

Wilthorpe Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106566
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309162
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Ellis
Headteacher	Mr Harry Goodliffe
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Greenfoot Lane Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 1EG
Telephone number	01226 205364
Fax number	01226 247269

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school situated close to the centre of Barnsley. The school serves an area with a broad range of socio-economic circumstances, that are overall broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award. Since the last inspection the number of pupils at the school has fallen because of falling birth rates in the area. As a consequence, there have been significant changes and reduction of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Wilthorpe Junior School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. It has improved rapidly since its last inspection because of inspired leadership and management. Very effective care, guidance and support and pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are key strengths of the school. It works well with the senior school and outside agencies but liaison with the feeder infant school is insufficient. The school has identified the need to improve liaison arrangements to provide a more seamless transition for pupils. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' progress has speeded up recently following stability of staffing because the quality of teaching is now at least good and often outstanding. A very well thought out curriculum meets the needs of all its pupils. The first-rate leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are complemented by very effective support from other staff and governors. Most parents enthuse about the school. The following comment is typical of their feelings: 'My children receive a high standard of education within a caring and supportive environment.'

Standards on entry to Year 3 are broadly average. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously and accurately in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Targets linked to pupils' levels of attainment are set for pupils and teachers. Progress towards these is carefully checked throughout each year. Any pupils not making sufficient improvement are quickly identified and action is taken to move their progress on at a faster pace. Pupils' achieve well and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average.

Lessons are planned very effectively to engage pupils' interest. Harmonious relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils lead to high standards of behaviour. The pace of learning is brisk because pupils are clear about what they are to learn. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates are above average. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy through opportunities in lessons and a broad range of out-of-school sporting activities. They are encouraged to eat sensibly. Bullying is very rare because pupils care for one another exceptionally well. They state that staff will always listen to their concerns. Pupils are extremely well prepared for future learning because of their good standards in basic skills and extremely positive attitudes to learning.

The school has a very good understanding of what it must do to maintain its strengths and further improve standards. Its view of itself is modest as it is constantly looking for ways to improve. These factors, together with the strengths in the leadership and management and the strong caring atmosphere, provide the school with exceptionally good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve liaison with the local infant school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement from entry to the school in Year 3 to the end of Year 6 is good. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 standards were overall above average. However, writing standards were lower than those in reading. Strategies put in place during the past two years to improve writing have been successful and pupils' progress throughout the school has accelerated.

Present standards in Year 6 in writing are now above average as are standards in reading and mathematics. This reflects the success of the programmes to improve writing and the high standard of teaching. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress relative to their prior attainment. In 2007, targets for pupils at the end of Year 6 were exceeded at both the level expected nationally and at the higher level in English and mathematics. The targets set to be reached in 2008 are likely to be exceeded because of the high quality of teaching and progress of older pupils during the past year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils understand how to stay healthy and have benefited from working towards gaining the Healthy Schools award. They know their opinions count. The proactive school council promotes pupils' interests and views very effectively. For example, it has established a healthy eating tuck shop and it has been involved in improving playtime organisation and facilities. Pupils make good use of a wide range of sporting activities, both as part of lessons and after-school clubs. They know how to stay safe, and show great consideration and care for each other in lessons and in the playground. Behaviour in and around school is exemplary and pupils are courteous and polite. Older pupils take on responsibilities, including the role of playtime buddies, and carry out their roles with diligence and enthusiasm. They have organised and run fundraising activities for the school and for charities. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through the emphasis the school places on the study of major world faiths. Effective numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and very positive attitudes to learning prepare pupils exceptionally well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Lessons are planned very well and, as a result, pupils' learning is rapid. Teaching ensures that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. The management of pupils is highly effective. As a result, pupils are interested in their learning and behaviour is exemplary. Drama and role play feature strongly in lessons which highly motivates pupils. Their understanding and rate of progress is enhanced exceptionally well by the many opportunities for them to investigate independently and to work with partners or in small groups. Teaching assistants provide valuable help for individuals and lower-attaining pupils and this ensures that they make similar progress to their peers. Very effective use of interactive whiteboards helps make new learning more understandable and provides pupils with additional opportunities to consolidate their learning. The marking of pupils' work is consistent in all classes. It clearly relates to pupils how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Pupils know their levels of attainment and the steps necessary to reach the next level of the National Curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. A strong emphasis on English and mathematics enables pupils to have a good grasp of basic skills. The linking of subjects together within a theme is adding purpose and enjoyment to learning. It also provides greater opportunities for pupils to develop and practise writing and ICT skills. This has helped to improve

rapidly standards in writing. Assemblies, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons provide ample opportunities for pupils to reflect, consider others and to learn life skills which enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The encouragement of pupils to work together, express their views and engage in role play develops their speaking skills. As a result, by Year 6 pupils are confident and articulate speakers. The wide range of extra-curricular activities engages pupils' interest. Visits and visitors, such as a trip to Whitby and working with a lecturer from a local university, add an extra dimension to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The high quality of care is at the centre of all the school does. Robust health and safety procedures and child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are understood by all staff. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and feel it provides a safe and caring environment, in which pupils feel confident and flourish. Pupils know who to turn to if they need help as relationships with staff are excellent. Pupils feel valued, and this builds their self-esteem and confidence. Links with the feeder infant school have recently been strengthened, although much still needs to be done. Older pupils are well prepared for secondary school. Effective education plans support those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils and their parents are fully consulted in creating the plans, and the school monitors their effectiveness closely. The school's very effective tracking systems are used to provide pupils with detailed guidance and support. Demanding targets and high quality feedback from staff contribute to ensuring that pupils have a clear picture of their progress and future challenges.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very effective leaders and have the full backing and support of staff, governors and parents. Together with the staff and governors, they have created a warm, secure and friendly environment in which pupils thrive. All members of staff share the leadership's ethos and provide a high level of education and care. Subject coordinators lead their areas of responsibilities efficiently. All are committed to a focus on high achievement. All members of staff play their part in monitoring the high quality of teaching and learning, and support each other in ensuring that the pupils enjoy their lessons and are challenged. They are fully involved in all aspects of school improvement. Very effective systems are in place to enable the management to check the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. There are very successful structures in place to assist those pupils who are not making sufficient progress, which help them to catch up. Governors understand exceptionally well the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have a clear picture of standards and achievement. They provide the senior leadership team with a strong level of challenge and support.

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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?	1
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Thank you for welcoming the team of inspectors to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

It was a privilege to inspect your school as it provides you with an outstanding education. This is because it is led and managed exceptionally well by your headteacher who is helped really well by the deputy headteacher, other staff and the governors. I was very impressed by your superb behaviour and how interested you were in learning. You told me you were proud of your school, feel safe and enjoyed learning. Your attendance is good. Staff look after you extremely well and I was pleased that you all get on so well together. The standard of your work by the time you leave the school at the end of Year 6 is above average. This is because you are taught very well and you make quick progress in your learning.

Your headteacher knows what needs to be done to continue to improve the school. However, I have asked the governors and staff to improve the links with the infant school to make the transfer from the infants to the juniors better.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.