

Helme Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107746
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	377637
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Roberts
Headteacher	Julie Dempster
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in eight lessons, taught by five teachers. Meetings were held with some parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. The school's work was observed, and inspectors looked at a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, assessment and tracking data, school development planning and samples of pupils' work. The questionnaires returned by 34 parents and carers were evaluated together with those returned by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do pupils make sufficient progress in Key Stage 2?
- How effectively does the school monitor the attainment achieved by pupils in subjects other than literacy and numeracy?
- Is the school justified in its assertion that its quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding?
- What is the impact of new leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British ethnic heritage; few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but a much higher than average percentage has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school during Key Stage 1 and 2 is above average.

Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has changed with the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has gained the Sing Up Silver award, is accredited as a Healthy school and has gained the standards for financial management in schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features and is improving constantly in all areas. Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to benefit from the excellent promotion of equal opportunities. Ambitious and visionary leaders are driving the school forward, generating an exceptionally strong team spirit among all staff. The vast majority of parents and carers are proud of the school and all that it offers. The opinion of one, epitomises that of the vast majority: 'There is a strong family ethos and yet a strong focus on learning.'

This is a happy school where there is much smiling and pupils thrive on a wide range of experiences. Good teaching and an enriched curriculum make learning fun. As a result, pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with attainment that is typically above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from high-quality support which enables them to make excellent progress. Teachers know each pupil very well. They closely track progress in English and mathematics, but systems to evaluate learning and monitor provision in other subjects are less well developed. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils benefit from a good variety of experiences ranging from an array of sports, both competitive and individual, dance and drama, and French, while maintaining a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision is being upgraded but some aspects are not as strong as the good provision found elsewhere in the school.

Outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contribute to the pupils' exemplary behaviour and their excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils are proud of their excellent contributions to their school community and value the opportunities they have to voice their opinions and help others, for example, as playground helpers. The school vigorously promotes community cohesion. Excellent partnerships with other schools, wide-ranging international links and first-rate provision for French successfully deepen the pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultures. The school has had remarkable success in the Olympic programme, 'Get Set'. It has placed the school on the national map and enabled pupils to explore the Olympic philosophy.

The school has maintained the strengths noted in the previous inspection and used the outcomes from its accurate self-evaluation to improve and develop. Given these

strengths together with the determined and caring leadership of senior staff and the good governance, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to be consistently good in all subjects by:
 - refining the quality of curriculum planning and systems for monitoring the quality of learning in all subjects, not just literacy and numeracy
 - strengthening the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in terms of enabling continuous access to outdoor learning and by creating greater vibrancy and more opportunities for independence when learning indoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Excellent attitudes to learning, coupled with a natural curiosity, contribute to pupils' good rate of learning. Great pride in the school and a desire to do well is evident in all classes. Whether it is creating shadow puppets, learning the features of Indian dance associated with Diwali or solving geometric problems in mathematics, pupils respond well to practical activities.

Achievement and enjoyment are good. From starting points that are typical for their age when children start the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress occurs at a good rate as pupils move through the school. Any variations in the performance of boys and girls are minimised. Innovations to promote the boys' interest in reading and to increase their confidence in writing are successfully raising attainment. Initiatives to extend the skills of all pupils in solving mathematical problems are employed with good effect. Good opportunities for pupils to explore the performing arts result in many pupils singing well and confidently participating in drama productions, for example, in exploring features of the plays of Shakespeare. Excellent provision for teaching French results in pupils achieving advanced standards for their age. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils do not make the same good progress that they do in English and mathematics.

The pupils' above average academic skills, their good attendance and good levels of personal development help them to grow into mature young citizens. By the end of Year 6, they are well equipped to take advantage of their next stage of education. Many thrive on contributing to many aspects of community life by, for example, proudly singing or dancing in local music festivals. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the choices required to live safe and healthy lives. Many report that school provides them with many opportunities to make friends. Their knowledge of others different to themselves is advanced. The inclusion of pupils with complex levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities in school develops in all pupils a high level of understanding of, and sensitivity to, pupils with different needs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
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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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are planned using good assessment information to match work to the pupils' needs. The purpose of lessons is shared with pupils and good procedures are established to encourage them to evaluate their own progress and understand how they can improve. The very best features of teaching are the skilful use made of resources to bring learning alive and the excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Exciting scenarios are created to prompt learning. During an excellent lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils were engrossed in crawling into 'the dark place' created in the classroom. In so doing they explored whether or not reflective materials 'shine' in the dark. Across the school, information and communication technology is used effectively to inform and interest pupils.

Strengths exist in the provision for literacy and numeracy and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore many things beyond the standard curriculum. The extensive use of educational outings, visitors, such as poets and authors, and the provision of a good and increasing choice of extra-curricular activities enrich learning very well. The planning of some foundation subjects, for example history and geography, is not refined enough to enable the efficient monitoring of the quality of pupils' learning and their attainment. Consequently, it is more difficult to take steps to help pupils do as well as they can in all subjects.

