

Littlemoor Children's Centre and School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106724
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309212
Inspection dates	23–24 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Hogg
Headteacher	Mr P Hamlyn
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Alfred Road Askern Doncaster South Yorkshire DN6 0PZ
Telephone number	01302 701353
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school, with two classes in each year group. It is located in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage, within an ex-mining village. Around two fifths of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is over twice the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. There are a number of children from Traveller families, some of whom remain throughout the year while others return each year to attend typically from autumn until Easter. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing but still below average; the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

The school's day care provision was inspected in October 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Littlemoor is an outstanding school. The pupils thrive in an atmosphere where every child is made to feel special and where no ceiling is placed on their achievement. The school has a high reputation locally. Parents are in no doubt that this is a 'Spot on' school. They find adults are highly approachable in a school where their children are treated as individuals and enjoy their learning. The exceptionally good leadership, high quality care and guidance, and the good quality teaching all combine to produce exceptional pupil achievement – both academically and in terms of the personal qualities that pupils develop.

Pupils feel safe and secure and are very well looked after. Care for pupils starts early in the day and finishes late, thanks to the children's centre that the headteacher fought so hard to establish. Its activities integrate very effectively into the life of the school and benefit pupils and their families. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary and they respond very positively to the high expectations placed on them. As a result, even in Nursery, children are beginning to master the key early steps of working calmly, sensibly and safely. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, with most pupils making remarkable gains in their personal development between joining and leaving the school.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Nursery with standards that are well below expectations and leave Year 2 with standards that are above average. Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception and make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2. The main reasons for pupils' outstanding achievement is a combination of consistently good teaching across the school and the excellent care, guidance and support given to pupils. Pupils are given outstanding academic guidance based firmly on rigorous assessment and very regular, detailed tracking of their progress. Those pupils who need extra help are given very focused support. No pupil is allowed to 'slip through the net' if their performance shows any sign of dipping. The sharing of regular targets with pupils and their parents ensures that everyone knows what each pupil needs to do to make their work better. This approach has a profound impact on the progress that pupils make.

Teachers plan lessons that are firmly based on what pupils need to learn and they make purposeful links between subjects, which helps to make learning relevant and more interesting. While strong teaching is found across the school, there are some inconsistencies, related to the teachers' use of questions and the match of work set to pupils' needs, which prevent it from being outstanding. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and fine-tuned to meet pupils' learning needs more effectively. For example, the links made with other parts of the curriculum contribute to pupils' success in writing.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, through his clear vision, high expectations and determination to do the best for every child, provides exceptionally strong leadership. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher whose contribution, especially in tracking pupils' progress and mentoring other staff, is greatly valued by all. Managers and subject leaders are reflective and analytical in

their approach to raising standards and achievement. Governance is good. Performance management is used very well to bring about improvement. Progress since the last inspection has been impressive. The school provides outstanding value for money and based on a proven track record, has an excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the foundation stage

Grade: 2

Good management ensures that the adults, across the care and education teams, work effectively in partnership. They maintain good links with parents through daily face to face contact and regular written updates in the children's reading records. Parents are very pleased that their children are taught in a secure environment and are making good progress. Children are very well cared for. Assessment is thorough and extensively recorded. The internal learning environment is stimulating and well managed. The outside provision is good and well used to enhance learning. Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff work particularly well together to provide effective small group learning activities. The way lessons are organised provides a good mix of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. These give children a good chance to start to develop independence. The curriculum is good, with strong support for children's personal, social and emotional development. A newly assembled teaching team is quickly implementing plans to improve this provision further. Support for language development is good, but remains a priority for further work. Provision for mathematical development is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in the way teachers use questions to extend learning and match work to pupils' needs, so that it becomes excellent overall.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When children start in the Nursery their standards are well below what is normally expected of three year olds. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Reception, standards are closer to national expectations than on entry but remain below the expected level in most areas of learning. This is especially the case in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development. In the Foundation Stage, staff recognise the importance of embedding personal and social skills as the forerunner to accelerating their academic progress in later years.

Pupils make exceptional progress in Key Stage 1. Very challenging targets are set, and usually met. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and areas for improvement are systematically identified and addressed. As a result, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Unusually, standards are higher in writing than in reading. There are clear plans to close this gap, aided by the recent introduction of an initiative to develop early reading skills across the school.

