in mathematics. The overall progress made by Year 6 has been unsatisfactory. The good provision in the Foundation Stage is helping children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a strong area that is now underpinning the improvements in learning. The poor behaviour and attitudes that concerned many parents and pupils have been eradicated. Attendance has showed good improvement over the last two years and is now satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about what they do in clubs and lessons. This reflects the good care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although they know less of the different cultures found in Britain today than they do of their own. Pupils feel safe and secure and appreciate the help they get from adults throughout the school, and particularly the learning mentor. They take full advantage of the good play facilities, which challenge them physically, and understand the benefits of eating the healthy options available in the tuck shop and at lunchtime. They are glad that a school council has just been set up but appreciate that they are already involved in making decisions to help improve the school. The children in the Foundation Stage make impressive gains in their personal and social development and even the youngest are comfortable with adults, share toys and work happily together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Since last year, teachers have carefully identified the knowledge, understanding or skills they want pupils to learn in lessons. They give clear explanations of key learning

points to pupils. Teachers and pupils work together purposefully to achieve what has been planned. Better use could be made of teachers' questioning and bringing pupils back on task when their attention has wandered. In all classes, teaching assistants work well to encourage pupils to think and tasks are mostly appropriately matched to what different groups of pupils need to learn. This is working well and the progress made in lessons is now satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, children are provided with rich learning experiences that stimulate them and lead to effective learning. The nursery nurse makes a good contribution to planning and teaching.

Regular assessments are sharpening up teaching and the targeting of extra support, though there is still more to be done. Pupils are also beginning to benefit from the targets they are given. The targets are explained to them and they now know what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for infant and junior classes is satisfactory. Recent changes provide a sound framework for learning. However, weaknesses in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), identified in the last report, have been only partially addressed and not enough has yet been done to enhance the learning of gifted or talented pupils. Good provision has been made to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity through involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative and Activemark Gold status, and the school is starting to use social and emotional learning materials to further extend provision. Action taken in these areas is successfully underpinning the good personal development of pupils. Out-of-class clubs are offered to all pupils in both infant and junior classes and include a good range of sporting opportunities as well as art, music and French. These are well attended and very much enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has worked successfully in the last two years to tackle problems with pupils' attitudes and behaviour and to provide them with the care, guidance and support they need. The behaviour policy has been consistently followed and counselling and individual care are provided to pupils, and their parents when necessary, in order to bring about these improvements. The playground manager, together with the learning mentor and the lunchtime staff, make sure that playtimes are stimulating and enjoyable.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are now being identified earlier. They are given effective support in class and on catch-up programmes, and their parents are provided with guidance so they can help their children at home. Many of the initiatives taken with these pupils are recent but they are already beginning to make a positive impact on their learning.

Appropriate systems have been set up to keep pupils safe, both in school and when they go on visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The actions taken in the last two years by an associate headteacher and the current headteacher have turned around flagging staff morale, parents' critical loss of confidence in the school and a deficit budget. In the last year in particular, robust and effective systems have been put in place that are bringing about consistency in the quality of provision and improvements in the progress of pupils. However, this is not yet seen amongst all groups of pupils across the school. The measures implemented include the assessment and tracking systems, and thorough, accurate and constructive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The high quality Developing Excellence Plan is based on thoughtful analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The current headteacher aims high and takes decisive action to tackle problems, such as weak teaching. She is being increasingly supported by the deputy headteacher who is responding well to the opportunities to become more involved in leading and managing the school. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is strong and underpins the good quality provision found there.

For several years, governors have not been effective in holding the school to account. Too few governors have had training or have developed the confidence to take an active part in the work of the governing body.

Given the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and the support she enjoys from the staff the school is well placed to move forward.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

¹ Grade 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.

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for being so friendly and polite. Your school is satisfactory and is getting better.

What is good about your school

- You enjoy school and I agree with you when you say that it is improving.
- You have lots of interesting things to do in your lessons, in the clubs you go to and when you play out.
- The teachers and all the other staff look after you very well.
- The targets that your teachers give you are helping you to make your work better.
- The youngest children do well when they start school and those in other classes are now learning better than before thanks to 'WALT' and 'WILF'.
- The headteacher and all the other staff work hard to make this a better school.
- Your parents are glad that you come here and are pleased with what the school does for you.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to achieve as well as you can, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that all of you are fully stretched in lessons.
- Help the governors to do their important job of making sure this school is as good as it can be.

I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at what you were doing and wish you well in the future.