

Featherbank Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107817
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	287920
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Dee Brigstock

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Siddall
Headteacher	Mrs K Rhodes
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Featherbank Avenue Horsforth Leeds West Yorkshire LS18 4QP
Telephone number	0113 2144811
Fax number	0113 2819232

Age group	5–7
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Inspection number	287920

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Featherbank Infant is a popular but smaller than usual school in a relatively prosperous area. However, almost a quarter of pupils live outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background with the remainder made up of minority ethnic groups. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has the Artsmark Silver and International Schools' Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

As several parents agreed, 'This is a fantastic school - truly a little gem within our community.' Featherbank Infants' is an outstanding school. Pupils greatly enjoy an excellent, lively curriculum which is enriched extremely well, delivered by a highly effective team of teachers, led by a very experienced headteacher. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding. The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent and their personal development is also outstanding. Pupils clearly love coming to school, their attendance is well above average and they are extremely well behaved. They enjoy at least two hours of physical exercise a week, including some additional coaching from external agencies and have a very good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy.

Children enter school from a range of pre-school providers, with skill levels that are better than would be expected for this age group and with particular strengths in speaking and listening. They achieve extremely well in Reception where the curriculum has an ideal balance between taught and independent learning activities. By the time they enter Year 1, their skill levels remain higher than is expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high and have been so for several years. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen further, illustrating the school's good capacity to improve. This excellent achievement is due to outstanding teaching and a constantly evolving curriculum. Lessons are very well planned, interesting and lively; they link different subjects together very effectively. Pupils' learning also benefits from a very wide range of trips and visits in the local and wider area. The input of visitors, such as artists, who share their expertise with pupils and staff, also makes an extremely effective contribution to pupils' first hand learning.

Achievement for the few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. This is because teachers set measurable targets for them to reach and because there is a very successful home/school partnership. The large group of gifted and talented pupils also achieve extremely well. Parents help the school to identify these pupils and the school accesses additional expertise to guide staff on how to promote their learning further. As a result, they also make outstanding progress. Teachers' marking is very informative and they set challenging group and individual targets for pupils to reach in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils and their parents know what they have to do to improve even further. Parental written comments on their children's reports illustrate this partnership very well.

The successes in all areas of school life are the result of excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, her team of senior staff and the governors who take a very active interest in the school. The headteacher has, in partnership with staff and governors broadened the curriculum and placed an increased focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is now very impressive indeed. She has forged several close links with external providers to improve the school. For example, the links with the local high school enrich the curriculum very well in sport. Subject leaders include pupils' views within their rigorous monitoring and ensure a detailed analysis of standards, pupil performance and the effect of curriculum development. This monitoring provides them with a keen understanding of the strengths of the school's provision and how it can be improved further.

Leaders know their school well but sometimes underestimate its performance because they are striving for continuous improvement. Leaders' plans to develop the school further are very well constructed and governors use their expertise effectively to support and challenge the school. The school has a limited budget and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement and the school has correctly identified how it can move further forward.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils comment quite accurately, 'We think we're doing really well in all our lessons, especially in maths, art and history.' After children enter school, they acquire reading, writing and mathematical skills at a rapid rate. By the time they leave Reception, many are writing in sentences and have good independent learning skills. By Year 2, standards are high in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement is outstanding. There is a steady upward trend in the standards being attained since the last inspection, affected only by the inclusion of the few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities this year. This group also achieves extremely well. Pupils' special gifts and talents are nurtured in partnership with external specialists, resulting in them making great strides in their learning. Pupils' attainment in physical education, the arts and in their personal development is also very impressive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As parents say, 'Our children have blossomed and developed, emotionally, socially and academically, well beyond our hopes and expectations.' Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development are outstanding. From the beginning of their time in school, children's learning has a strong spiritual and cultural dimension, whether through the arts, or through their inclusion in whole-school celebrations of festivals. Older pupils make a good contribution to the school community by doing various 'jobs' around the school and pupils support a very wide range of charities for their age. Pupils know how to stay fit and healthy through having additional physical education and games in a good partnership with local schools. Those pupils who have a school lunch choose healthy options and many parents have taken full advantage of the school's suggestions on how to make up a healthy lunchbox for their children. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal and social development is excellent. They have many opportunities to improve their social skills through role play, both indoors and outdoors. Behaviour is excellent and pupils on the school council confirm this. They are confident they feel safe in school. The standards pupils attain, their developing skills in using information and communication technology, their community spirit, and the way they are prepared for their next school equip them extremely well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

In the words of pupils, 'Teachers help us spell and plan different work for you.'

