



Wellgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131661
Local Authority Barnsley
Inspection number 293806
Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Linda Murphy

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	George Street
School category	Community		Mapplewell, Barnsley
Age range of pupils	3–11		South Yorkshire S75 6HR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01226 383739
Number on roll (school)	448	Fax number	01226 383739
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Janet Lowe
		Headteacher	Mrs Carol Kirkman
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	24–25 January 2007	293806

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average size school serves a socially mixed area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage: a few are from ethnic minority heritages. An average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the last inspection there have been many changes in staffing and governance. Following a year of temporary leadership a new headteacher was appointed in autumn 2005 and a new deputy headteacher in summer 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Parents like the school because, 'it is clear about improving standards, engages children in learning and helps parents feel part of the learning process'.

This satisfactory school has strengths in the way that it helps pupils grow into personable young people who understand the importance of caring for others. Relationships between pupils and staff are good; the pupils are respectful and always ready to offer a helping hand to others. They enjoy their learning and their friendships and this is reflected in their above average attendance. The school cares for and supports its pupils well: it gives strong moral guidance and as a result pupils behave well and follow the 'golden rules'. The guidance to help pupils learn is satisfactory. Assessment is developing but there is inconsistency in teachers' use of it to speed up pupils' progress. Pupils are at an early stage in judging for themselves how well they are doing. They are not always clear about how to improve their work or how they can aspire to higher standards.

Pupils enter the Nursery with standards typical for their ages. Their achievement is satisfactory throughout school because, even though the quality of teaching and learning varies between classes and subjects, and sometimes lacks the pace and challenge pupils need, it is satisfactory overall. Since the appointment of the headteacher, improvements in the use of information to track pupils' progress mean that staff have a working understanding of the levels that individuals reach and the targets for improvement. They have a fuller understanding of their accountability for their pupils' progress. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average overall although those in writing are slightly lower. Pupils need help in constructing sentences and organising their writing. This slows the pace, and the amount of written work is often less than would be expected for pupils' ages.

The satisfactory curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6 places a sound emphasis on basic skills and caters for the needs of all groups of pupils. It is broadened through a good range of well-attended after-school activities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) extends to many subjects. The bank of computers forms a central hub where access is easy and teaching and learning come alive. As a result standards in ICT are high and contribute very well to pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being: this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils also do well in the arts: this is reflected in the school's Silver Artsmark Award.

The headteacher provides determined leadership of good quality and has done a lot in a year to underpin the raising of standards. Clear, realistic priorities are set and the actions taken are checked for their positive impact on pupils' achievement. For example, a dip in standards in mathematics in 2005 was quickly addressed when the headteacher first took up post and standards have risen to an average level. There are good opportunities to enable other leaders throughout the school to contribute and take responsibility for aspects of the school's development. However, those responsible for supporting the headteacher in leading and managing the school do not always make the most of these opportunities or act with sufficient urgency to fulfil their roles

and responsibilities. For this reason, and for its impact upon pupils' achievement, leadership is satisfactory overall. Governors set a good example of a team where responsibilities are distributed and monitored and where individuals work smartly for the good of the school. The schools' evaluation of its work is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection, the capacity to succeed further and the value for money the school provides are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, including teachers' use of assessment, to enable all pupils to improve their work and make greater progress.
- Ensure that those with responsibilities for leading and managing aspects of the school's work fulfil these effectively in order to raise standards further and enable pupils to achieve well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school mostly meets its targets, which provide a satisfactory level of challenge. Pupils' diverse needs are met to ensure satisfactory progress and achievement for all groups. Pupils' sound achievement in the Foundation Stage is built upon year-on-year so that by Year 6 standards are average in English, mathematics and science. This forms a satisfactory base for the pupils' future learning and economic well-being. In ICT standards are higher than typically expected by Year 6 because of the good resources and planning for the subject. In writing, often pupils' least favourite aspect of English, standards are somewhat lower than in other subjects. The balance of time spent on writing has recently been increased but it is too early to see the impact on achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are positive about school. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn and take part in activities. They say that teachers, 'explain things to help us understand and make us feel part of everything'. Pupils attend school regularly and punctually, enjoy positive relationships and behave well - these attributes contribute to their great readiness to learn. The school promotes attendance well even though it is not helped by some parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow rapidly because their achievements are celebrated and rewarded. Pupils keep themselves safe, play together well and are polite and friendly. The introduction of the 'consequence ladder' has been effective in improving the behaviour and attitudes of a small minority of older boys. Pupils have a good understanding of

