

Wickersley Northfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106909
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	324487
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Judy Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	465
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Bonnett
Headteacher	Mrs L Ruston
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Northfield Lane Wickersley Rotherham South Yorkshire S66 2HL

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Inspection number	324487

Telephone number
Fax number

01709 543704
01704 731174

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	4-5 February 2009
Inspection number	324487

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and most of its pupils are from White British families. Very few come from other ethnic backgrounds or speak a language other than English at home. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Children aged three to five are provided for in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a breakfast club and a privately run after-school club. The school has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with some outstanding aspects. The care and guidance given to pupils of all ages are outstanding and contribute significantly to their exceptional personal development. Pupils are proud of their school and they like their lessons and other activities. Typically, they say that 'the best thing about the school is the way lessons are fun, so I enjoy working'. Pupils speak confidently to adults in the school and to visitors. Relationships throughout are outstanding. Pupils' outstanding knowledge of how to lead healthy lives is put into practice, and the school is a calm, very safe and purposeful place.

Achievement is good. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently improved and is now exceptional. This is enabling children whose capabilities were broadly typical for their age when they joined at age 3 to move into Year 1 with above average skills and abilities. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils whose attainments were just average when they started the key stage reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards have also risen markedly in the last 18 months. This is evident in pupils' work. Good teaching and an imaginative curriculum are leading to good progress in all years. By the time they leave, pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education and have a good basis for their future economic well-being. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in mathematics and reading, and broadly average in writing. Pupils can express themselves clearly in writing, using a wide vocabulary and a good range of styles, but they are let down by poor spelling in all years. Pupils of all ages who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are very well supported in all aspects of their work. There are effective partnerships between the school and other agencies to promote learners' well-being.

Teachers are skilled at enthusing pupils and making them want to learn. Their good teaching is supported by the imaginative curriculum that sets learning in many different contexts, such as themed topic work chosen by the pupils about 'raging rivers' or 'tropical forests'. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is shown by their good attendance and contributes to the excellent behaviour in and beyond the classroom.

The good and improving achievement is due to dynamic leadership and good teamwork that have enabled the school to take effective action for improvement since the previous inspection. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled the headteacher and senior leaders to raise standards by being very clear about what needs to be done and backing this up by well-targeted advice, support and guidance. Consequently, there is a shared sense of purpose among staff and the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Parents support the school enthusiastically and feel that behaviour and standards are improving. A small number found that communication with the school had not always been straightforward. Inspectors found that is not now the case, and this view is supported by other parents who found the school welcoming and staff easy to contact.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When they join the Early Years Foundation Stage children's ability levels are generally in line with national expectations, although there is a wide spread of ability. The care and attention to children's welfare is outstanding. Children thrive in the warm, nurturing environment and

greatly enjoy all this stage has to offer. For example, children were fully engrossed in asking 'baby bear' questions, making porridge, and retelling the story of Goldilocks with puppets, to support their writing. Children are encouraged to explore things for themselves. They are stretched and challenged by highly skilled questioning and the opportunity to share their ideas together. Effective planning is based on rigorous assessments that ensure children's needs and interests are fully known and well met. All staff have very high expectations and children really rise to the challenge.

All groups of children make rapid progress from their very different starting points and their achievement is outstanding. This is due to high quality teaching and the wide range of stimulating learning activities. There has been a marked improvement in pupils' writing and numeracy skills over the last year, because of accurately targeted support, which moves children's learning on apace. The Early Years Foundation Stage works closely and well with many agencies and support from other professionals such as speech therapists is well managed and of great benefit to the children. Standards on entry to Year 1 for many children are above age-related expectations. Parents appreciate the way they are kept informed of their children's progress and enjoy the frequent opportunities to come into school. 'Dads and Grandads days' are particularly popular.

There is no permanent leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage at present. The headteacher has ensured that excellent leadership is maintained by working alongside the current leader.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take steps to improve pupils' writing by teaching pupils to spell accurately in all years in Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment by the end of Year 2 was above average in 2008 and children's achievement in the current Year 2 is good in relation to their starting point in Year 1. Progress in mathematics is particularly good. For example, children in the current Year 2 can confidently identify multiples of 2, 3, and 5 and explain the relationship between multiplication and division. Test results for the end of Key Stage 2 showed significant underachievement in the years up to 2007 in English and mathematics. However the provisional results in 2008 show significant improvement and the school narrowly missed its ambitious targets based on pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2. The good achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 is evident in all years and in the above average standards in the current Year 6. Rigorous assessment and recording show that pupils are on track to meet even more ambitious targets in 2009, in mathematics and reading. Currently, standards in writing are satisfactory, however, progress is not as good as in other areas because spelling is inaccurate and not taught consistently throughout Key Stage 2.