Teachers' planning is excellent. They plan work which links different areas of the curriculum together, including the planned trips and visits. As a result, pupils learn at a faster rate because they make connections in their learning. In addition, the planned work captures pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. For example, several areas of the curriculum appear in the pupils' topic on the seaside. They learn about the animals that live there, various holiday destinations and how to stay safe near water. Throughout the school, teachers have good classroom management skills. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, contributing effectively to pupils' learning. Teachers' marking is excellent; their advice on how pupils can improve their work further is specific and plays an important part in pupils' outstanding progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is lively, interesting and in a constant state of change. Each year subject managers discuss with each other and with pupils how learning could improve and the changes that can be made. If topics and projects are repeated, it is because they are successful in promoting pupils' progress and their enjoyment of learning. The planned links between different subjects and the associated visits that pupils make are outstanding because they give pupils new first hand experiences to write about. As pupils say, 'The trips are fantastic.' The curriculum is adapted extremely well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those with special gifts and talents. The progress of all pupils is carefully tracked through the school's own assessment system and evaluated against the challenging targets that are set. This includes the targets on pupils' individual education plans. There is a good range of clubs for a small school, and French is also taught.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The overwhelming majority of parents feel their children are well cared for and supported. Child protection and all other checks to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. Pupils say they are confident that their teachers help them if they are in difficulty and that, 'The teachers will look after you all the time. It's just great.' Pupils with learning difficulties are supported extremely well by all staff and the school has excellent links with outside agencies which provide further support when needed. This ensures that these pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer. Pupils are very confident that teachers show them how to improve their work further and this is borne out by the excellent quality of marking in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leaders, including governors, have clear aspirations and plans to improve the school further. These plans are drawn from extremely accurate monitoring of pupils' learning. Leaders identify the strengths of the school's provision and what the school can do next to improve further. As a result, standards are high and pupils' achievement is excellent. The school is moving towards adding an international dimension to its curriculum. It is at the beginning of a new project to forge links with other schools in Jamaica and, nearer to home, in Doncaster. The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely supportive of the school; they all believe their children progress well. However, a few parents are unhappy with the level of communication and consultation between home and school. The inspection found that the school holds the usual amount of

parental workshops, meetings and opportunities to comment on children's progress. In addition, parents make comments on pupils' extremely informative annual reports and all staff, including the headteacher, are available to parents each morning. The school has consulted with pupils and acted on their suggestions for improvement. For example, trees have been planted in the playground. Parents' efforts to raise money have been very successful. A large proportion of this money is being spent this year on the much-needed refurbishment of the Reception classrooms and the purchase of new resources. Governors use their expertise extremely well to support and challenge the school. They regularly monitor the school's work in classrooms and report their findings to the full governing body. As a result, they have a keen knowledge of the school, its strengths and areas for development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

I am very pleased to say that you go to an excellent school.

These are the best things about it.

- Your teachers are excellent and you learn a great deal.
- The standards you reach in reading, writing, mathematics and science are high.
- Your headteacher and the governors know exactly how to make your school even better.
- You go on lots of really interesting trips and visits. I wish I were going to the seaside with you!
- Your behaviour is splendid and you really do know the difference between right and wrong.
- The 'wake and shake' exercises you do each day really make you lively!
- Your parents work hard to help you learn, and to raise money for the school, so you can have nicer things in your classrooms.
- Almost all of you come to school on time and your attendance is excellent.
- The school dinners are very tasty and lots of you bring in very healthy lunchboxes. I've never had a 4th July lunch before and I really liked it.

I hope you enjoy your summer holidays and that you come back refreshed and ready to learn even more.