

Windmill Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107103
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324527
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	309
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 Howard Mee
Headteacher	Mr Peter Escott
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ash View Chapelton Sheffield South Yorkshire S35 1ZD
Telephone number	0114 2468550
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school draws pupils from a socio-economically mixed area. A smaller-than average-proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Very few pupils speak languages other than English at home and most are of White British heritage. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has attained the Activemark award and is working towards Healthy Schools status. It has Extended School status. The headteacher joined the school as its substantive headteacher in September 2008, following several months in the role of executive headteacher. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes that operate from one base. A private provider runs a breakfast and after-school club in the school's Key Stage 1 building. The extended services did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Windmill Hill is a good school, with some outstanding elements. Its rapid improvement stems directly from the clear direction of the school's good leadership, as it dismantles barriers to pupils' learning and enables them to learn efficiently. When the school was last inspected in 2006, its overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory. In December 2007 it received a visit from an additional inspector, as part of Ofsted's ongoing monitoring of the progress being made by a proportion of schools deemed to be satisfactory overall. At that time, the school was judged to be making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement. In addition, the quality of leadership and management had deteriorated and the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had declined. This is no longer the case. Standards are rising, achievement is accelerating for all groups of pupils and leadership at all levels, including governance, is focused firmly on every aspect of the school's improvement agenda. First-rate partnerships with parents, other schools and the local community combine to make the school a valuable neighbourhood asset, with parents and local support workers equally effusive in their praise of the school's strengths. The leadership demonstrates close attention to ensuring equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination and enabling community cohesion. Parents value highly the work of the school. Typically, they comment 'The school is improving dramatically,' and are delighted that there is 'a real partnership' between home and school. There is evidence of clear improvement since the last inspection and of the school's good capacity to improve further, through dynamic leadership at all levels.

From starting points in Reception which are typically lower than expected in reading, writing and mathematics, children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. This rate of progress reflects the sound quality of provision they experience in Reception, where good practice, particularly in outdoors activities, is not yet fully-developed. Pupils make good progress through the rest of the school so that, by the time they leave Year 6, they achieve well and their attainment is broadly average overall in English, mathematics and science. Even so, pupils do not yet reach high-enough standards in these core subjects.

Pupils' good personal development, coupled with their excellent behaviour, ensures that they develop into positive citizens, mindful of the needs of others and with a keen sense of fair-play. They are clear about how to live healthily and care for their own and others' well-being. Good-quality teaching draws on the detailed assessment information available to all staff and ensures that all pupils make good and increasingly rapid progress. This improvement in the quality of teaching and learning is helping to close the previously identified gaps in pupils' learning. Skilful teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. This ensures that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the right levels of continuous support and now make as much progress as other groups. The good curriculum, with its clear focus on excellence and enjoyment, incorporates pupils' ideas and meets their needs and interests well. High-quality pastoral care and personal support link with close tracking of pupils' work to ensure that staff have a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. This helps them to plan effectively and to move pupils' learning on, usually at a good rate.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children join the Reception class from nine different early years providers. They make a sound start to their schooling. Children's personal attitudes are well developed for their age when they join the school. However, other aspects of their social and emotional development, along with significant elements of their communication, language and literacy skills such as reading and writing, their calculation skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world, are all at levels below those typical for their age. Children settle quickly and behave very well. The school has a well-planned programme that successfully welcomes both children and parents. The leadership team is working hard to develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage but recognises that there is still work to be done. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall. Current assessments show that standards are rising. A greater proportion of children are now working securely within the levels expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1 and some go beyond this. This is because the staff are gradually gaining knowledge and experience in how to challenge young children. Resources are being renewed over time, new furniture is awaited and the outdoor environment is developing slowly. Nevertheless, many resources are well worn, while cluttered indoor learning spaces do not provide effective models or backdrops for children's work. The outdoor environment is unappealing, under-resourced and awaits an imminent upgrade. Currently, children cannot choose whether to play and learn outside or indoors and this restricts their independent learning. Friendly key workers pay close attention to children's overall well-being, safety and health and parents confirm they are very happy with the care their children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well as they build effectively on their sound start in Reception. Standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from pupils' below average starting points. Good leadership, effective use of assessment data and teachers who take responsibility for the progress of pupils in their classes mean that pupils' individual needs are now being met far more effectively. Pupils are making good and better progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Current monitoring information shows that, in two terms, many pupils across the school have already achieved what is usually expected after three terms or more. This means that more pupils in each year group are reaching the expected levels in their work. Current data indicate that standards in most year groups are rising. Although standards are predicted to fall in 2009, pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or particular gifts or talents achieve as well as others because tracking systems identify their varying needs for individual support to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they make the most of their time in school. Their clear enjoyment of school life is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and appreciate thoughtful initiatives from staff, such as the 'what's on your mind' boxes. They adopt safe practices and benefit from regular discussions with the community police officer, who is a popular visitor. Pupils learn and play well together and take care of each other. They learn about different faiths and cultures and are particularly affected when, for instance, they hear about the homeless in India from teachers who have lived there, or receive messages from contacts in Rwanda. Pupils live in a largely mono-ethnic community but are beginning to develop an awareness of diversity within British society. Many relish taking responsibility to improve school life, or to benefit the local area, through litter picking, for example. Pupils strive to achieve the 'extra 10%' to which the headteacher regularly refers. They talk about 'fab teachers and fab lessons' and say 'Everyone cries because they don't want to leave here at the end of Year 6.' Pupils have an increasingly good understanding of how to live healthy and active lifestyles. They recognise the importance of exercise and sport, enjoy the many clubs on offer and are appropriately prepared for their future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching continues to improve. Much is good and a greater proportion is now outstanding. The best lessons at the school flow along at a very brisk pace and provide a wealth of creative activities that engage pupils totally in their learning. High-quality questioning plays a key part in teachers' successful lessons. Learning is often put into a real-life context, so that pupils can see the relevance of what they learn. For example, the oldest pupils readily use their knowledge of grammar and how to incorporate the characteristics of higher level writing in their work, as they sing songs with words that change to include a checklist of tips.. They applied this knowledge further to use a checklist of the characteristics of higher-level English to change to words of and then sing songs. For example, popular tunes such as 'Let Me Entertain You' suddenly become 'Let Me Persuade You', incorporating key elements of good persuasive writing. In more ordinary lessons, pupils take a passive role in their learning, teachers do not check pupils' understanding as effectively and some well-planned tasks lack challenge. High-quality relationships ensure that pupils are comfortable enough to admit when they do not understand something. Adults' consistent management of behaviour means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teaching assistants provide valuable skills as they support individuals and groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well, increasingly practical and is relevant to pupils' lives and interests. Links between subjects continue to develop and help to make learning more meaningful for pupils. Pupils are helping to drive changes to the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils led a staff meeting to share views on the curriculum. As a result, pupils' independence is increasing

