



Kirkburton Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107745
LEA Kirklees
Inspection number 277831
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Joe Peacock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Kirkburton
Age range of pupils	5 to 10		Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 0SG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 222734
Number on roll	121	Fax number	01484 222734
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Gledhill
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr Jeff Rigg

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This First school, pleasantly situated on top of a hill with panoramic views over rural West Yorkshire, is smaller than most schools nationally. Almost all pupils are from a white British background and the very small number from a minority ethnic background all speak and understand English as well as other pupils. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs are both well below average. The attainment of most children when they enter the reception class after their fourth birthday varies considerably, but overall it is in line with that expected for children of this age. The headteacher has been in post for two years and has introduced several initiatives to raise standards even further. The school has gained an Investors in People award and an Activemark Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with ambitions to improve continuously and become outstanding in all that it does. It provides good value for money. Staff and governors are proud of their school and this is reflected in the high self-evaluation in some areas. Inspection judgements mostly agree. However, the quality of care, guidance and support is good rather than outstanding as new strategies and initiatives have not had time to fully impact on provision.

The achievement of most pupils is generally above average with none significantly below average by the end of Year 5. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils of all ages really enjoy their lessons, behave exceptionally well and willingly accept responsibility. The vast majority of parents are very supportive. They appreciate the good quality of care, guidance, and support. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are fully included and take part in all that is offered.

The capacity for improvement is good. All issues from the previous inspection have been addressed thoroughly. In the present climate for learning, it is difficult to believe that the school had some serious weaknesses to address two inspections ago and problems with some pupils' behaviour more recently. Resources for information and communications technology (ICT) have been significantly improved and the latest technology is being used well to support learning by all teachers. Improving standards in reading has been a school priority and they have improved significantly as a direct result of management initiatives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards further in writing and in mathematics by the end of Year 2 by adopting the same successful strategies employed to improve reading for boys and concentrating on improving all pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Involve governors more in evaluating the effectiveness of all aspects of school life.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Early school assessments show that most children entered the reception class this year with skills that were in line with those expected for their age, but that there was a wide range of abilities. Children generally achieve well because of the very favourable adult to child ratio in reception and the good quality of the provision for them. Provision for their personal, social and emotional development is a strength and all children make very good progress in this area of learning. However, a few each year do not achieve all their targets in all six areas of learning.

Careful tracking of individual pupils clearly shows that all achieve well as they move through the school. By Year 5, detailed assessments clearly show that all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment despite being in quite large mixed age classes

in the junior section of the school. This is due to the quality of teaching and pupils' excellent attitude to learning. Although there was very little improvement from 2003 to 2004 in the national tests for seven year olds, school initiatives introduced by the new headteacher and School Leadership Team have resulted in a significant improvement in performance in 2005 with boys in particular performing much better. Reading was a priority for improvement and this area saw the biggest improvement with all pupils achieving the expected level and a third the higher Level 3. Compared to reading, many fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics. An analysis of results by the school has shown that in mathematics, problem solving was a weakness for all pupils, not just boys. The few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in school achieve well against the targets set for them because they are very well supported in lessons by the highly skilled and caring teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This area has been most effectively developed by staff and is an undoubted strength of the school. As a result, there is a calm, caring, warm and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils can thrive. One parent wrote, 'the change in my daughter is something to see: reading, writing, spelling and confidence have improved 110 per cent!' Pupils enjoy coming to school and all work hard and try their best in lessons. Attendance was much better than average but there has been a significant decline and, in the figures for the last complete year, absence is above the national average. This is wholly due to the relatively small number on roll and the effect of some parents taking their children on holiday in term time. Behaviour is exemplary. All pupils fully understand the school rules, and show respect for others. They work together very well and are keen to accept responsibility.

The school council gives its members an understanding of working together in a team. Elections for a new council are to be held shortly and candidates are expected to be confident, clever, smart and friendly according to the outgoing council. Its members talked proudly of their achievements, designing markings for the playground and posters for the healthy schools award bid. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the world of work and thoroughly enjoy using modern technology and learning to speak French.

Interesting assemblies help effectively to promote pupils' spiritual development in this Church of England school. The local vicar is a regular and popular visitor. His story about the lost coin in a school assembly, told with a shawl over his head and using the voice of a pantomime dame had everyone spellbound. Pupils' moral and social development is also very good. Gold and silver award assemblies help to reinforce teachers' high expectations of behaviour and standards of work. Through visitors, residential experiences, theme weeks like the one on Africa and visits to places of interest, pupils gain respect for others and a good understanding of world and local cultures.

Pupils are actively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep themselves safe. Both boys and girls have very good opportunities for exercise and

sport with a wide range of after school sporting opportunities such as gymnastics, cross country, football and netball.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges teaching and learning to be good and the inspection judgement confirms this. The quality of teaching is successfully engaging and motivating most pupils throughout the school, and is instrumental in helping to raise standards. All adults manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and this leads to a calm learning environment in each class. The very favourable child to adult ratio in the reception class and exciting learning opportunities provided ensure that children settle quickly into school, enjoy what they are doing and make good progress.

Teaching styles have been modified to ensure that boys are better motivated and that their learning needs are well catered for by staff. Learning is broken down into small sections and an emphasis on group or paired tasks gives lower attaining pupils and boys the chance to interact and learn from other pupils. The careful use of praise to raise self-esteem and a recap on learning at the end of each lesson are other successful methods which are being employed by teachers and support staff to help raise pupils' achievement. The much better performance in the 2005 national tests is evidence that the above strategies are beginning to have an impact. However, the process of improvement is ongoing. The school is aiming to get more pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics to match the improvement in reading.

