

Luddenden Dene CofE (VC) Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107541
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	287847
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Howard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	224
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rodney Collinge
Headteacher	Mr Simon Day
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2003
School address	Dene View Luddendenfoot Halifax West Yorkshire HX2 6PB
Telephone number	01422 886353
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school opened in new premises in 1993 following the merger of three small schools. It is situated in a rural setting and serves a mixed community of local authority and private housing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is well below average and none are in the early stages of learning the English language. The school holds the Calderdale Healthy School Award, the ActiveMark Award, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and is recognised by Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school judges overall effectiveness to be good, inspectors find that this is a satisfactory school, with some good features. Where the school's judgements differ from inspectors, this occurs because the school's arrangements for checking on teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous. The school's clear commitment to ensuring pupils' all round education successfully contributes to their good personal development. The strong school ethos, based on Christian values, contributes well to pupils' maturing understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils get on well together, showing good levels of care for each other. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. They value the many opportunities to exercise responsibility provided through the school council and roles such as play leaders and befrienders. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) are given insufficient opportunities to develop as independent learners and this impacts adversely on the progress they make.

Children enter school in Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge that are in line with those expected nationally. At the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. While this represents satisfactory achievement, progress throughout school is inconsistent. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 to 2), due to good teaching, which provides a good balance of adult led and child initiated learning. Although there is some good teaching in Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in this key stage and as a result, pupils make satisfactory progress.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, it is characterised by a lively pace, work that actively involves learners and meets their different needs. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace slows and work is not sufficiently varied to meet the needs of all learners, particularly the more able. The impact of this is seen particularly in the standards attained in writing in Key Stage 2, where pupils could do better.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Good enrichment opportunities, including visits to places of interest, visitors to school and a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports and games, contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. This is a caring school, where arrangements to secure pupils' health, safety and welfare are effectively in place. Recently introduced strategies to make marking more helpful to pupils and to involve pupils more in assessing their own work are starting to have an impact on learning, but they are not yet consistently implemented.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. With support from the local authority, the school is developing a better understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. The senior leadership team, with good leadership from governors, have put in place constructive planning systems to bring about improvement. In this context, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school maintains good partnerships with other schools and agencies, which contribute well to its development. For example, its partnerships with a local school and one in Africa contribute well to pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions. The issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Improve the standards attained in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Improve the rigour of checks on teaching and learning to raise the standard of teaching so that all learners, and especially the more able, make good progress.
- Give pupils in Key Stage 2 the opportunities they need to develop independence and play a fuller part in shaping and assessing their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Nursery with the level of skills and knowledge that are expected of children of that age. Teaching in Foundation Stage meets their needs well and they make good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1, attaining standards that are above average in writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics. However, progress is not sustained at the same rate in Key Stage 2, where teaching does not consistently provide work that accurately matches the needs of all pupils, particularly those of higher ability, who do not always progress as well as they could. As a result, at the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. Given their starting points, pupils' overall achievement and progress is satisfactory. Although children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn satisfactorily overall, their individual education plans do not always give manageable and achievable objectives to guide their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges personal development and well-being to be outstanding, but inspectors judge it to be good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The atmosphere in school is calm and behaviour in school is good. Although there are small groups of pupils who sometimes cause disruption to others, their behaviour is generally well managed. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 are not given a sufficiently active role in their own learning. Over-direction of learning by teachers in Key Stage 2 limits pupils' personal development, giving them insufficient opportunities to develop independence and take responsibility for their own learning.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and older children, acting as 'befrienders', help younger children to develop their understanding of how to play safely. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy; they are learning to make healthy choices in their diet and a high proportion of pupils participate enthusiastically in the many sporting activities available during and after school. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in school; for example, acting as play leaders and undertaking many jobs around school. School councillors are proud of the role they have in decision making and the improvements they have made to the outside environment. Pupils gain a good understanding of the wider world through their links with the local church, local businesses and fundraising for charity. Pupils leave the school with academic and personal skills that prepare them satisfactorily for the next stages in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are reflected in different rates of progress made by pupils. Where teaching is good, pupils are set appropriately high levels of challenge and work is well planned to meet their needs. In those lessons where teaching is satisfactory, work is not always well matched to the needs of individuals. In particular, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils. In some lessons in Key Stage 2, teachers talk for too long and their teaching is too reliant on the use of worksheets. As a result, the level of challenge is lower than it could be and pupils do not make as much progress as they might. There is good teamwork between teachers and other staff, classrooms are organised efficiently and display is used well to promote learning. Teaching assistants give pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, effective support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good. The varied range of activities indoors and out engages children's interest and contributes well to their good progress. Pupils are given many opportunities to write for a purpose and this contributes to good progress in writing. However, in Key Stage 2, the curriculum for the basic skills of English and mathematics is not always well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils, particularly the more able, do not make the progress they should, particularly in writing. Appropriate strategies to improve the teaching of this skill have been introduced, but it is too early to judge their impact. Special themed weeks, such as the Asian Arts Week, link subjects together and make learning more relevant and exciting for the pupils. The curriculum throughout school is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors, which effectively extend pupils' learning experiences. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school's outside areas and sports facilities are well used to promote pupils' physical and environmental education and their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for in a secure and attractive learning environment. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and teachers know their pupils well. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know there is always someone to help them with any worries they might have. New systems are in place to track pupils' progress, but these have not yet had time to impact on attainment. Strategies to involve pupils more in their own learning, such as setting lesson objectives, linking marking directly to those objectives and asking pupils to assess their own work are being introduced, but are not consistently implemented. There are effective arrangements to support children entering Nursery and those leaving to go on to secondary education. This inclusive school welcomes pupils from the nearby special school into classes and this reflects their commitment to involving all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into school life. There is a strong partnership with parents, who

give the school their overwhelming support. Arrangements for health and safety, including child protection, are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the school shares a strong commitment to the all round development of the children in its care. This has contributed to securing good personal development experienced by pupils and good progress in English and mathematics in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Leadership has been less successful in its aim to accelerate the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 and to raise the standards which they attain. The school's self-evaluation of several aspects of its provision and performance are overgenerous. Although strategies for checking on teaching and learning are used positively, they are not sufficiently rigorous to secure the improvements to teaching and attainment which the school is seeking to achieve. Middle managers and subject leaders are developing their roles and becoming increasingly effective. Governors are active in school life and committed to the development of the school. Their growing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school contributes well to their increasingly effective leadership of its strategic development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team. We enjoyed our visit very much. Here are some of the things that make Luddenden Dene a satisfactory school.

- Most of you behave well and get on well with each other.
- You involve yourselves well in school life by doing jobs, acting as play leaders and befrienders and joining in with the school council.
- Staff in school work hard and care for you well.
- Good use is made of the school's grounds to help you develop your sporting skills and environmental education and give you lots of opportunities to learn through play.

To make your school a good school we have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- Help you to do better in writing in Key Stage 2
- Work even harder to check that all teaching is helping you to learn as much as possible
- Help those of you in Key Stage 2 to be more independent, to be more actively involved in planning your own learning and to give you more chances to judge how well you have done.

You can help your teachers by working hard, behaving well and taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by the school.

On the behalf of the inspection team, I would like to wish you all the very best for your future.