and this is developing their thinking, planning and problem-solving skills. Pupils use the 'Thinking actively in a social context' approach to plan projects. A good range of clubs and sporting activities, as well as a range of partnerships with other organisations and colleges, broaden pupils' experiences and enrich the curriculum. The school continues to develop its modern foreign language provision. Pupils' personal, social and health education, including the programme of social and emotional aspects of learning, are well-established strengths. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of the time they spend working alongside pupils from a local special school as part of a 'Shine and smile' project run by a local university. They say that this helps them to understand more about differences in society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they feel well cared for and safe in school and parents confirm this. All health and safety and child protection procedures are in place and meet current guidelines. Teachers and teaching assistants provide sensitive support for pupils, who are encouraged to become increasingly self-reflective. Pastoral care is well managed and all adults, including lunchtime and ancillary staff, have consistently high expectations and provide excellent levels of care for pupils. First-class links with outside agencies, other organisations and schools prepare pupils very well for the next stages in their education. Staff are familiar with assessment systems and provide good levels of support. However, although they plan different tasks for pupils with different abilities in lessons, these are not always used in practice and so the levels of challenge drop for some pupils. Teachers' marking provides good guidance for pupils on how to improve their work. The school promotes regular attendance well. Current attendance levels are lower than usual, due to specific illness outbreaks.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership has achieved much in a short time. The headteacher has wrought a whirlwind of improvement with a primary focus on raising standards and achievement. Even so, the school has not yet had the time to demonstrate the impact of setting challenging targets, in the form of sustained improvement to standards over several years. Senior leaders work seamlessly together, possess complementary skills and so ensure that all staff have a crystal clear understanding of the school's improvement priorities and the strong contribution they must necessarily make to these. As a result, they are able to sustain and accelerate the school's rapid improvement in provision, so that it gives good value for money. The school acknowledges that, as yet, standards are not high enough and the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is less strong than in the other key stages. Supportive governors are now more effective because they know which questions to ask to challenge the leadership and to check whether the school is doing well enough. Appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. Conscientious administrators oversee finances and ensure the school's daily smooth running. A message of mutual respect reverberates between the school and the community it serves. This results in greater collaboration and supports already strong community cohesion. Comprehensive home-school links support pupils' learning. Parents are demonstrably won over by a headteacher and staff who care about the success of every pupil and family.

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Annex A

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
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?	1
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

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?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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**

Inspection of Windmill Hill Primary School, Sheffield, S35 1ZD

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when I inspected your school with two of my colleagues. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and listening to your views. It was good to hear so many of you say how much fun it is at school and how much your school is improving.

We judge that Windmill Hill is a good school. You all achieve well because your teachers make lessons interesting and provide you with good levels of challenge. The songs you sing to help you remember the characteristics of Level 5 English, for example, are brilliant! You are very good at taking responsibility for different aspects of school life and are trustworthy as well as hardworking. Your behaviour is excellent and you are very caring towards each other. These are all very important qualities that will serve you well in the future and help you to do well at your next school and in your jobs. You also know how to live healthy and safe lifestyles and learn a lot from your discussions with the community police officer.

Part of our job is to see what your school could do even better. As the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science are still not as high as they could be, we have asked your school to help all of you to attain even better in these subjects. You can help by continuing to try your best in lessons (remember your headteacher's extra 10%!) We would also like children in Reception to be able to learn and develop their skills better than they do now, particularly when they are working outdoors. No doubt that the Reception bears, Lily, Billy, Rufus and Barnaby are looking forward to all the new furniture in their room.