



Helme Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107746
LEA Kirklees
Inspection number 277832
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Roger Gill CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Helme
School category	Voluntary aided		Meltham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Holmfirth, West Yorkshire HD9 5RW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 222607
Number on roll	140	Fax number	01484 222618
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Chris Hirst
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Cardnell

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school situated in a relatively advantaged rural area near Huddersfield. Pockets of economic deprivation nearby produce an average social mix overall. The vast majority of children are from white British families; a very few are of mixed heritage. Children who find learning difficult are typical in number, but more than is usually found have a disability. The school population has grown considerably since it was last inspected.

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 outstanding features, which provides good value for money. The school judges itself accurately; inspection agrees with it in virtually every respect. Children progress well in the Foundation Stage owing to the good provision. Most children reach the nationally expected levels by the end of the Reception class. Achievement elsewhere is equally good because the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, children are not always clear enough about what they need to do to improve their work. The school's strong Christian ethos produces outstanding personal development. Children brim with pride for a school in which they are treated as valued partners.

This is a well led and managed school where the hallmark is one of including all children in a lively and well thought out curriculum. It lives up to its mission: children feel happy, safe and wanted. Improvements have been good in recent years; the school is well placed to improve even further. Sensitive methods of care and support produce confident children who enjoy learning immensely. The headteacher gives a dynamic lead in academic progress and personal well-being. Partnership with governors, staff and parents, in pursuit of these aims, has been forged extremely well. Parents appreciate the school's continual striving: one parent rightly comments that, 'Children are always encouraged to exceed their own comfort zones'. The way that the children's progress is analysed and the quality of teaching is evaluated in English, mathematics and science is good. Leadership in other subjects is under developed in these respects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve children more in the evaluation of their own progress: what is successful and what could be improved.
- Improve subject leadership to ensure that the school knows which standards are reached and how well children are achieving across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children begin with skills and knowledge typical for their age but this varies greatly from one year to the next. They achieve, and sometimes exceed, challenging targets by the end of Year 6. Test results in Year 2 and Year 6 do not always show this progress because small groups of pupils who find learning difficult affect scores disproportionately. Those that find learning difficult or who have a disability progress as well as other children.

The good progress made by children in Reception is typified by their progress in speaking clearly about their learning through play. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Standards are around average at the end of Year 2; most children have achieved well.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average; children achieve well in English, mathematics and science. They make good progress in information and communication technology, particularly since every class has use of an electronic white board. Above average standards in art and design are demonstrated by the stunning work on display. Achievement and standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not evaluated by the school. There are obvious differences between subjects and the school possesses some evidence of progress, but it has not been analysed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's outstanding personal development is encapsulated by the title of a school's project: 'It's good to be me'. The feeling of self-worth and pride that all children feel, even the most vulnerable, is exemplary. The vast majority of children make healthy choices and behave safely as a matter of course. They enjoy school greatly, which is reflected in their good attendance. Excellent behaviour and attitudes exist in lessons and around the school. Pupils' contribution to the community is first-rate. For example, the school council works very hard in helping to improve the school. Children's feelings and ideas are listened to and acted upon. Bullying is uncommon because adults respond promptly and older children are trained to befriend those in difficulty. Children exercise this responsibility wisely and those being cared for feel included and safe. Children grow in stature owing to the top quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Social and spiritual aspects are enhanced very well through the extensive cultural and multi-cultural activities. A project to improve the school's grounds involves children in bidding for a large sum of money and collaborating in caring for the environment. Enterprises like this equip the children superbly with skills needed in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children learn well as a result of good teaching, which is peppered with outstanding elements. Parents are rightly pleased with this provision and the way in which they are involved in their children's progress. Children who find learning difficult and/or have a disability are taught with insight, commitment and understanding; they learn well as a result. Sometimes the progress for children with specific difficulties, such as autism or cerebral palsy, is profound, which justifies the glowing opinion of the school held by many parents. Relationships are excellent and children's interests are nurtured very well. Learning is particularly effective when lessons blur subject boundaries. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 1 and Year 2, children's learning slid easily between science, art and design, English and geography. Elsewhere in the school, strong elements in teaching provide a blend of well-pitched activities to suit different groups of children and a real buzz of conversation about learning. Teaching is good at assessing which level children have attained in their work and the degree of progress

being made. However, children are not involved well enough in talking about their learning and progress. On occasions, teachers talk too much to allow this to happen.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum helps children develop basic skills, enjoy the many extra-curricular activities and know how to keep healthy and safe. Celebrations for Chinese New Year and links to a school with a different cultural makeup, for example, create fun and diversity in learning. Outstanding features deepen children's understanding in some subjects but not all. For example, art and design has been overhauled to allow all children to explore, using mixed media, the work of an artist like Henri Rousseau. There are parallels in history. Children in Years 4 and 5 produced work of high quality on the Victorians because they studied aspects in detail rather than skimming the period superficially. Some subjects such as design and technology have not yet been revitalised in this fashion. The school's saving scheme, its links with a local book shop and debates conducted in the Town Hall give children a valuable insight into adult life and the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are outstanding aspects which matches the school's view exactly.

However, the school slightly overestimates the quality of its academic guidance.

Parents are consulted very well and this enhances their children's progress. Equal opportunities are promoted so well that all children work and socialise successfully.

Those who find learning difficult progress well, partly due to the help received from the

capable teaching assistants. Children with disabilities blossom in a culture of acceptance and support. The school provides very well for health and safety; thorough risk assessments are conducted regularly. Child protection procedures are in place and working; all staff are trained to use them. Pupils know who to turn to for a listening ear;

they feel safe and able to cope with emotional stress. Teachers recognise where children are up to in their learning but the guidance about what to do next lacks consistency. Some good ideas are used to prompt children's progress but these have not yet been moulded into a comprehensive system of guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that children make good progress academically. Moreover, the headteacher's drive and an outstanding ethos help to produce the children's outstanding personal development. Year 6 pupils wrote in the prospectus that this is a small school 'but it makes us feel big': which is exactly what happens. Parents and children are consulted frequently and rightly respect what the school has to offer. The school understands its own strengths and weaknesses well. In personal development and well-being, its own evaluation is slightly too modest and in academic guidance it is a little optimistic. Nevertheless, its plans for development pinpoint, correctly, the ways in which the school could be even better.

The school operates very smoothly; the headteacher, staff and governors work in close harmony. A well implemented programme exists to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science and children's attainment and progress is recorded in detail. There are relatively few staff to undertake the formal aspects of leadership in other subjects. The school has devised a method of working in teams and prioritised the jobs to be done. In this way the curriculum can be modelled on the very promising start made in art and design. Moreover, the school recognises correctly the need to evaluate the children's standards and progress in all subjects. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and know the school very well. They are informed well by their regular visits and rightly understand the need to be even better informed about the children's progress across the curriculum.

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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?	1	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	2	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	1	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	2	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	1	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	2	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 your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. I would like to share with you what I thought.

These are some of the things that I enjoyed:

- the family feeling that exists
- the way that you are all so involved in helping to run the school
- the good teaching and how well you learn in lessons
- the kindness that older children show by being Befrienders and Buddies
- the quality work on display which shows just how brilliant you all are.

I know everyone wants to do even better and I have suggested a couple of things that I think will help:

- your teachers should involve you more in discussing how well you are doing and what still needs to be improved
- subjects other than English, mathematics and science should be organised in a way that gives your teachers a good idea of the progress you are making and the standards that you reach.

Best wishes to you all. I hope that the Environmental Committee gain the funding to create their pond and other exciting features in the school grounds.