

Castleford Airedale Infant School

Poplar Avenue, Townville, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 3QJ

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from their low starting points.
- Teaching is typically good. Very positive relationships with pupils ensure that they want to please their teachers and they are keen to do well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress because they are effectively supported.
- Pupils are happy and proud of their school. They say they feel safe because 'the teachers are always watching over us'.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning and they get on very well together. They are able to show great sensitivity to the needs of their classmates and respond extremely well to the positive role models provided by all staff.
- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and want it to do well. Good teamwork is ensuring that improvements are driven through.
- Staff, including teaching assistants, work well as a team. They are enthusiastic and work hard to make their classrooms and lessons as interesting as possible.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, not enough is outstanding in order to increase attainment in all areas still further.
- Achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The most able learners are not always fully challenged in lessons.
- Pupils do not read to adults very often at home or read to adults at school enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. Every class was observed at least once and a number three times.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, several staff members, including senior leaders, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a range of documents, including the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, records relating to performance management of staff and documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Pupils were listened to reading and school reading diaries examined.
- Inspectors also took account of the 22 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parent views were sought through discussions at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Wintle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dina Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all pupils currently speak English as their main language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and those eligible for free school meals (the pupil premium) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There is a stable school population, with large numbers of children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage and staying right through until leaving in Year 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that a greater proportion becomes outstanding, and further raise attainment in writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils are quicker to start their main lesson activities
 - fostering pupils' independence and ensuring that they are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own thinking and learning
 - providing written comments in Key Stage 1 that precisely tell pupils what to do next to improve their work
 - ensuring that the most able learners are constantly challenged to achieve their very best through matching work exactly to their needs.
- Raise attainment in reading still further by:
 - ensuring pupils read more often to an adult at home and especially at school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school their skills are well below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and personal skills. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and care for their welfare. This makes them feel safe and secure and so they settle very quickly and progress well.
- Pupils enter Year 1 below national expectations but they make good progress in all subjects in Key Stage 1, and especially in Year 2. This is because good foundations for learning are being established lower down in the school and are built on well.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are good and show that in Key Stage 1 pupils are now making faster progress than in the past and more are reaching the higher levels in reading. Attainment is steadily rising so that it is now just below national levels. Standards are higher in reading and mathematics because pupils are challenged better with their thinking.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because teachers have good subject knowledge and good questioning skills, which pupils respond well to.
- In writing fewer pupils reach the higher levels. Sometimes more-able pupils do not achieve quite as well as they could because the teaching does not always challenge them enough. From time to time pupils are already able to understand the work they have been asked to do rather than concentrating on more challenging work.
- Reading is well taught so that pupils make good progress and acquire skills they need to support learning in all subjects. Letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) are taught very effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, ensuring that early reading skills are developed well. They are well prepared for their next steps in education. Pupils 'sound out' tricky words and many say that they enjoy reading.
- An examination of school reading diaries reveals that adults do not often listen to pupils reading in school or at home. A number of pupils also felt that they needed to read to an adult more often. This means opportunities to escalate progress in reading even further are being missed.
- The early identification of pupils' needs and the good provision made for them ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well against their starting points. The school has made strong efforts with these pupils and their hard work is paying off with good progress.
- The school uses pupil premium funding to fund smaller intervention groups and additional teaching assistant time to support pupils looked after by the local authority and pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals. Their progress is good and they achieve well for their age, with the gap between how well this group achieves and their classmates closing fast. As a result, a gap of only one average point overall in all subjects has been achieved, which is better than that seen nationally and an improvement on previous years.

The quality of teaching is good

- Close monitoring by the headteacher has resulted in high levels of teachers' confidence in their abilities, leading to good teaching.
- Teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. A notable feature is how well teachers and support staff enable children to access a range of captivating learning opportunities inside and out. An example is the investigating water and pipes apparatus that so captivates young minds. Here, children excitedly watched water gush through pipes and discovered how water was collected in containers. Another is the high-quality equipment that develops physical skills such as the wooden climbing bridge that all children loved to play and learn on.
- Teachers' questioning skills are good and they encourage good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen. For example, in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson pupils were very engaged with their

learning and used mature vocabulary to spark off debates about writing a descriptive setting. They were animated and thoroughly enjoying their learning and, as a result, progress for all groups was good.

- Motivating resources help enliven and extend pupils' learning. This was particularly true in a literacy lesson where pupils used real flowers and fruit to help them with their work on developing the senses. Pupils were confidently using the flowers and fruit to help them improve their subject vocabulary and make good progress.
- Occasionally, in a small number of writing lessons, the more-able pupils are not challenged enough and teachers' expectations of what they can do limit their progress. Important opportunities to extend thinking are sometimes limited by the teacher moving to the main activity too late and failing to give pupils important opportunities to take control of their own learning and move quickly on by themselves.
- Marking is usually successful at explaining to pupils why a piece of work is good, but often lacks clear guidance on how they might improve their work.
- Careful planning and knowledgeable teaching assistants support pupils well and promote good achievement. Disabled pupils and those with special needs, including those with an educational statement, benefit from the variety of approaches used to help them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because their attitudes to learning are very positive. In lessons and around school pupils behave very well.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous. Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, their attendance figures have been rising quickly over the last three years so that they are now just in line nationally.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. The school's systems for managing behaviour are very clear and applied consistently across the school. Pupils fully know and understand the rules and routines of the school very well and apply them at all times.
- Of particular note is the outstanding behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage where young children very quickly settle into nursery life and fully engage with all activities available. As a result, they are happy and play extremely well with each other.
- When asked if they feel safe, pupils were unanimous in saying that they do. They do not regard bullying as an issue and understand that it may take many forms. Year 2 pupils said that, on the rare occasions that bullying happened, adults always took this seriously and it was quickly 'sorted out'. Year 2 pupils could confidently say how they could keep themselves safe using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and effective teamwork is driving improvement strongly. Leaders and governors are committed to giving pupils the very best education. Because teaching is good the most recent information about pupils' progress shows an overall improvement in the school's effectiveness.
- Teaching is good because there are rigorous systems for checking the quality of teaching by the headteacher. As a result, the school has a clear and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses. She has taken decisive action in the past to strengthen the quality of teaching and decisions about pay are firmly based on an evaluation of the quality.
- Pupils are hugely enthusiastic about their learning because subjects and topics interest and engage them well. Links with the local community help to strengthen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was seen in the visits to Cannon Farm, which pupils spoke about fondly, telling inspectors what they enjoyed and learned about. The school's work around

Open Futures (an initiative to support the curriculum, enabling pupils to undertake exciting activities such as cooking and filming), inspires them to talk excitedly about their work. One pupil in Year 2 said, 'I love doing this because there is no right or wrong answer and it causes us to agree or not agree and to think!'

- The school is highly effective at promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and ensures that all groups achieve well. Parents appreciate the work of the staff and speak openly about how well their children are being supported.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides light-touch support and has an accurate view of how good the school is.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors keep a close eye on finance. The governing body is ably led by a committed Chair and they are well informed about all aspects of school performance, including attainment, pupils' progress and the way that the pupil premium is used. This is because governors are regular visitors to the school. Governors are not afraid to ask challenging questions and to take difficult decisions or to hold the school to account for achievement and the quality of teaching. They have a good grasp of the strengths of the school and what is needed to ensure further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108228
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	412638

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Sutton
Headteacher	Julie Winterbottom
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
Telephone number	01977 722980
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Email address	headteacher@airedale-inf.wakefield.sch.uk

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