There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The gap in performance between boys and girls, identified in the previous inspection, has been effectively addressed. The performance of Traveller pupils that attend regularly is similar to their peers but the performance of those with significant absence levels is adversely affected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour is excellent because expectations are exceptionally clear and adults build extremely positive relationships with children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunities to hear other people's points of view because it helps them to work out what they think. Pupils make rapid progress in their social and moral development because adults give clear and consistent guidance which is pitched at exactly the right level. From their earliest days in school pupils benefit from outstanding opportunities to take responsibility and to understand how they can make a contribution to the community. This, alongside their excellent progress in developing basic skills, and their confident use of computer technology provide superb preparation for success as they get older. Pupils begin to develop a good understanding of what a healthy lifestyle entails. They have good opportunities to practise what they have learned in a variety of play activities as well as in their physical education lessons. The excellent school environment creates a secure experience where pupils greatly enjoy learning and relish the challenges they are given. They participate wholeheartedly in first-hand experiences such as the recreation of a Victorian classroom. Attendance has improved and is now close to average for an infants' school; most pupils' attendance is good but there is a small number of pupils, including some Travellers, that have extended periods of absence, despite the best efforts of the school and outside agencies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The headteacher maintains a range of experience and new approaches in the teaching team. The very good use of the extensive common learning spaces enables the team to learn from each other. Well-established classroom expectations and excellent relationships mean that behaviour is generally superb. Pupils spend a very high proportion of their time working hard or absorbed in purposeful play activities. Particular strengths of teaching and aids to learning include the high quality resources, which include very good use of information and communication technology. Teachers and the many support staff work very well together so that pupils of all abilities have good opportunities to work in small, highly focused groups. In the very best lessons teachers use questioning particularly skilfully to tease out just how effectively pupils have learned. However, this practice is not yet a consistent feature. The way that teachers adapt the tasks to make sure that all pupils are fully challenged is also more effective in some lessons than in others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The superbly attractive internal environment of the school provides an excellent climate for learning. High quality displays of pupils' recent work include clear examples which help them to complete current tasks effectively. Some stunning artwork has a strongly motivational effect. This high quality is also seen in the quality and range of classroom resources. Learning experiences are carefully linked so that pupils' writing, for instance, benefits greatly because it is based on first-hand experiences. There is a good range of visits and visitors to bring experiences alive and enhance pupils' enjoyment. The school is looking to extend these because they are so effective in assisting learning across a range of subjects. There are further highly enjoyable enrichment activities such as an after-school 'Fit Club' and others which are offered in school time such as Tai Chi. Extensive outside play areas are very well managed to promote learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The integration of care and the Foundation Stage provision means that the ratio of adults to children is high. This means that each child is extremely well known, and carefully supervised. Both teaching and support can be matched very closely to pupils' needs and the school is outstandingly inclusive. Parents particularly appreciate the approachability of the staff and the respect that adults show to their children. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Very good measures to improve attendance have brought about significant improvement. The school has very good links with outside agencies, including the Traveller support unit in relation to improving and monitoring attendance. Systems for assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress are excellent. These are linked to a highly effective approach to setting targets which means that both children and parents are very clear about the next priorities in each area of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership is clearly focused on raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. This is reflected in rising standards, which are now above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils' outstanding personal development. The very experienced headteacher has high expectations for himself, staff and all pupils. He has been particularly effective at accessing additional funding to improve the school environment and learning resources. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and has successfully established a shared vision among staff. The needs of the pupils are central to the work of the school and everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The school's excellent care for pupils is rooted in the emphasis that all adults have on promoting pupils' emotional development and positive behaviour. The school runs smoothly; financial management is rigorous and effectively supports the school's priorities for raising standards. Governors provide the right combination of support and challenge for the leadership team. They recognise that further work is needed to refresh the pool of governors, as part of ensuring the body's longer term viability.

Leaders set ambitious targets and are very effective in achieving them. The school's self-evaluation is very effective. While somewhat modest about the contribution of leadership, self-evaluation is largely accurate and well used to identify and address the right improvement priorities.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	2
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

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	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



25 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Littlemoor Children's Centre and School, DN6 0PZ

I would like to thank you for making us welcome and for being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to find out that you like your school. We enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we found.

We found that your school is an excellent one, where you learn extremely well. Your behaviour is excellent and you really do know the difference between right and wrong. You all get on so well together and try to make sure that everyone is happy. Many of you said how much you enjoy coming to school because of the interesting things you do and the 'lots of new things that you learn'. You come to a school where all the grown-ups take excellent care of you and listen to what you have to say. We were pleased to hear about the work of the school council and the playground friends; this work really helps to make the school a better place for everybody.

Your headteacher, all the other grown-ups and the governors want you to have the best school possible; they work very well together and have been very good at making improvements happen. We think your teachers are doing a good job. They make your lessons interesting; the many assistants also help your learning in lessons and outside. There are two things that we have asked them to do to make your lessons even better. In the closing part of some lessons, teachers could focus more on asking you questions to check carefully if you understand what you have learned or not. Also, sometimes the work set could be more closely matched to where you are up to in your learning.

Your parents think you come to an excellent school. We agree with them and we are sure you will continue to be very happy there.

Yours sincerely

Jim Griffin
Lead inspector