The achievement of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because they are supported in lessons with high quality teaching by teachers and teaching assistants as well as through exceptionally good individualised support outside lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are independent learners and dependable members of the school and the wider communities to which they make a good contribution. They are confident and use initiative in,

for example, raising money for charities, or making presentations to governors and parents. Pupils talk with pride about initiatives they are involved in, such as helping to design improvements to a local park or taking part in a national initiative to promote healthy eating and are meticulous in the way they respect and care for their environment. They feel safe and have no concerns about bullying or unkind behaviour because they know that any problems will be dealt with promptly and fairly by staff. The school council and the very active playground committee help to make all feel that they are part of a community where their views are respected. Pupils show outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through their work and behaviour. This is evident from the way pupils from different faiths share knowledge and respect each others' views and beliefs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers use a range of methods, often introducing an element of friendly competition to motivate pupils and consolidate learning. For example, a Year 5 mathematics class enjoyed revising their knowledge of shapes through a game in which they attempted, by asking friends questions about the number and sizes of the sides and corners, to discover the name of a shape drawn on card hung on their backs. Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately in lessons so that they can move them on quickly enough to keep the pace moving, but not so fast that some get left behind. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners and explain their own strategies, and teachers are good at allowing 'thinking time', or time to discuss an idea with a partner before answering a question. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to all lessons because they work closely with teachers and know individual pupils' strengths and needs. In the few lessons where learning is satisfactory rather than good, it is usually because the pace is too slow or the objective for the lesson is not linked closely to what pupils will learn in the lesson, so pupils do not have a clear enough idea of what they should achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and enables them to make good progress in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad range of experiences. Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the previous inspection and further development is planned to ensure pupils' ICT skills are built upon as they move from year to year. Interactive whiteboards are used well as a teaching tool in lessons, but specialist ICT equipment for science is not yet in use. A number of strong features include a full programme of trips and visits and events such as a Health Week involving street dance, a skipping workshop and cooking healthy food. As a group of pupils agreed, 'We have a very healthy school!' Pupils benefit from an increasing range of specialist teaching and extra-curricular activities such as the very lively music and movement lessons from an outside provider. Links between subjects often increase the relevance of what is being taught. For example, a trip to an ice rink was followed by: writing 'How to skate instructions'; considering why ice melts; life in polar lands; stories set in snowy climates; making models of ice-skates and penguins. The good range of extra-curricular activities is appreciated by pupils and by their parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care and guidance underpin all the school does. Staff know children and pupils well and provide pastoral and academic support that is closely matched to their needs. Vulnerable pupils benefit from highly individualised attention and regular meetings with parents and carers.

Academic guidance is strong because it is based on rigorous use of assessment. Pupils know their targets and can explain what they have to do to reach them. Consultation evenings where parents and child attend together to discuss progress and targets reinforce this process.

Partnership with parents is, therefore, securely founded on the child's progress and welfare.

The school has productive partnerships with other institutions including local primary and secondary schools, to the benefit of groups and individuals. For example, older pupils visit the local secondary school to use the sports facilities and experience science lessons in a laboratory. Transition to secondary school is well planned and managed.

Good attendance is encouraged and achieved through appropriate procedures. The school is safe and secure and meets statutory requirements for child protection. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has established outstanding educational direction for the school. The headteacher and senior leadership team monitor the work of the school rigorously and are critical but supportive in their response. For example, as a result of lesson observations by senior leaders, training has been given to a number of teachers to bring about a consistent approach to planning and classroom activities. The effectiveness of this support was evident in the good teaching seen in the inspection.

The establishment of subject teams is enabling middle managers to develop leadership skills, and bringing more teachers and teaching assistants into the planning and management of subject areas. Some of the teams are quite new in composition because of staff changes so the full impact is not yet evident. However, the influence in terms of morale and enthusiasm of teachers is clear and having a positive impact on teaching.

The school is strongly committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination. The steps taken to promote cohesiveness within the school community are exemplary. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion overall, through links with the local community and charity work for a school in Nepal. Knowledge about multicultural communities in Britain is developing well.

The senior leadership team enjoys the confidence of staff and pupils and there is a shared sense of purpose throughout the school. Governance is good. Governors embrace changes with enthusiasm because they trust the leadership of the headteacher. They are supportive and ask questions that challenge the leadership to explain and justify changes. The school makes effective use of its resources and gives good value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to start by thanking you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school. We found your school to be a good and improving school with some outstanding aspects. Your school is led and managed well. It is very clear to us that you enjoy school, make good progress and get on well with each other. You really love learning and finding out. You told us that the things you learn and do at school are interesting and that your teachers make lessons fun. We agree with you. We enjoyed your lessons too!

Your teachers look after you very carefully and this must be part of the reason you are confident and polite and you care for each other very well. You also take great care of your building and understand a great deal about green issues and how to cut down on waste.

You get off to a flying start in the earliest years and this helps you learn to read and write and be able to do quite difficult mathematics by the time you leave. We enjoyed reading some of the stories and letters you wrote and are glad you are developing such a love of words and ways to express your ideas. It is a pity then, that there are quite a lot of spelling mistakes in otherwise good work and we are asking your teachers to help you improve your writing by paying more attention to this. We know that English is a difficult language to spell, but it has to be learned if you are to do yourself justice!

With very best wishes for the future.