



Woodthorpe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107071
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277696
Inspection dates 23 January 2006 to 24 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Philip Cole CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lewis Road
School category	Community		Sheffield
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		S13 8DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 239 9167
Number on roll	353	Fax number	0114 264 2628
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr L Angel
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2003	Headteacher	Mr Chris Thew

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a considerably disadvantaged community confronted by many social problems. Many children are vulnerable because of the difficulties faced by their families. Almost all the children come from white British backgrounds. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average and overall attainment on entry is very low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards and achievement of pupils. Standards are exceptionally low by Year 6, and pupils have achieved significantly less well than pupils in other schools. There are, however, signs of improvement that have not yet shown in the national test results. These undoubted improvements have led the school to somewhat over-estimate how far it has already gone. Foundation Stage pupils are making good progress and in lessons in infant and junior classes pupils now make satisfactory progress. Teaching continues to improve. Pupils are cared for and supported well, which effectively promotes their personal development, although attendance remains unsatisfactory overall. Parents are supportive of the school and acknowledge its improvement; as one parent reported, 'this school has been transformed'. Parents, however, are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a good leader. The new leadership team is strong and, together with all other staff, take pride in what they do. Expectations are high and self-evaluation is now being used effectively to identify and tackle weaknesses. Governors provide sound support. Although there has been good progress made since the last inspection in improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of leadership and management, standards have yet to improve and therefore value for money remains unsatisfactory. The school is now using its resources effectively and efficiently and is well placed to tackle pupils' longstanding underachievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement by continuing to use the effective strategies to improve teaching and by encouraging greater involvement of parents in their children's education.
- Improve attendance and continue to improve pupils' behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Results in the national assessments in both Year 2 and Year 6 have been consistently exceptionally low compared to national averages. In 2005, the school failed to reach the overambitious targets it set itself. Pupils' starting points are very low, but for many years they have made significantly worse progress than pupils in other schools. This is now changing as a result of much improved and more consistent teaching and the effective use of assessment information. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and are now making satisfactory progress overall in lessons in infant and junior

classes. However, this improvement will need to be built on and maintained for a considerable time before results in the national tests at Years 2 and 6 are good enough. As in many schools, girls achieve better than boys although this is becoming less marked as boys' behaviour improves. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good gains in their learning when they are following the well-taught intervention programmes. At other times their progress is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school evaluates this area of its work as good but inspectors judge that it is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good in lessons and around the school but there is still a small minority with challenging behaviour that occasionally leads to fixed-term exclusion. However, pupils feel safe and know that there are many adults whom they can approach if they are upset or in difficulty. Pupils' attendance is below the national average and the punctuality of a minority is poor. Unauthorised absence is particularly high; the school's recent very hard work with parents and external agencies to bring about improvement has yet to bear fruit.

There are many opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development and the work of the school council is positive evidence of this good provision. Older pupils help and support younger ones in the playground. The school encourages pupils to mediate when there are disputes and behaviour problems. This is helping to improve behaviour and raise pupils' self-esteem. Extracurricular activities, local and wider visits and occasional residential trips extend pupils' experiences.

Pupils are actively encouraged to eat healthily and two members of the school council paid a visit to another local school to sample improved school dinner menus linked to the Jamie Oliver initiative. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with strengths in their moral and social development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While the school judges teaching and learning to be good, inspectors found it to be satisfactory but improving. Accurate monitoring of teaching is effectively identifying and tackling weaknesses and leading to greater consistency.

Important strengths in teaching include:

- the way learning objectives are shared with pupils and successfully focus their learning
- the quality of questioning in most lessons to check understanding and encourage pupils to think
- teachers' good subject knowledge

- the good relationships, with clear boundaries, in classrooms that create an atmosphere that effectively supports learning
- the good use of 'brain breaks' to improve pupils' concentration and retention of learning
- teaching assistants work well with groups of pupils that are targeted for extra help.

There are still some areas that could be improved to increase pupils' learning and progress. The use of homework is limited, especially in upper junior classes. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to build on classroom learning or to develop their interest and confidence as learners. There is still a lack of pace or challenge in a minority of lessons, especially for more capable learners. Closing discussion sessions are not consistently used to assess pupils' learning. Whilst there is some very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support and stimulate learners, this is still an inconsistent feature.

Effective assessment and pupil tracking systems are now in place. These have not yet had enough time to significantly influence pupils' progress, but good use is being made of them to identify and intervene in cases where pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are at risk of underachievement. Most staff now mark pupils' work constructively and this is clearly helping them to make it better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Assessment is now used successfully to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to fine-tune the curriculum. The Foundation Stage generally provides pupils with a good start to their learning. Good adult support and learning resources enrich pupils' experiences. The school is well aware that an unusually high proportion of pupils enter school with significant deficits in speaking and listening, and in their personal, social and emotional development. The school now identifies these pupils quickly and works closely with partners to provide additional support when this is needed. Use of additional literacy support programmes is well established. As a result, there are now early signs of improved progress.

The curriculum has an important emphasis on practical and creative activities, which enhances the access and enjoyment of all pupils. The range and participation levels in out of school activities, centred around sport but also including some drama and music, are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of visits and visitors, which play an important part in opening pupils' eyes to the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good pastoral and emotional support to pupils. Teaching and support staff are committed to this positive provision and pupils say that they feel safe and secure at the school, although they say that the behaviour of a few could still improve. Fewer pupils show challenging behaviour because of the consistent

guidance and support they receive. Child protection systems and procedures are securely established and understood by staff. Good recording and reporting systems are in place for the monitoring of pupils' health, safety and welfare.

The school now provides a good level of academic support and guidance to all pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' needs are effectively identified through the good assessment systems now in place and support is informed by external expertise when appropriate. Effective programmes are devised to meet their needs and these often make a very positive impact on learning. All pupils understand and benefit from the targets that make clear what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Recent strong and effective improvements have led to significantly better education and care but there has been too little time to have an impact on national test results. The headteacher is a good leader who has a clear understanding of what he wants to achieve. He works tirelessly to ensure that others share the vision and are fully involved in achieving it. Leadership is now broadly based; effective subject leaders and others with responsibility are central to the improvements being made to teaching and learning. Governors are now more knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and are taking an increasingly active role in supporting developments. Considerable effort is taken to ensure that everyone has the skills and expertise needed to take on their responsibilities. Staff are now constantly challenging themselves to improve and want the best for the children.

The leadership team makes very good use of a wide range of effective strategies to look at how well the school is performing. This information is being used, together with the views of all those associated with the school, to draw up well thought out plans to improve the school. The leadership team and governors keep under close scrutiny the progress made in achieving what has been planned. This approach has ensured that most of the issues from the last inspection have been dealt with well; however, standards remain far too low.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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 welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and polite. We think your school has got better over the last two years but more needs to be done to help you do as well as you should in Year 2 and Year 6 tests. We have given the school a Notice to Improve so it can be helped to do this.

What we most liked about your school:

- we are pleased that you enjoy school so much and that almost all of you are well behaved
- we think the teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors look after you well
- you work hard and are now doing better in your lessons
- your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help you with your learning
- the headteacher, governors and all staff are doing a good job to make this the best school they can
- your parents are glad that you come here and think the school is getting better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- we want the school to make sure you do better in the tests
- we would like the school to improve the attendance of the few of you who do not come to school as often as you should and to continue to improve behaviour in school.

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