Virtually everyone associated with the school speaks highly of the exceptional levels of care provided for all pupils but in particular those with a statement of special educational needs. A talented team of knowledgeable and dedicated teaching assistants help teachers by doing all it can to support and guide pupils, some of whom have very challenging needs. Both pupils and adults share in the care all pupils receive; everyone, for example, learns the basics of signing so that pupils with complex communication difficulties are always included in lessons and activities. Excellent support is given to the relatively high percentage of pupils joining school at various times throughout Key Stage 1 and 2. As a result, new arrivals settle in quickly and make the same progress as their classmates. Very productive links with outside agencies in education, health and welfare add to the expertise within the school.

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

Good guidance is provided for families when their children start school in Reception and effective procedures at Year 6 eases the pupils’ transition to secondary school.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

At the heart of the school is the skill and dedication of the headteacher and senior leaders. Everyone working in the school is valued and treated with respect and their skills are appreciated. Great value is placed upon setting individual targets for staff but within a supportive culture that promotes their professional development. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. Increasingly, staff are taking responsibility for aspects of management and all are involved in evaluating its effectiveness. As a result, for example, pupils’ progress in Key Stage 2 has accelerated since the previous inspection and is now good. Good governance ensures that staff feel supported while also challenging them to do their best. Effective procedures for safeguarding pupils are carefully monitored and updated as required. Child protection procedures are exemplary and protect individuals; great care is taken to minimise all reasonable risk in school and during educational visits. Equal opportunities are vigorously promoted by all in the school in terms of pupils’ access to both social and academic support. At no time is discrimination of any sort accepted and any incidents of this are exceptionally rare.

Excellent partnerships with others promote learning and well-being for pupils. The school sports coordinator programme adds enormously to pupils’ sporting experiences. Links to the local rugby league club, which involves star players giving ‘medals’ to pupils who have read a wide range of books inspires pupils to read more. Parents and carers are much valued partners with the school. They are kept well informed by systems such as homework diaries and regular meetings to guide them in how to support their children with homework. Finances are managed efficiently so that the best value is gained from the budget. Given the good outcomes of the school, it gives good value for money. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is exceptionally strong and there are excellent links with the local community and schools in France, Africa and India. Accordingly pupils have a highly developed understanding of the diversity of modern society.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children usually start school in the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. Their progress in recent times has been satisfactory but good leadership by the Early Year Foundations Stage leader is bringing about improvements and the rate of progress is accelerating. By the time children start Year 1, the proportion of children reaching the levels expected for their age is average. Good leadership and the commitment of staff have recently strengthened the quality of assessment. By liaising with other colleagues and working with a skilled Early Years Foundation Stage practitioner, the assessments of children’s individual attainments are increasingly accurate. Children do well in their personal and social development and are relatively advanced in their speaking and use of language. High-quality support from skilled teaching assistants benefits the learning of all children but in particular those with a statement of special educational needs. Some weaknesses in the accommodation restrict opportunities for children to learn outside and a lack of creativity in the learning environment indoors holds back opportunities for children to develop their independent learning skills. The children’s welfare and safeguarding are maintained at all times. Good partnerships with parents and carers add to the quality of education provided.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around a quarter of parents and carers returned their questionnaire which is just below the average response. The vast majority are very supportive of the school. Some made a point of stating how much they rated the high quality of care provided for their children and others expressed the view that the school is steadily improving. Some extended comments were written on questionnaires stating high levels of satisfaction with the way the school meets their children’s needs and others praised the dedication of staff and the headteacher and their approachability. The inspectors’ findings match the positive points reported by parents and carers. There were no significant negative comments reported and nothing to suggest a trend of concern or dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, all individual issues raised were investigated and the findings are in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Helme Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	53	15	44	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	35	22	65	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	44	18	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	59	11	32	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	50	16	47	0	0	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)	14	41	19	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	44	19	56	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	38	17	50	2	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	32	17	50	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	41	17	50	3	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	62	13	38	0	0	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Helme Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School, Holmfirth, HD9 5RW

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me to your school recently. You attend a good school which has many features that are outstanding. The levels of care and support for all of you are excellent and the level of your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is high for your age. These factors mean that all of you, regardless of your ability, have the chance to enjoy school and join in with all that it offers.

You told us that you feel safe and showed us that you understand how to stay safe and healthy. Your behaviour is excellent and you make an excellent contribution to helping others in school and people further away. The way you can learn about people in other cultures, for example in India, is excellently promoted by your school.

Good teaching and support from all staff enable all of you to make good progress, and for most of you to reach attainment that is above the expectations for your age by the end of Year 6. You benefit from a wide range of activities that make learning fun. We were impressed by your dancing, your drama and your knowledge of French.

Your headteacher is doing a good job. Together with others senior leaders and all staff, much is being done to seek ways of making the school even better. We have asked the school to consider ways of doing this by:

- establishing ways of checking on your learning in subjects other than English and mathematics so that you do as well in these subjects too
- improving the outdoor areas and the way children learn when they are indoors during the Early Year Foundation Stage.

I wish you all happiness and success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne
Lead inspector

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