

# Ackworth Howard CE Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130977
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	381284
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lynne Blakelock

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Wrightson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Low Ackworth Pontefract WF7 7HH
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock  
Sharona Semlali

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed seven teachers in 14 lessons over approximately eight hours. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, with members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its development planning, data about the achievement of all groups of pupils and a range of school policies. They analysed the 99 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. A below average proportion of pupils is disabled or has special educational needs, most of which are specific learning difficulties. This includes the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2010 and November 2011 respectively.

The school is part of the Pontefract Education Trust. Little Acorns Pre-school Playgroup and Ackworth Howard out-of-school club are located on the site. They are managed by an outside provider and are inspected separately.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well. Achievement throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory. The school is not yet good because there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress, and behaviour is not consistently well managed. Leaders' and managers' monitoring is not leading to roles and responsibilities that match most closely the school's needs. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in all aspects of learning and development. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This equates to satisfactory progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is good. Some good practices are evident elsewhere in the school, but assessment information is not used to set tasks that provide accurate challenge to pupils of all abilities. Questioning is not regularly considered carefully enough to extend pupils' learning. Lesson planning does not always build-in sufficient time for pupils to practise what they have learnt.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Many pupils always behave well, but in lessons where expectations of behaviour are not high enough and they are not engaged, some pupils go off-task and are slow to respond to instructions. Most pupils feel safe in school.
- The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There is a greater emphasis on pupils' progress but monitoring is not comprehensive or systematic enough to ensure evaluations are fully accurate, including those of teaching. School development planning links to staff's performance management goals but is not broken down to match the school's needs.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 by ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better through:
  - making sure that assessment information about the levels at which pupils work is used to set tasks that promote accurate challenge to pupils of all abilities
  - always giving pupils time to practise what they have learnt
  - ensuring that questioning promotes and extends pupils' learning.
- Ensure that behaviour is always good or better in lessons through:
  - consistently high expectations of pupils by all staff
  - good engagement of pupils in their learning.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management at all levels by making sure that:
  - the headteacher oversees comprehensive and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and acts promptly on its findings
  - middle leaders have specific roles and responsibilities that echo the school's priorities and for which they are accountable.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Of the high proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, a very large majority believe progress to be good. While it is good in Reception, the school's data and inspection evidence shows it is satisfactory through the rest of the school.

Many children start Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age, although they vary from year to year. Their skills tend to be weaker in writing and personal, emotional and social development. The children are delighted with the many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, both in and outdoors. They make quick progress, including in working independently and cooperatively. Many children observed formed letters accurately and wrote and read simple words. Most were able to identify and add single and double-digit numbers. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, many exceed the levels expected, especially in their mathematics, reading and writing skills.

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, all groups of pupils make the progress expected of them. This results in average reading levels by the end of Key Stage 1. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, which reflects satisfactory progress from their starting points. Achievement in writing is less secure than in reading and mathematics because pupils, including those capable of reaching higher levels, do not have the range of skills in sentence structure, composition and spelling to move ahead more quickly. However, the focus on writing powerful words in Year 3 and 4 has resulted in pupils developing more effective vocabulary. A lower proportion of pupils reach higher levels by the end of Years 2 and 6 because of an inaccurate level of challenge.

There are no significant variations in progress between the groups of pupils represented in the school. Boys and girls achieve satisfactorily in reading, writing and mathematics, often facilitated by small group support and intervention sessions. Pupils who are disabled or have

special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. Where intervention is very specifically and accurately focused, individual pupils make accelerated progress in literacy and numeracy. An individual support session focused effectively on the skills a pupil would need to confidently start secondary school. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve satisfactorily.

## **Quality of teaching**

The large majority of parents and carers believe that teaching is good and that pupils' individual needs are met well. Their views are accurate in some cases but overall teaching is satisfactory and results in satisfactory progress over time.

Inconsistencies in practice, throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, restrict pupils' progress to satisfactory. There are common strategies and some good practices, such as pupils' good knowledge and understanding of their targets. However, variations in the quality of planning, in the quality of marking, and in the thought given to questioning prevent progress being good over time and in a lot of lessons. Examples of very effective marking were seen in literacy. It stated pupils' achievements and the next steps for improvement. In other subjects, marking often did not guide pupils forward. In the best lessons, pupils have plenty of time to practise what they have learnt. Reception children used the stimulus of dinosaurs to develop their understanding of bigger and smaller numbers and more and less. Pupils particularly enjoy applying their skills. In a mathematics lesson, effective modelling by the teacher, based on step-by-step learning, resulted in pupils successfully solving a range of problems related to working out dimensions of a 2D shape. Tasks varied according to pupils' ability and therefore accelerated their progress. In too many lessons, work was not accurately challenging because tasks had not been carefully enough matched to pupils' levels. Those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are supported at least appropriately, and sometimes more effectively, to learn as well as their peers.

