

Hebden Royd CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107551
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	287850
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Aelwyn Pugh HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Howard Pask
Headteacher	Ms G Young
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Church Lane Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire HX7 6DS
Telephone number	01422 842821
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hebden Royd is a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school in the small town of Hebden Bridge. The school is smaller than average with 106 pupils on roll, but numbers have increased in recent months. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Two pupils have English as a second language. Nursery and Reception year pupils are taught together in the Foundation Stage unit. There are ten pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, one of whom has a statement of special educational needs. Ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has attained Investors in Pupils and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hebden Royd is a good school with some outstanding features. It offers good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

It is a very happy and welcoming community where staff and pupils work very well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. It takes its role as a church school very seriously and pupils regularly lead or take part in services. They are also given the opportunity to celebrate the main festivals of other world religions and, through work in several areas of the curriculum, to understand and appreciate a wide range of cultural traditions within this country and abroad. On entry to the school, a number of pupils are shy and have limited social skills. However, they make rapid progress and, during the inspection, even the youngest children spoke with enthusiasm and confidence about their work and were very keen to demonstrate what they had learnt both in school and at home. Behaviour is excellent and, from speaking to them, it is clear that pupils have a well developed notion of what is right and wrong and that they feel safe in the school. They know whom to approach if they have concerns or worries and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems that arise. They also have a well developed understanding of safe practices and behave appropriately to ensure the safety of all. They are aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and many regularly take part in the sporting and physical activities which form part of the wide range of extra curricular activities which the school offers. They also readily take on posts of responsibility within the school and contribute to the wider community through charitable activities. The staff know their pupils extremely well and there are very good systems of support and guidance for pupils of all ages and abilities. The skills that they acquire during their time at the school prepare pupils well for the next stage of education and life beyond that.

Standards in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated over the last six years but are now above average. Progress is good, particularly in English and science. Pupils of all ages make use of a wide range of often sophisticated vocabulary. The prose and poetry work seen showed a good understanding of how to give form to writing, how to convey mood and how to maintain the interest of the reader. In investigative science work, pupils displayed good powers of planning, reflection and deduction. Pupils also attain good standards in non-core subjects as was demonstrated in the art, music, geography and history work on display. This reflects the standard of teaching which is good overall. Most lessons are well planned and include a range of varied activities which are delivered at a good pace. In the best instances, very good use is made of questioning to help pupils reflect on their ideas and to develop them further. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen but, on occasion, the pace of delivery by the teacher was too slow and the work did not take sufficient account of the varying abilities of pupils within the class.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader, with a very clear vision of the direction in which she wishes to take the school. From the numerous written comments on the questionnaire returns, it is clear that she has been very successful in communicating this to parents and the wider community and in gaining their support. One result of this is the growth in numbers of pupils entering the school and the high level of parental satisfaction with what the school offers. Changes have been made to the organisation of the middle management team to make it more cost effective and ensure more coherent tracking of pupils' progress against targets. These changes are having a positive impact in the core subjects. However, in other areas of the curriculum, no specific targets are

being set to ensure that pupils are being challenged sufficiently and making the progress of which they are capable. The governors provide good support and challenge for the school and have a clear and well thought through strategy for securing its further growth and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the good practice which already exists within the school to ensure that teaching and learning across the school are consistently good.
- Develop the target setting process to include non-core as well as core subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Approximately half of the pupils entering the Nursery display knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly in line with what might be expected of children of their age. Many are shy and lack social skills, but make considerable improvements in these areas during their time in the Foundation Stage.

Standards at Key Stage 1 have fluctuated over the last six years. After a rise from 2001 to 2002, there was a downward trend in all core subjects for the next three years, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, results have improved over the last two years and, in 2006, they were above average in all core subjects.

For the last six years, standards at Key Stage 2 have generally been in line with, or slightly above, the national average. In the 2004 tests, science results fell below the national average and the average for similar schools. This situation was rectified in 2005 but that year results in English and mathematics declined. In 2006, there was a general improvement, with results in all three core subjects being above average.

The progress made by pupils between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 is good, particularly in English and science. The school's assessments of pupils in the current Year 6 indicate that this trend is being maintained.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Provision in this area is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils' spiritual development through regular involvement in church activities and a well planned programme of collective worship. Comments from members of the public who have attended services organised by the school draw specific attention to the spiritual uplift they experienced as a result. This was also reflected in a Key Stage 2 assembly observed during the inspection where teachers and pupils worked effectively together to use story-telling, music and drama to explore and reflect on moral issues relating to the theme of trust. Since the last inspection, the school has worked very effectively to ensure that pupils develop a greater understanding of the range of cultures both in this country and abroad. Work in geography and art has been used particularly well to celebrate diversity.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They relate well to their teachers and to other adults and are sensitive and cooperative in their dealings with each other. They report that they feel safe in school and free from bullying. If it does occur, they are confident of the support mechanisms within the school for dealing with the situation.

