

Stannington Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107050
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336794
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Butler
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Binns
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, improvement plans, records of lesson monitoring, selected policies, pupils' work, safeguarding records, 68 questionnaires returned from parents and carers and 16 questionnaires returned from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- current attainment, progress and achievement of pupils of all ages
- the use of assessment information to ensure the correct levels of challenge for all groups of pupils, particularly higher-attaining pupils and boys
- continuing strengths in terms of the creative curriculum and partnership working, and the outcomes of these in terms of pupils' personal development and academic learning
- key strengths of leadership and management, and how these reflect in pupils' outcomes, school provision and the seemingly relentless focus on improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller than average school draws pupils from a range of economic and social backgrounds, although few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who attend the school from outside the area has doubled over the last three years. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is larger than average. The school currently holds Healthy Schools Status, Artsmark Gold and Activemark. It also has a Leading Parent Partnership award.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes, known here as Foundation classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school enjoys many plaudits from parents and carers such as, 'A brilliant school that puts the children at the centre of all they do,' and: 'The school is inspirational. I feel very happy and secure in the knowledge that my child is getting the best possible start.' Stannington has many strengths. The headteacher's firm resolve to maintain the best while developing ever-more sophisticated practice is central to them all.

Children enjoy experiences of the highest quality in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They develop key personal and social skills that underpin pupils' impressive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school. At the same time, practitioners provide children with every opportunity to become very effective at problem solving and these skills set the youngest children on the path to becoming very successful learners. Adults offer high levels of challenge and support as children learn to play and work together both inside and outdoors. Pupils build seamlessly on this excellent start as they move through the school so that, by the time they leave at the end of Year 2, their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Close monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning ensures that teachers know precisely what pupils need to do next to improve. The highly inclusive learning environment coupled with top-quality support programmes ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at a rate equal to that of other pupils. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching results in pupils' good learning and progress. Even so, the school's continuing focus this year is to close further the gap between boys' and girls' writing skills. Leaders and governors recognise that still more remains to be done to entice boys to write for pleasure and to convince them that they have the necessary skills so to do.

Accurate self-evaluation provides senior leaders with a clear view of what works well in school and focal areas to develop. There is no complacency as the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors consult regularly in order to maintain the school's long and distinguished pathway of success. Since the last inspection the school has broadened further its prime interest in creativity across the curriculum. Pupils now build on areas of specific interest to them by drawing up 'potential lines of development'. This strategy is working well as it involves pupils in determining more closely the path their individual learning will take. Creative partnership work enables pupils who tend to take the lead to work alongside more passive pupils and this benefits both parties. The senior leadership places importance on developing the professional skills of the teaching and support staff so that they can move on. In spite of some personnel changes, the school continues to pursue both excellence and enjoyment for every pupil with great success

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and unflagging determination and these factors demonstrate the school's ongoing outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Narrow still further the remaining gaps in writing skills between boys and girls by:
 - helping boys to see themselves as writers by developing further their confidence and by using their own interests and enthusiasms as starting points as well as through continuing initiatives, such as philosophy
 - providing more stimuli that provoke active learning, including even more use of the outdoor environment
 - offering more frequent, purposeful writing opportunities such as pen pals and email
 - increasing the number of male role model writers who visit the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve and enjoy well so that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers because the school is very quick to identify and support their individual needs. They participate happily in lessons because they know that familiar, consistent and highly effective support from skilful teaching assistants is close by. The school is known for its burgeoning success in this important area. Its changing makeup reflects this with almost double the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now at the school in comparison with three years ago. Teachers know pupils well and this helps them to target individual pupils with just the right levels of challenge during question and answer sessions. This ensures that all pupils are actively involved in whole class sessions and that they noticeably grow in self-esteem when they get things right. Pupils are very keen 'to have a go' and do not fear answering incorrectly as they know that, 'this is how we learn'. Increasingly practical activities help to engage the interest of more reluctant pupils and particularly boys in order to turn them into enthusiastic writers. However, more remains to be done to maintain their involvement in such tasks.

