

Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107740
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	287902
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Bill Keast

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	160
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cynthia Osborne
Headteacher	Mrs Eelin Megson
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Church Lane Linthwaite Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD7 5TA
Telephone number	01484 222573
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average semi-rural primary school draws its pupils from a wide area. This area includes pockets of disadvantage. An average proportion of pupils have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has experienced staffing difficulties for several years. Investors in People and Investors in Pupils awards have been achieved.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This rapidly improving school provides a sound education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. Inspectors judge the school's overall effectiveness to be satisfactory, rather than good, because pupils make only satisfactory progress overall. Staffing difficulties in recent years have adversely affected the quality of teaching and this has been a barrier to raising pupils' achievement. Very good leadership by the headteacher has ensured that these difficulties have had as little impact on pupils as possible. The now good permanent staff and a new staffing structure provide a firm foundation on which the school can build.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because of the good relationships they have with the staff and the very good care and support they are given. They feel safe and have someone they can turn to if they had a worry. Pupils behave well. The Investors in Pupils award is evidence of the importance the school places on the personal development of pupils. The good curriculum effectively promotes aspects of this development so that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils understand and remember the safety and the health messages they receive. They make a good contribution to the broader community through many, effective fundraising activities and develop well the skills they will need in the future. The school works well in partnership with others, for example through visitors, local teacher networks and links with the local high school, to promote pupils' well-being.

In 2006 pupils' standards were average by the end of Year 6 but lower in science than in English and mathematics. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The 2005 results also showed only satisfactory achievement as a direct result of staffing problems. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children get off to a flying start in the rich and stimulating environment which provides interesting and exciting activities to help them learn. They make good progress. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The new teaching team is working hard to improve pupils' achievement but has not yet worked together long enough to have had a pronounced impact on standards. Teaching has good features but is satisfactory overall because some teachers use the school's new strategies more effectively than others. Pupils are well supported in their learning by the classroom assistants. Those who may be struggling are given additional support to help them make better progress. While the use of targets is developing, marking does not often make pupils aware of what they need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management are good. Through regular monitoring and self-evaluation the school knows its strengths and where improvement is needed but has been overgenerous in its judgements on teaching and learning and on care, support and guidance. Effective action has been taken to improve identified weaknesses. The headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment have driven the effective improvement since the last inspection. This record together with the increasingly strong leadership across the school show the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress and standards in science.
- Ensure that all pupils experience teaching that is consistently good or better.
- Ensure that all pupils know what to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are generally as expected for their age. As a result of the good provision, by the end of Reception they reach standards that are above those generally expected for their age. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average with similar standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These were significantly lower than in previous years but as expected for this group of pupils. Standards in the current Year 2 are improved to above average and pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Overall standards at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were broadly average, as they have been for the last five years.

However, standards in science were significantly lower than in English and mathematics and pupils made significantly less progress in this subject. The difference was because the school had been unable to overcome the impact of previously weak teaching in this subject. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average and pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress as standards are beginning to rise. In science there is still more to do as some pupils could do better. The pupils are generally on course to meet the targets set for the end of the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

High quality assemblies contribute very well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are socially very mature. Relationships are good and pupils have an excellent understanding of what is right and wrong. Pupils develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded. Most pupils are well behaved, welcoming to visitors and positive about school. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in all that the school provides. Attendance is above average. Bullying and racism are very rare, but when they occur they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils understand very well how to keep safe and healthy, and the school is working towards attaining the Healthy Schools award. Through the many opportunities they have to develop initiative and independence, pupils develop well the skills to help them in their future. Through the class and school councils, the buddy system and the befriending arrangements, pupils make a good contribution to their school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Secure relationships, effective management of pupils and high levels of care successfully underpin teaching. Pupils of all ages find many lessons interesting, challenging and fun. Although most teaching is satisfactory, the proportion of good teaching is improving. However, there is still more to do to raise pupils' achievement further. Well trained and committed teaching assistants contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All adults give pupils much encouragement and praise and as a result, pupils are keen to do their best. Teachers usually share clearly with pupils what they want them to learn but do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning towards the end of lessons. Thorough marking acknowledges and celebrates pupils'

