

Dear Parents/Guardians

Please find below a summary of our recent inspection report. You will see we have a school to be proud of!

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized infant school, serving a village close to Doncaster, with a mixture of mainly owner occupied and some rented housing. Almost all the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although both are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The school has achieved Quality Mark Awards for high standards, Investors in People, Activemark and the Healthy School awards. It is currently working towards the International Award for schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils love coming to this outstanding school. 'You get to learn so many things and make lots of friends' sums up the views of many pupils. Pupils thrive and make consistently good and often excellent progress because the school's motto 'Together we achieve more' underpins every aspect of its life. Pupils talk eagerly about the exciting things they do. Their behaviour is excellent, they work hard in lessons and everyone gets on exceptionally well together. Pupils are proud of the 'friendship stop' they have set up in the playground and really appreciate the way the school listens to their ideas. They love the many opportunities they have to exercise, such as 'Wake up, shake up' and have a very good understanding of what they need to do to keep healthy and safe. Pupils' outstanding personal development provides an excellent platform for their learning and ensures that they are exceptionally well placed to face life's future challenges.

Pupils make excellent progress overall. They reach standards that are significantly above national averages from starting points, when they enter the Nursery, that vary from average to just above average each year. High quality teaching across the school underpins pupils' impressive learning. Teachers' planning of lessons is excellent. The needs of different groups are consistently identified and met, very effective and efficient links are made between subjects that make learning relevant and purposeful. All lessons have very clear objectives. Teachers use these very well to focus pupils' efforts. This enables pupils to understand, and even identify for themselves, what they should be able to do by the end of each lesson. All teachers use high quality resources well, such as interactive

whiteboards, to enliven and promote learning. Improvements in the use of assessment to match learning more precisely to pupils' needs, and to provide very helpful guidance to pupils, is impressively accelerating progress in their learning. Well trained assistants provide skilful support for pupils who need extra help, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and these pupils make the same excellent progress as other pupils.

The school takes great care to ensure that its curriculum meets all pupils' needs and promotes excitement and enjoyment in their learning. Pupils benefit from the chance to learn a modern foreign language and there are many high quality clubs, which pupils love to attend. Very successful steps have been taken to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of different cultures, which was a weakness identified in the last inspection. Excellent programmes for personal, social, health and emotional development, together with robust and effective arrangements for care, guidance and support, ensure that all aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted exceptionally well. It is no surprise that parents are confident that any problems their children have will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

The school's success is based on the outstanding leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the very professional and enthusiastic approach of senior staff and governors, and the hard work and skill of its teachers and their helpers. No one is complacent; everyone works hard to further improve standards and the quality of what the school offers its pupils and their parents. Their efforts are successful because they are based on rigorous and accurate self-assessments and because plans for improvement take account of the views of all who have a stake in the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has an excellent capacity to improve in the future. It provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage shares the same strengths as the rest of the school. Excellent care and support ensure that children quickly settle to learning. They make consistently good progress in the Nursery, where there is a good balance between purposeful activities from which they can choose and well focused sessions led by adults. Progress accelerates in the Reception classes where children benefit from extremely well taught literacy and numeracy sessions, and from the excellently resourced 'Plan, do and review' activities they can choose from. These very successfully promote pupils' learning across all the areas of the curriculum and are extremely effective in developing children's awareness of themselves as learners. Their extension into Year 1 very successfully eases transition into Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant weaknesses that the school needs to address.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school has maintained impressively high standards for many years. In 2005 and 2006 the performance of Year 2 pupils in writing, although better than that of pupils nationally, was not as strong as it had been previously. The school has very successfully reversed this dip through very well focused teaching, its excellent use of assessment to identify those who needed support or pushing on, and the extremely effective use of targets that help individuals to improve their work. Results in 2007 were again significantly higher than in most other schools and current tracking information shows pupils making impressive progress across Year 1 and Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development reflects the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the school. Staff fully understand that happy, healthy and secure pupils are effective learners and staff work very hard and successfully to ensure this. Pupils love 'Wake up, shake up' sessions and thoroughly enjoy their exciting lessons and 'theme weeks', which are often focused on different cultures and ways of life. Not surprisingly, their attendance is well above national averages. They participate very thoughtfully in evaluating how well they have completed activities and those provided to promote healthy living and their safety. As a result, they are developing excellent self-awareness, make informed choices at lunchtime and are very careful, for example when crossing roads. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is evident in their excellent behaviour, relationships, ability to cooperate on tasks and their knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress because teaching is of a consistently high quality across the school. Lessons are always very well focused on what pupils need to learn. Pupils work hard to demonstrate that they can do what is expected of them, because they often help to identify their own targets for the end of each lesson. Teachers make sure that the different groups in each class have work that is challenging. This ensures that higher-attaining pupils, including those who may have particular gifts or talents, and those who need extra help, make such impressive progress. Skilful, well trained assistants play a full role in delivering these highly effective lessons. Adults make exceptionally good use of high quality resources to make their explanations clearer and to support pupils when they are engaged on tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school places a great emphasis on 'learning by doing' and in personalising learning to pupils' needs. Practical approaches are used whenever possible and pupils are regularly encouraged and guided to plan and evaluate aspects of their learning. These, together with many interesting visits, visitors and 'theme weeks' motivate and inspire pupils in the learning process. Considerable efforts

