



# Dryclough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107729  
**Local Authority** Kirklees  
**Inspection number** 287899  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jim Kidd

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

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|---|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Infant               | <b>School address</b>   | Dryclough Road                 |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Voluntary controlled |                         | Crosland Moor,                 |
|   |                      |                         | Huddersfield                   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 5–7                  |                         | West Yorkshire HD4 5HX         |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                | <b>Telephone number</b> | 01484 222202                   |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>                | 294                  | <b>Fax number</b>       | 01484 222238                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body   | <b>Chair</b>            | Dr G Hallas                    |
|   |                      | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Mrs Bernadette<br>Boryslawskyj |
| <b>Date of previous school<br/>inspection</b> | 10 December 2001     |                         |                                |

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|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection dates</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 5–7              | 12–13 February 2007     | 287899                   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of significant social disadvantage and with high levels of unemployment. Seventy percent of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and over half have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with that usually found. Dryclough Church of England Infant School holds Active Mark, has Healthy School status and has won gold awards for school meals and its breakfast club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Dryclough Church of England Infant School is faithful to its mission statement: 'to provide a stimulating, challenging and secure environment where children can reach their potential, learn to value themselves and relate to others with consideration.' Indeed, the well-being of its children lies at the very heart of everything it does. It is a good and improving school with many outstanding features.

Children quickly gain in confidence and self-esteem having entered the Reception classes with well below expected skills especially in communicating. They make good progress in all areas of their learning and thoroughly enjoy the new and exciting activities. Despite only reaching below average standards, they continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, but although improving, their skills in reading and writing need to develop more rapidly. Their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) are very impressive indeed and stand them in good stead for the future.

Teachers' lesson plans indicate high expectations of what their pupils should achieve. Lessons are sometimes outstanding and the school now needs to consider how it can ensure consistently high quality teaching across all areas. The well thought out curriculum plays a major part in pupils' outstanding personal development. They behave well and are very proud when their classmates overcome difficulties and produce good work in class. They are delighted to take on a range of responsibilities to help the school run more smoothly and, at such an early age, members of the school council willingly come forward to make suggestions for improvement. Healthy eating is a byword in school and pupils also speak accurately about the need for regular exercise. Their learning is enriched by the wide range of extra-curricular activities open to them. From the opening of breakfast club at 8 o'clock in the morning to well beyond last lesson in the afternoon, the school is alive with happy pupils, playing sport, learning new skills and enjoying the company of both children and adults alike. Without doubt, pupils are proud of their school, feel safe within it and speak highly of the outstanding support they get from their teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the dedication of senior and other staff and the very strong partnerships with parents ensure that the school continues to move forward and that it provides good value for money. It is a focal point for the local community and its reputation goes from strength to strength. It is an oasis of calm, yet an environment which excites and encourages its pupils to want to learn. Racial harmony, respect for others and the celebration of success in all its forms are the hallmarks of Dryclough Church of England Infants. It is a school where children come first and where each individual really does matter.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards of reading and writing across the school.
- Ensure that all teaching is of a consistently high quality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Reception classes with attainment well below the expectation for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where well-organised provision and effective teaching lead to good achievement in all areas of learning. Despite making good progress, across the school, standards are still below average by the end of Year 2. Progress is slower in reading and writing. The strong support given to children with little English and to those with learning difficulties throughout the school ensures they also achieve well. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked and any problems are effectively identified and action is quickly taken to ensure that pupils achieve well. Pupils have challenging targets from the start of their school life and are encouraged by their teachers to 'reach for the stars'. Standards in reading and writing continue to lag behind those in mathematics and it is in these two areas that the school has the biggest gap to bridge.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