Pupils confirm that they enjoy school very much. They say that Stannington is very friendly with little bullying and that this is quickly addressed. Almost all parents and carers confirm this. Pupils develop a very good understanding of how to keep safe, knowing, for example, 'not to cross a road near parked cars and never to walk on the motorway!' Pupils show high levels of tolerance for, and interest in, the views of others, as developed through discussions at circle time, religious education, assemblies and philosophy lessons. These help them to reflect, think originally and make coherent oral contributions to debate. They do not shy away from disagreement and develop their own opinions at an early age. Pupils understand that fruit, milk and water are good for them and that they need regular exercise to keep healthy. Large numbers participate in

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a wide variety of school sports clubs. There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of the world beyond the local community. Governors travel extensively and captivate pupils on their return with stories of life around the world, such as life in Nepalese schools. Particular favourite stories relate to wildlife and these form the basis for practical problem solving, such as pupils calculating how many cars would be needed to cover a whole whale. Staff go on educational visits to different countries and bring back a wealth of experiences for pupils to share and this is leading to strong global working partnerships. Pupils take huge pride in their school and relish running errands and taking on responsibility. They are currently focusing on how to mark out the newly surfaced playground. Attendance levels are consistently above average and pupils learn at an early age the importance of reliability and hard work as important attributes for their continuing education and the more distant world of work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

High-quality relationships provide pupils with daily opportunities for valuable collaboration. For instance, staff encourage pupils to enjoy every moment of their

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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'talking partner' work and to display consideration well beyond their years for their peers. The support that pupils learn to offer each other during physical education lessons to ensure safe work on the large climbing equipment is impressive. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and provide excellent role models to pupils, and parents and carers. Lessons are very orderly and most move along at a brisk pace. Detailed planning ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now spend much of their time in classrooms, with knowledgeable adults working alongside them. This system works well and ensures that they develop at the same pace as their classmates. Teachers, some of them relatively new to the school, are mindful of the continuing need to develop boys' writing skills when they plan lessons, although this is still a work in progress.

'Cutting-edge creativity' is at the heart of the school and much appreciated by pupils and parents and carers alike. Parents say, 'The creativity of the school is superb.' Arts partnerships are a strength of the school with regular visitors adding to pupils' knowledge of art, culture and music. Philosophy lessons provide an excellent platform for pupils to demonstrate their well-developed listening and reasoning skills as, for instance, when pupils in Year 2 discussed whether it is possible to dream while awake during the day. The consensus was 'yes' as pupils concluded, 'Sometimes you day dream when your brain needs a rest.' An impressive programme of school clubs and activities extends pupils' learning through music, languages and physical activities.

Highly effective arrangements to meet the pastoral needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable, ensure that they settle extremely well into school life. Pupils write their own induction booklets to help young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as those who join at different times of the school year. They highlight routines and expectations and these are printed by the school and illustrated with colourful photographs of the unfolding school day. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that parents and carers understand the value of regular attendance. Parents and carers confirm that the school keeps their children safe and they praise the caring ethos with comments such as: 'The dedication and enthusiasm of the teachers never ceases to amaze me. It's a joy to leave my child in their care'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspirational leadership embeds ambition and imbues Stannington with its central drive

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to improve. There is no complacency here as the headteacher steers pupils and staff to become ever-more effective learners and teachers. As a result, the whole school community is keen to develop new skills in order to keep the school at the forefront of educational innovation and investigation. Senior leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, originating in searching analysis of what works well or requires further development. The governing body comprises a good mix of experience with governors offering unstinting support and ever-increasing challenge to the school. As yet, governors do not fully analyse the impact of the work they do.

First-class partnership with parents and carers ensures that they feel welcome, well supported and very well informed about the work their children do and the progress they make. A multitude of links and working relationships with other organisations, schools and colleges enable skilful staff to bring huge benefits to pupils in school in terms of their learning. At the same time, the school is outward looking and generous with its time as it provides support and mentoring for colleagues across the authority. The school gives equality of opportunity the highest priority and tackles discrimination very effectively. For instance, staff keen to ensure that all pupils could communicate effectively in school, whatever their individual need, introduced rebus symbols into the Foundation classes. Their popularity grew swiftly and now pupils of all ages can be seen around school with their packs of laminated or hand-drawn symbols. Safeguarding procedures meet current legislative guidelines and the school pays the highest attention to everyday practice with regard to pupils' protection and well-being.