They show a very high degree of enthusiasm and willingness to learn both within lessons and in the after school activities in which they are involved. Even the youngest children work very effectively alone, in pairs and in groups, displaying considerable self-sufficiency in their approach. Pupils readily take on roles of responsibility within the school, with members of Year 6, for example, acting as buddies for younger pupils. They also contribute to the wider community through regular charity work and music and drama performances. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and readily take part in a wide range of physical and sporting activities.

Their positive attitudes, outstanding social skills and sound literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Detailed planning, careful structuring of activities and good use of indoor and outdoor activities ensure that Nursery and Reception children make rapid progress. Even the youngest of those seen were confident and sociable, engaged well in conversations between themselves and with adults, making use of a good range of vocabulary. They were also highly enthusiastic about the activities in which they were engaged and proud to display their skills.

The teaching seen elsewhere was more variable. In the best instances, particularly in Year 6, teachers made good use of a range of practical ideas to prompt the pupils to generate ideas for themselves and, through careful questioning, to develop and refine them further. This was supported by good use of marking which gave a clear indication of how work might be improved. In some of the lessons seen, however, the pace was rather too slow, with too much time being taken by the teacher on presentation and explanation and insufficient opportunities being provided for pupils to work independently. Work was not always adapted sufficiently to match the varying ages and abilities of pupils within the class. In all the lessons seen, the pupils were extremely well behaved and worked with concentration and enthusiasm.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets all statutory requirements and provides pupils with access to a wide range of experiences. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and, from the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils make regular, confident and independent use of a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) programmes. Work in the core subjects is enhanced by very good use of practical activities. This was seen in a science lesson where pupils were planning an investigation to determine what constituted a good bubble. It was also seen in an English lesson where pupils had visited a local woodland and were now using the photographs they had taken as a stimulus for conveying mood and atmosphere through story writing.

The school has taken an imaginative approach to staffing to enable pupils to work with a range of professionals, particularly in art. The paintings, drawings and ceramics on display around the school are of a high standard and pupils' work has also been displayed at local public venues. All pupils from Year 3 onwards learn the recorder and several also learn the piano, cello and violin. A specialist French teacher on staff, teaches the language throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils

have access to a good range of athletics and sporting activities. All pupils are given equal access to clubs. Thus girls play cricket and football and boys were seen participating enthusiastically in the cheerleaders club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has robust systems for ensuring the safety of all the children. Teachers know their pupils well and make every effort to build on their individual interests and experiences. There are effective systems for inducting new pupils into the school, to help them manage the transition between each key stage and to prepare them for the transfer to secondary school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given effective individual support and there is good liaison with other agencies to ensure continuity of provision. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and, through the newly established communication systems, there are increasing opportunities for them to be actively involved in the work of the school. The highly positive responses to the parent questionnaire included repeated references to the warm, friendly and caring atmosphere created by the headteacher and all the staff.

There are sound systems for measuring and tracking individual progress in core subjects. Pupils know their targets and, in most cases, what they need to do to reach them. In other areas of the curriculum the progress made by pupils is recorded, but no specific targets are set to ensure that they are being challenged sufficiently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Within a very short time, she has succeeded in conveying a very clear vision of how she wants the school to develop further and has established close and very successful links with parents and the wider community. Comments on parent questionnaire returns provide ample testimony to her skills as a communicator and the support she has gained for the innovations she has introduced.

The school development plan is very well based and is an active document which is referred to frequently by the headteacher and staff to guide their work. The management structure has recently been modified to ensure better and more cost-effective use of the expertise of staff. These changes have been embraced enthusiastically by the staff concerned and are already leading to improvements in the coordination of work across the school.

The governors are very committed and well informed and use their skills well to hold the staff to account in a rigorous but supportive way. Through foresight, business acumen and creativity they have developed an imaginative strategy for securing the future development of the school. They know the school well. The self-evaluation produced for this inspection was succinct, focused and thorough.

The school provides good value for money and the capacity for further improvement is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. A particular thanks to those of you who kindly gave up your time to share your ideas and to show me your work. You and your families told me that you thought that Hebden Royd is a good school. I agree with you.

I was particularly impressed by:

- your excellent behaviour
- the good teaching you receive
- the good progress that you make during your time at the school
- the good care that all staff take of you
- how polite and friendly you are to each other and to visitors
- how eager you are to learn and how much you enjoy your lessons
- how ready you are to help each other and to take on responsibilities
- how keen you are to take part in the good range of interesting subjects and activities that are planned for you.

I think that the school is well led and managed by the headteacher and the other senior teachers. They work hard and are well supported by the governors and everybody who works or helps in the school. They are all determined to make the school even better in the future. I have asked them to make all lessons as good as the very best ones that I saw and to set you challenges which will help you reach the highest standards in all the subjects that you study. You can help them by coming to school regularly, keeping up your enthusiastic and positive approach to lessons and other activities, and by continuing to work hard.