Overall, the high expectations of teachers and the learning links made between subjects ensure that all pupils achieve well. Teachers use assessment information well and their planning details clearly what each group of pupils needs to learn in each lesson. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory, not all teachers adopt the same consistent approach when assessing pupils' progress in subjects such as history, physical education or art and design. Resources for ICT have been much improved. Teachers make good use of the computer suite and all confidently use the new interactive whiteboards in each classroom. Computers are used well by all staff to support pupils' learning in all subjects.

There is very good use of day-to-day assessment, and all teachers carefully mark pupils work, including their homework. Pupils are often asked by teachers to write a short evaluation of their learning in particular lessons at the end of their written work. This gives valuable feedback to staff and gives added responsibility to pupils to assess their own learning. All pupils are aware of their challenging individual targets, which are clearly displayed in their exercise books.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In addition to all the subjects of the national curriculum and religious education, French is taught to all year groups and personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is included as a separate subject on the junior classes' timetable. In an outstanding French lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm and determination to speak as little English as possible ensured that all pupils achieved very well. Pupils particularly enjoyed singing in French. Infant classes do not include PSHCE on their normal timetable or plan for it in the same detail as junior classes. Junior pupils are encouraged to discuss sensibly a wide range of moral and social issues, raising their knowledge and understanding of relationships and responsibility. This helps them to make a positive contribution to the school community and develop respect for others. As this is a church school, the quality of provision in religious education will be inspected separately in a Section 48 inspection.

The school year is planned to allow time for special topics to take place. These provide exciting learning opportunities across many subject areas. The Africa week, for example, had pupils in class 5 making masks, class 3 producing Kenteh cloth patterns and weaving and all pupils using computers to produce related topic work in English, geography and design and technology. The topic not only gave pupils valuable additional learning experiences in the arts, but also improved their spiritual and cultural understanding very well.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' ability to stay safe and healthy. This year, for example, pupils are working towards achieving a Healthy School Award. A good range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Specialist teachers from other organisations contribute to additional music and sports activities, and most pupils take part in these activities. Well-trained and knowledgeable support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures these pupils' needs are met very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care for pupils contributes effectively to their good progress and their enjoyment of school. The school is well resourced to accommodate pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils are fully included in all the school has to offer.

The very good relationships between adults and pupils help them to feel secure in expressing their personal thoughts and feelings. The school's assessment and target-setting procedures provide pupils with good guidance on how to make further progress. However, the quality of assessment information varies in some subjects as not all teachers use a consistent assessment procedure. Reviewing procedures, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is a school priority. Using assessment information, targets are set for individuals, groups and the whole class. Many of these are specifically aimed at improving the level of achievement of boys and these are beginning to have an impact.

Pupils work in a safe environment and playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised and free from aggression or bullying. Pupil play leaders, who wear baseball caps to identify them, are responsible for setting out an impressive range of trikes, scooters, balls, ropes and games such as a giant 'connect four' and supervising pupils at playtimes. This ensures that pupils have plenty to do and learn to share and play together without conflict. Parents are very positive that the school takes good care of their children. One of the few concerns in the questionnaires was the above average size of the junior classes. They report that some pupils find it hard to adjust from the attention they receive in the very small infant classes when they move into the junior section. The school site is impressively well maintained.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The highly motivated headteacher has a clear vision and has achieved much since his appointment. He is ably supported by the assistant headteacher and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator and, together, they are providing an outstanding quality of leadership. This has brought about significant improvements in all aspects of the school's provision and a big improvement in the standards being achieved by all pupils as their strategies take effect. Introducing measures to modify teaching styles so that boys learning could be more effective, for example, has resulted in a significant improvement in their achievement.

The strong and consistent leadership and stability of staffing ensures that the school has a good capacity to improve. The role of subject leaders is well developed with good systems in place for evaluating standards and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. A sharper focus on weaknesses and areas for development in some subjects is needed so that relevant action plans can be drawn up; this will help speed up the pace of improvement. Parents' and pupils' views are regularly sought and taken into account. The management of provision for the very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. In this relatively small school, staff know pupils well and pupils are only added to the register for those with learning difficulties if they fail to respond to normal teaching and additional help or resources are required. This policy means that very few are actually on the register.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Many governors visit regularly and are deeply committed to the school. They are knowledgeable and keen to oversee all aspects of the school's provision. The headteacher appreciates their support. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in deciding the school's priorities for development or evaluating the priorities in the school improvement plan. Although their reports following visits to the school provide a good record, the purpose of the visit is not always linked to monitoring priorities for improvement and their reports are not sufficiently focused on clearly identifying strengths and areas for further improvement.

Resources at the school are good. The extensive grounds with a large woodland area are used effectively as a valuable learning resource. The school has good relationships

with the local community, with the middle school and nearby special school. Pupils are prepared very well for the next stage of their education.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I am pleased that you enjoy school and think that you are all working hard in your lessons. I agree with you that it is a good school.

The things that I particularly liked were:

- your headteacher does a fantastic job and has made a tremendous difference since he came;
- your teachers are good. They work hard and you are learning lots of new things;
- the big improvement in how well you all read;
- the number and range of after school clubs provided for you to enjoy;
- the way the school gives you responsibilities, looks after you and cares for you all equally well;
- the strong links that you have with the church and lively and interesting assemblies provided by Gary, your vicar;
- the really nice way you all behave towards each other and your teachers.

I have only asked your teachers and the governors to improve two things to make your school even better.

- I would like to see you continuing to work hard in lessons to improve standards even further, particularly in writing and problem solving in mathematics.
- I think the governors could help the school to be even better by trying to spot things that could be improved when they visit.

Thank you again for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will carry on enjoying your lessons and helping your teachers to make Kirkburton First School even better.