The teaching of letters and sounds is systematic and results in pupils' satisfactory progress in reading. In Reception teaching is good. Children develop good strategies for decoding words, although planning does not regularly encourage pupils further up the school to transfer their skills to other learning.

Opportunities for pupils to broaden their learning, such as through their spiritual understanding are promoted well through teaching.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Although many pupils behave well in lessons, and behaviour around the school and at playtimes is good, it is satisfactory overall. Some pupils disengage from learning because work is not sustaining their interest or meeting their needs. They lose focus, distract others, or fail to respond promptly to teachers' instructions. When teachers' expectations are high and the behaviour code is implemented consistently, all pupils behave sensibly. Pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities with which they are entrusted and value participating in activities to improve the school, through the school council and peer mentoring. A very large majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour is good in lessons. Inspection evidence shows that in some, but not all, it is.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say that their children stay safe in school and a very large majority believe that bullying is dealt with effectively. Inspection findings

support this view. From Reception onwards, the children are very aware of the importance of behaving safely. Most adopt safe practices throughout the school. Pupils show a good knowledge of different types of bullying, appropriate to their ages. They say they feel safe and that the very few instances of bullying are dealt with well. Their understanding of safety deepens as they move through the school, from dealing with disagreements with other pupils, to their awareness of the importance of internet safety. Attendance continues to be above average.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are now basing school improvement planning far more on the pace of pupils' progress. Staff support their goals and vision and they work determinedly to move the school forward. The headteacher, and other leaders, monitor and evaluate the work of the school, but know that this is not sufficiently wide-ranging or organised to give a full picture of strengths and weaknesses across the school. Similarly, middle leaders' roles, responsibilities and accountability are not closely enough matched to the school's specific needs to move the school forward as quickly as possible. The school's judgements of teaching during the inspection matched those of the inspectors, although over time, evaluations have been overgenerous in some cases.

The school's actions are having a satisfactory impact on improvement, indicating a continued capacity for further improvement. For example, the deputy headteacher has strengthened leadership capacity and is introducing more consistent assessment practices to support pupils' learning. Data about the progress of different groups of pupils are improving in the range of information that they give. The school has an accurate understanding of those who have special educational needs and those who have fallen behind and their response is more prompt. The support provided is more closely focused in promoting pupils' progress towards individual goals. Pupils' satisfactory progress reflects the school's satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

The governing body is supportive of the school and its roles are broadening to develop its greater knowledge of pupils' achievement. Safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory regulations, with governor and staff training equipping them with the skills to ensure students' safety and good quality care on a daily basis. This includes the breakfast club which provides a secure and sociable start to the school day. Other staff training, including that as part of the Trust, is closely linked to staff's performance management goals. As a result, more consistency in teaching practices is developing.

The satisfactory curriculum focuses primarily on promoting pupils' communication and numeracy skills increasingly through themes. In the mixed-age classes, there is appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Visits and visitors are a stronger aspect of the curriculum, extending pupils' learning beyond the school. Pupils speak very positively of after-school clubs, although most of these relate to sport. Learning promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding satisfactorily, through assemblies and lessons.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and appreciate the regular communications and invitations to school events. Several parents and carers expressed their desire for more regular information about their children's progress and the levels at which they work.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



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## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ackworth Howard CE Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School, Pontefract, WF7 7HH**

We enjoyed our recent visit very much. In particular, we liked watching you learning. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your thoughts about your school with us. We are pleased that your attendance is above average. You feel safe in school and enjoy the range of opportunities you are given to learn and to develop your personal skills.

Your school is satisfactory. That means you make satisfactory progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. The attainment levels that you reach are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. Many of you behave well all of the time and are a credit to the school. While you all behave well at playtimes, behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. This is because some of you lose focus, waste time and do not follow the teachers' instructions when learning does not keep you interested.

The headteacher and staff want to improve the school. We have asked them to do the following things and hope that you will help them, by working and behaving well:

- make sure teaching is at least consistently good, by giving you work that is at just the right level to help you make quicker progress, time to practise what you have learnt and asking you questions that will encourage you to think more about what you are learning
- make sure that they always have high expectations of your behaviour in lessons and that you respond by always behaving well
- check your progress very regularly.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock  
Lead inspector

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