efforts. However, comments are not specific in pinpointing what is good about a piece of work and do not make pupils sufficiently aware of what they need to do next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum provides enjoyment through its variety. The strong emphasis given to developing pupils' personal and social skills as well as raising their awareness of how to stay healthy contributes considerably to lifelong learning skills. Teachers plan and review carefully what is taught to ensure that work matches the needs of most pupils. As a result, pupils steadily develop knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. In the Foundation Stage, a very good balance is struck between practical and stimulating activities that children choose and the teaching of important skills. Personal and social development as well as the development of communication skills are given strong emphasis and lie at the heart of the school's work. In other years, themed events, such as that on 'holes', help stimulate pupils' interest, break down barriers between subjects and promote learning. As a result, pupils' horizons are broadened considerably as they make links between subjects in the themes and topics they study. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a good range of out-of-school activities such as sports. As well as adding to their enjoyment of learning, these rich experiences help to develop healthy and varied lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and guidance is of a high quality. The school takes very good care of all its pupils and all staff have a high concern for their welfare. Health and safety systems are good and procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are rigorous. The school does all it can to ensure a smooth transition when pupils move to and from school. Parents are kept well informed and express confidence in the school. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised and mostly effective. Academic guidance is satisfactory and developing well. The school tracks pupils' academic attainment increasingly carefully so that weaknesses can be identified and overcome. Pupils are beginning to develop ownership of their targets to help them learn. However, approaches are not yet consistent across the school. Some targets are too general to give pupils clear guidance about what they must do next to secure the next steps in their learning. Barriers to individual progress are reduced as far as possible. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, with the help of colleagues, has coped well with the problems created by staffing issues. Through professional development, good induction and open discussion the headteacher has ensured that her staff understand and share her passion and vision for the school. Senior and middle leaders are involved in monitoring the school's performance, pupils' work and colleagues' performance in the classroom. As a result, all are clear about the strengths of the school and share in the desire to improve the weaker aspects. Planning for improvement is focused and effective in many areas, and as a result, teaching is improving. However, the current team has not worked together long enough for these improvements to show in greater

progress. Pupils are seen as individuals, and meeting the varied needs of all its pupils is central in the work of the school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are kept well informed, give full support to the school and know its main strengths and weaknesses. While some visit purposefully on a regular basis, they are not sufficiently involved in gaining the firsthand knowledge necessary to enable them to be fully effective in their evaluating role. Financial resources have been used prudently.

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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	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?	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	1
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	2

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?	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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

Inspection of Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School, Huddersfield, HD7 5TA

Thank you very much for your polite and friendly welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play.

You clearly enjoy coming to school and spoke warmly about your teachers. They and your teaching assistants support you well in your learning. You enjoy your lessons. You said, and we agree, that they look after you very well. You feel safe, are not worried about bullying and have someone to turn to if you have any worries. How your teachers teach you and the opportunities you have for visits and visitors help you to make outstanding personal development. You understand how to keep safe and live a healthy life well. You are polite, behave well and work hard. You help others through all your successful fundraising. You take opportunities to show how responsible you can be and contribute well to the life of your school through your councils and, for example, being buddies to younger pupils. The Reception class gives a very good start in the school. Your standards at the end of Year 6 are at the national average and you make satisfactory progress but you have not been making as much progress in science as in other subjects. You have a very good headteacher who wants you to do even better. She, and your teachers, are very clear about how they can help you do this. Unfortunately, there have been staffing problems. These have meant that your school has not made the progress that your headteacher would like. You now have a new group of teachers who are beginning to tackle the things that had not been possible before. As a result the teaching you receive is certainly satisfactory and improving.

To help you learn as well as you can we have asked the school to make sure you make greater progress in science and to do its very best to make sure that you are all taught equally well. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that each of you knows what you need to do next to improve your work.

We hope you will continue to enjoy your school and send our best wishes for your future.