have been made to improve pupils' personal development and well-being. The school's research into aspects of this, such as pupils' attitudes to learning, and excellent programmes to promote these, underpin the outstanding outcomes in this vital area of their development. Very effective and purposeful links have been made between subjects that ensure learning is both efficient and enhanced.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults in school work with a common purpose of ensuring that pupils are happy, secure and make the best progress they can. The school provides excellent information to parents, listens and acts on their concerns and provides many opportunities for them to be involved in their children's learning. The performance of all pupils is monitored very closely, and prompt and effective action taken to tackle any problems that arise. Pupils are given excellent guidance on how they can improve their writing through targets that are discussed and agreed with them, and used consistently in lessons. This is making a very positive impact on progress. All the requirements for safeguarding pupils have been implemented rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has very high expectations for pupils and the school. She has worked hard and very successfully to ensure that all teachers make valuable contributions to the continuous process of improving standards and progress. The leadership team is fully involved, as are teachers in their roles as subject leaders, in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. A wide range of very appropriate and effective strategies is used to inform this rigorous process, including research programmes. Full account is taken of the views of governors, parents and pupils as well as the outcomes from the accurate and realistic self-evaluation to inform the extremely appropriate improvement plans. These are implemented very effectively and successfully tackle any relative weaknesses that are identified. Governors keep a very watchful eye on the school's performance and work extremely well with school staff in promoting very high quality provision.

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 Achievement and standards Personal development and well-being The quality of provision Leadership and management

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? 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	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.	
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	1
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
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
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

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed the two days we spent in your outstanding school. It is no surprise that your parents are very pleased that you come to this school. We were really impressed with the high quality of all your work and particularly the excellent writing you do. You all work very hard in your lessons. We know that this is because you love coming to school so much. Teachers make your learning fun with all the interesting activities they do with you, the exciting visits you go on and the visitors who come into school. We were all really impressed with your excellent behaviour and with how well you all get on together.

You all seem to know what you need to do to keep fit and healthy and it is no surprise to us that you keep so fit. 'Wake up, shake up' looks exhausting! We were very pleased that many of you choose healthy things to eat at lunchtimes. It is also good that you know so much about how people in other countries live. This will really help you as you grow up in the world today.

All the adults in school really look after you extremely well, which is why you feel so happy and safe. They also keep a close eye on what you are learning so they can help you even more if and when you need it. We were very impressed with the way you try to do what your targets suggest when you are writing. This is definitely helping you to make your writing even better.

Your school is excellent because all the adults work so hard to make it the best they can. Your headteacher is outstanding and all the teachers work extremely well with her to find out what needs to be done to make the school even better. They then do their very best to make it happen. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Kirk Sandall and wish you well for the future.