their own and other cultures, which is an improvement since the last inspection. School councillors have a voice and work eagerly to discharge their responsibilities. Their ideas are considered by adults but pupils would welcome opportunities to have more impact on school life. Pupils make a positive contribution to their community, and the wider community, through charity work. Pupils are well aware of healthy lifestyles because the school places a good emphasis on their health and well-being, as reflected in the Healthy Schools Award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching throughout the school has some notable strengths but lacks consistency in the pace and challenge. As a result pupils' learning, although satisfactory overall, is not always as smooth as it could be. Teachers share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils, though full use is not made of the recently developed systems to track pupils' progress and ensure that work is always pitched appropriately. Although marking is positive it does not always give sufficient information on what pupils need to do next to develop their work. Pupils are aware of their targets in mathematics but targets to support progress in English are not fully in place. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. In the best lessons work is matched to the needs and abilities of all groups and teachers set high expectations for work and behaviour: relationships are good. Teaching assistants give satisfactory support to those pupils who need additional help. A range of assessment information is beginning to be used to identify areas for development in pupils' learning. A somewhat narrow range of styles of teaching limits pupils' opportunities to work collaboratively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum gives satisfactory emphasis to literacy and numeracy. The use of ICT is well established and is increasingly contributing to enriching the learning experiences of all pupils. Arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are sound: these pupils receive the extra help they need. Pupils with special gifts or talents are identified and a start has been made in giving extra support, such as in mathematics. Satisfactory links are made between subjects, which help to make lessons more interesting and meaningful for pupils. The arrangements for developing writing have very recently been revised to enable pupils to write in greater depth but it is too soon to judge their impact.

Pupils take part in a good range of visits which are carefully linked to their studies. A range of visitors, including musicians, an archivist and grandparents, further enhances the curriculum. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 also take part in residential visits, contributing to their healthy lifestyles. Some pupils have recently been involved in working with a

community group to help design and plan a new local park, and pupils of all ages enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular choices which include activities in the sports and arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. A high priority is placed on ensuring pupils' care and welfare and the school works hard to ensure that they feel safe and happy. This is reflected in the school's mission statement, 'children are like diamonds - precious to us all'. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult they can turn to if they need help. The school works effectively with external agencies to provide extra support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are thorough. The school complies with all of its statutory responsibilities for child protection and for safeguarding its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to keep healthy by sensible diet and exercise and they enjoy working with health-promoting visitors such as 'Freddy Fit.' Academic guidance, including the setting and reviewing of targets throughout the school, is developing but is at an early stage and not yet fully making an impact on progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The impact of the leadership and management is that pupils make satisfactory academic progress and have good outcomes in relation to their personal development and well-being. Because of the large number of pupils on roll, the very effective headteacher has wisely devolved some responsibilities to other staff. This way of working is new to some and support is being given to enable all to play their part in raising standards. For example, teams have been set up to promote all aspects of pupils' development. Even so, some senior and middle managers are at an early stage in carrying out their roles and are still over-reliant on the headteacher to bring about change for the better. New systems for tracking pupils' progress are beginning to pay dividends. This is helping to raise the aspirations of staff and pupils alike.

The governing body evaluates the school's work thoroughly and provides a good degree of challenge and support. As a result it has a clear understanding of how to improve the education it provides to raise standards. The agenda for improvement is set out clearly in the school's development plan: priorities are well chosen to bring about success.

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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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	2
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	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

When we visited your school to check how well you are learning we found that it gives you a satisfactory quality of education and has some particular strengths in what it provides for you - especially in how it is helping you to become caring and helpful young people.

You say you like school and we found out why. Learning is enjoyable, you make friends easily and your behaviour is good. You attend school regularly and this helps you to improve day-by-day. You have a good understanding about how to keep safe and live a healthy life style. This is because staff look after you well. Your headteacher knows just what to do to make school an even better place to be.

Here are some things that we have asked the school to do next. Firstly to help you get better at writing. Secondly to make sure that you are all set work that is not too easy or too hard but that is at just the right level to help you learn quickly. For this to take place all staff have an important part to play, especially those who are in charge of leading different parts of the school's work. We are sure you will help by always trying your best, especially in writing.