



Arkwright Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112632
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289356
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Arkwright, Arkwright
Age range of pupils	3–11		Chesterfield, Derbyshire
			S44 5BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246234018
Number on roll (school)	141	Fax number	01246234018
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Norma Dolby
		Headteacher	Mrs Julia Brown
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves the former mining community of Arkwright Town. Over half of the 141 girls and boys on roll travel into the school from neighbouring communities. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and all come from homes where English is the first language. Attainment on entry to the school is below expectations although there is a wide range of ability in each class. Socio-economic circumstances are challenging for many families. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Arkwright Primary School is a good school that has improved significantly since the last inspection. All of the key issues have been resolved and the school is well set to maintain this momentum. Standards are rising, the quality of teaching is much improved and the school provides a vibrant curriculum. The pupils now have a clear voice, particularly on environmental issues, in the affairs of the school. Arkwright Primary has the respect of the community that it serves and works well with other schools.

Children start school with levels of attainment that are below national expectations, particularly in their communication skills and their personal development. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they feel safe and secure and the quality of teaching is good. They continue to make good progress in the infant class because the teaching is well focused and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national picture. Standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations and the school's tracking data shows that the pupils are well set to meet the challenging targets for their year group. Because they are well supported, those pupils who find learning difficult make good progress. However, their individual education plans are not sufficiently specific to enable gains in their learning to be measured more readily, particularly in writing. The school ethos that every child should be the best they can be has supported the progress of the higher attaining pupils. The school is consistent in enabling these pupils to reach the upper level (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science.

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, care, guidance and support. Each member of staff knows each of the pupils by name and the adults are excellent role models. As a result, relationships and standards of pupils' behaviour are good. The school's ethos, alongside the exciting and effective range of learning opportunities available to the pupils, strongly supports their personal development and keeps them interested. As one parent commented, 'My children really do enjoy school and I am proud to tell people that my children attend Arkwright Primary.' The pupils are very keen to come to school and attendance rates are improving. Pupils' personal development is good. The school checks the pupils' progress carefully and assessment procedures are being refined to provide an accurate picture of the children's starting points. This ongoing priority has sharpened the quality of teaching, but pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in the target setting process. Furthermore, marking does not consistently give them a clear enough idea of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are effective and so the school has a good capacity to improve in the future. The school's view of itself is broadly accurate and has resulted in a clear strategy for further improvement. This includes the development of the management roles of the senior staff to ensure that the pupils' progress is monitored carefully. The quality of governorship has improved since the last inspection as they now have an increased awareness of the school's effectiveness and how to measure its performance. However, they still rely too heavily on information provided by the headteacher. Nevertheless, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of the school's assessment data and marking so that the pupils are better informed about what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the role of the governing body as 'critical friends' of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. The gap between the pupils' performance in tests for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science and the national picture has narrowed markedly in recent years. This is because the quality of teaching has improved and the school has a much clearer idea of the pupils' potential. Furthermore, the school has placed very good emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and this has supported the pupils' language development. Pupils with learning difficulties receive sensitive support and this enables them to make good overall progress. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen through enhanced resourcing and training for staff. Standards in singing are above average and strongly support the pupils' personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. They benefit from a climate in school that enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to take responsibility. This is particularly evident in the improvements to the school environment that stem from school council decisions. The pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and they enjoy trusting relationships with the adults in school. They are confident learners and work very well together. Their behaviour is good. The school has good systems to promote attendance and has been successful in discouraging lateness. Attendance rates are broadly average.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good and there are particular strengths in the moral and social aspects. The spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is well promoted through art and music. The pupils are aware of other religions through their work in the humanities. They have a strong sense of their own cultural traditions and a growing awareness of cultural diversity. The pupils are very supportive of the school's drive to encourage healthy lifestyles. They know how to stay safe and are very mindful of each other. Links with the community are strong and effectively developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school is well staffed and the pupils benefit from the staff's broad range of skills and expertise. For example, good use is made of a skilled music teacher to enable all pupils to become confident and enthusiastic singers. A common denominator in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that promotes good behaviour and encourages the pupils to try hard. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' performance and in most lessons the pace is good. Teaching assistants provide valuable support throughout the school. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully to demonstrate new techniques. In the classes for the youngest children and in Year 6, the work set is closely matched to the range of ability in each class, and this enables the pupils to make good progress. However, in Year 3 and in those classes where the teachers are much less experienced, assessment is not yet used as effectively. Similarly, the quality of marking is variable, but is particularly good in Year 6.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is planned well with an appropriate focus on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum strongly supports the pupils' personal development with many valuable opportunities to promote their well-being. In the Foundation Stage, the children benefit from a very well organised indoor and external environment that stimulates their interest and learning. A key strength of the curriculum are the strong roots in the school's cultural traditions and the links with the community. A further strength are the many and varied special events, such as 'Science Week' and 'Book Week' that support pupils' learning. Their learning is further extended and enriched by well chosen visits, visiting speakers and a good programme of visits beyond the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Pupils are very happy and secure here. Arrangements to ensure their safety and well-being are fully in place. Parents are pleased with the induction arrangements and believe any issues their children have are handled sensitively. This enables the children to settle into school readily. Parents feel involved in their children's learning throughout their time here. A learning mentor provides valuable support for those pupils who are experiencing emotional difficulties.

The good pastoral care provided by the school is matched by the quality of academic guidance that the pupils are given. The school has developed new assessment and target setting procedures that are being used to further support the pupils' progress. This data is used well to plan work for different groups of pupils. However, not enough is done yet to involve the pupils in this process. As a result, the pupils are not always

aware of what they need to do to improve. Although the targets are not always specific enough in the individual education plans for those pupils with learning needs and, they are supported well by knowledgeable teaching assistants.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership. She maintains a clear view of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school and has resolutely fashioned the strategy to bring about school improvement since the last inspection. A key element of her success is the strength of the teamwork and the quality of the relationships within the school. This has enabled the staff to grow in confidence and to share the responsibility for school effectiveness. It is particularly evident in the new leadership team that has both strengthened and sharpened the school's assessment arrangements. The community recognises the success of the school and, consequently, pupil numbers have doubled in recent years, with more than half of the pupils travelling from beyond the village.

Governors are committed to the work of the school and provide conscientious support. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold the school to account has grown, but they do not yet fulfil their role as 'critical friends well' enough, particularly in terms of monitoring the school's effectiveness.

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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?	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

22 January 2007

Dear Pupils,

Arkwright Primary School, School Lane, Arkwright Town, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5BZ

I really enjoyed my visit to your village school because everybody was so helpful and friendly. I was very pleased to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your morning assemblies and to listen to your wonderful singing. I can understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them:

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- Your school council and eco committee are doing a great job in making the school a better place to be.
- Everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is good.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- All of your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides a great range of activities and visits to keep you interested.

But, of course, as in all schools, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better:

- Firstly, I know that some of you can do even better with your work, and I am asking your teachers to make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve.
- I also want the governors to keep a more careful eye on what works well in the school and what needs further improvement.

Although there is work to be done to make your school even better, you must never forget that Mrs Brown and the staff work very hard to help you to learn and you must remember to thank them. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Edwards

Lead Inspector