The school shows a comprehensive understanding of the makeup and needs of the school and neighbouring communities. Aware of the school's mono-ethnic constituency, staff are highly proactive in taking pupils on visits to a variety of religious buildings, for example. When some parents and carers expressed concerns about these visits, the school arranged for them to meet with other parents and carers who had already experienced some of these in order to discuss the benefits. As a result, every pupil participated in the visits, along with many parents and carers, who all agreed that they were extremely worthwhile. The leadership team also ensures that pupils continue to enjoy weekly opportunities to learn modern foreign languages, such as German.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to the best possible start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Key strengths include:

- excellent leadership of the setting
- vibrant learning environments, both indoors and outside
- a keen desire by adults to build on children's innate curiosity and to develop their problem-solving skills
- individual and highly creative learning experiences
- first-class nurture and pastoral care.

Highly skilled early years practitioners engage children's curiosity from the time they rush through the doors at the start of the day. Innovative programmes such as improving children's initial handwriting skills on large pieces of paper in the hall to mirror the beat of stirring music ensure that children see all the activities as great fun. They are quickly absorbed in purposeful tasks that provide the building blocks for their future learning, development and success. For instance, they make up silly rhymes, laughing aloud as they cheerfully chant their way through daily phonics sessions about 'ten dirty dogs' and 'nine naughty newts'. They also concoct 'silly soup' in a witch's cauldron to help memorise initial letter sounds. Key workers ensure that children feel totally at ease in the setting, and that they can follow their own interests throughout the day. Adults monitor children's development meticulously and make regular assessments of their progress. Comprehensive, individual 'journals' for each area of learning provide a clear picture of the outstanding progress children make during their year in the Foundation classes and parents and carers enjoy sharing these. With skills on entry are below the level of those expected, particularly children's communication, language and literacy skills, there is a key focus by all adults to improve these. Oral story telling begins in this class and its success permeates the whole school. Children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals for their age with all working within these in terms of their personal, social and emotional development by the time they move into Year 1. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the very effective induction arrangements and confirm that their children settle very quickly in this engaging environment. They typically comment, 'My children have had the best start I could possibly wish for!'

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Approximately half of all parents and carers returned questionnaires to the inspection team. Almost all parents and carers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. A typical comment from them is, 'Great school, excellent leadership; a super place to come each day.' They report that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school hugely. They are very appreciative of the pastoral care and induction programmes. Parents and carers feel very well informed about the progress their children make. They feel closely involved in the life and work of the school. A very small number of questionnaires contained criticisms but these were individual concerns and revealed no specific trends.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stannington Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 155 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	106	80	23	17	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	95	72	36	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	78	60	41	32	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	57	40	31	8	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	96	75	28	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	68	36	28	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	100	77	26	20	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	88	71	28	23	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	68	33	25	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	77	60	43	33	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	74	58	39	31	10	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	101	78	24	18	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	75	27	20	6	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to your school recently with two other inspectors. We saw how well you do, how hard you work and just how much you all enjoy school. Your parents and carers also told us that they think your school is 'brilliant' and we agree. We have to use a longer word in our report. That word is 'outstanding'. See if you can break it down into syllables like you do in lessons!

We saw many outstanding things in your school. Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make school fun for you. There are many exciting activities for you to enjoy, including all those school clubs. We had great fun too as we listened to all your fantastic ideas in philosophy. You go on lots of exciting trips and learn a great deal about people who live in different parts of the world and how their lives are very different from your own. You are lucky to learn some German too – das ist gut!

Part of our job is to see what your school could do even better.

We have asked your headteacher and all the adults to continue to help boys to do as well as girls in writing. You can help by trying as hard as you can to write with care and to listen carefully to your teachers when you practise your handwriting to the music in the hall.

Carry on enjoying school, having fun and growing your delicious vegetables!

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