On entry to the Reception classes, children quickly develop independent habits and a love of learning. They are soon embraced within the close-knit school family. 'Befrienders' and play leaders accept responsibility for younger children and help them to settle down in their new surroundings.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well because learning is often fun, offering them a sense of wonderment and excitement. They know that adults in school want them to succeed and pupils say, 'Our teachers are so kind that they make us want to cry!' Frequent visits, such as to a farm or to the theatre, broaden their horizons and extend their experiences. The school council gives them a voice and pupils of all ages express their views with confidence. They are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and tell visitors about how the local policeman shows them how to stay safe.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary and as parents say, 'The school teaches our children to know right from wrong and to respect each other's beliefs.' There are high levels of racial harmony throughout the school and pupils appreciate the diversity of beliefs represented by their classmates. They contribute regularly to a range of charities. The school's ongoing emphasis on improving pupils' basic skills and their involvement in a savings scheme prepare them well for the future. Attendance is below average but is improving as a result of well thought out strategies.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers prepare their lessons in detail and make sure that the tasks they set are well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Pupils respond well, enjoy their lessons and are generally fully engaged in learning. They willingly help each other when working in pairs and in groups and are delighted when their classmates succeed. Pupils who find the work difficult or who struggle with English are supported very skilfully by teaching assistants and often benefit from explanations in their native language. As a result, pupils are proud to present their work to the rest of the class. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 numeracy lesson, they demonstrated so many different ways of calculating their answers that pupils learned a lot from each other. On occasions, inappropriate behaviour is not checked quickly enough and a minority of pupils lose concentration.

Teachers' assessments are comprehensive enabling them to quickly spot when pupils are experiencing difficulty. Marking is regular and celebrates success, but its quality is variable. Pupils know their learning targets but would benefit from more advice on how to reach them.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and there is an effective balance between teaching basic skills and on promoting pupils' creativity, imagination and personal development. Indeed, strategies to foster pupils' confidence and self-esteem are outstanding. Excellence and enjoyment are promoted well and teachers work hard to make sure that topics are covered in the ways that best suit pupils' needs and interests. As parents say, 'There is a friendly atmosphere in Dryclough which encourages children to learn without pressure.' Provision in ICT is a developing strength and many pupils use computers and the 'digital blue' camera with a skill that belies their years.

Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for and there is a clear focus on bilingual support so that pupils new to English can take full advantage of what the school has to offer. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities: for example, pupils greeting visitors with 'Guten Tag!' and reciting 'Eins, zwei, drei' in the playground is a testament to the after-school 'Busy Bees' German club.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Parents are very appreciative of this outstanding aspect of the school's work and comment, 'Dryclough is a school in which everyone is treated equally and in which children thrive, are cherished as individuals and made to feel special and safe.'

Exceptionally high levels of care permeate the school and contribute much to pupils' personal development. Puppets and dolls are used imaginatively to encourage pupils to share any problems they may have and child protection procedures have a high priority. Pupils' academic development is monitored very effectively and appropriate targets for improvement are set. Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make good progress in all areas of school life because of the excellent support they receive. The school's overriding commitment to each and every one of its pupils is further demonstrated by the many parental workshops it delivers. There are also excellent arrangements to ensure that pupils settle in quickly when they transfer to the junior school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good overall and the headteacher's inspirational leadership has a significant impact in every aspect of school life. Leadership by example promotes teamwork and the determination to improve standards is evident at every level. The school continues to face many challenges, but does so with relish and with the highest expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve. There are excellent links with parents, who are encouraged to be true partners in their children's education. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and feel well informed about how well their children are doing. Governors are diligent and supportive but are not afraid to challenge the leadership when they feel it is necessary to do so. The newly formed senior leadership team has already had considerable impact and demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further. Self-evaluation is both rigorous and accurate, but strategies to improve standards in reading and writing are relatively new and their effect is not fully apparent.





## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| 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                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 2 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 1 |

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets   | 1   |
| 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  |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You were very friendly and we enjoyed meeting and talking to you. We particularly enjoyed visiting you in the breakfast club and the Busy Bees German class. We would now like to tell you what we thought about your school.

Dryclough Church of England Infants is a good school and we know you like attending it.

You behave well and you enjoy your lessons. You like your teachers, your teaching assistants and your learning mentors and you are very proud of your classmates when they do well. You make good progress in your lessons and your teachers teach you well. The school council has lots of ideas to make your school even better and the playground helpers and befrienders make sure that no-one is lonely at break and lunchtime. There are many after-school clubs you can go to and there are lots of sports activities. You are very good at using computers and you like to video your work with the 'digital blue' cameras. You know too why it is important to eat healthily and you have fruit and vegetables every day. The adults in school are proud of you and look after you very well. They make sure that you work hard but that you have lots of fun too! Your headteacher and all the other staff know how to make your school even better.

We have asked your teachers to keep working hard with you to make your reading and writing better and also to make sure that everyone does well in class. You can help them by always doing your best!

Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly to us. We enjoyed watching you learn.