

Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107860
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	287931
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Boden
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Blacoe
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Victoria Crescent Horsforth Leeds West Yorkshire LS18 4PT
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Horsforth Newlaithes is a smaller than average school which serves an area of predominantly socially advantaged households on the outskirts of Leeds. Attainment on entry is above average, but has declined since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, and none has a statement of special educational need. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. Over the last year or so, the school has experienced significant staffing changes, including a new headteacher and deputy headteacher and a restructured senior leadership team. In this same period, the school has successfully been renewed the Basic Skills Quality Mark, gained the National Healthy Schools Standard, and maintained Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are happy and eager to learn. Staff work hard to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their learning. Attendance is well above average and many pupils enjoy the good range of lunchtime and after-school activities. Parents value highly the school's work. They feel that it is a school in which 'every child matters', where 'children are challenged and achieve highly'.

Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is above average. When they leave at the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for the pupils. Many pupils excel in science, with more reaching the higher levels of attainment than is nationally expected for their age. Attainment at the higher levels in English and mathematics is variable in recent years but, overall, well above national expectations.

The good quality of teaching is characterised by a careful balance of whole-class and independent activities. This encourages pupils to think for themselves and to work productively in small groups. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Teachers' marking is increasingly helpful in indicating what pupils need to do to improve their work in order to reach higher standards. A well planned curriculum offers a good range of cultural, musical and sporting opportunities. Pupils are appreciative of the regular visitors to school who enhance their work through providing practical and realistic contexts for learning. Special weeks and theme days provide creative backdrops for further development of key skills, knowledge and understanding.

Parents welcome the good care that the school provides for their children. Pupils feel that 'The teachers are always there when we need them.' Systems to check pupils' progress, in all subjects, are at a very early stage of development, teachers having concentrated largely on English in recent times. As a result, academic guidance is satisfactory overall, with work to be done to measure pupils' progress in sufficiently small steps to demonstrate how well they are doing, or to pinpoint exactly where they need help. Pupils are clearly happy in school, saying, 'We do work but it's fun and the surroundings are good.' Their mature attitudes and responsible behaviour mean that they act safely and show respect for the world around them. Their enthusiasm for sport and their strong awareness of how food and exercise affect their bodies gives them an excellent understanding of the importance of living healthily. Strong links with the local community and fundraising for local and national charities help pupils appreciate the value and pleasure to be gained from contributing to a community. Good collaborative skills, well above average academic standards and a good understanding that work can be enjoyable prepare them well for their future lives.

Although only four terms into her new role, the headteacher, with the full support of a very recently restructured senior leadership team, has made significant progress in developing positive and open relationships with the local community. Parents believe that the 'school is going from strength to strength'. Given the large staffing changes since the last inspection, effective steps have been taken overall to promote continuous improvement. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and largely accurate, although leadership has not yet judged with enough rigour the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning. Tracking procedures have not been used widely and systematically, to date, to determine how effectively pupils are learning throughout the school, and to bring about sooner and more effective interventions to boost

performance where necessary. Nevertheless, recent initiatives have brought about measurable improvements, for instance in attainment at the higher level in English and in the performance of boys. This, together with the aspiration on behalf of young people shown by the headteacher, key leaders and governors, demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further. Horsforth Newlaithes gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information on pupils' progress more systematically to identify and implement specific strategies to raise achievement.
- Evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6 and achieve well to attain well above average standards. Even though the girls generally perform better than boys in English, mathematics and science, boys' achievement is still higher than the national picture. Pupils' performance in science is particularly strong. Specific strategies to improve pupils' attainment at the higher levels in English have been successful in the most recent test results. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties generally achieve well, because they are well supported. Refined and extended processes for checking pupils' progress have now been put into place to add more rigour to raise achievement even further. The school has a good record of attaining and often exceeding its targets, and recognises the need to be more rigorous and demanding in its approach to monitoring pupils' performance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they say 'The teachers are really nice and there are lots of sports and activities.' Their attendance is well above average with few latecomers. They are happy learners and behave responsibly both in and around school. Pupils say that there is no bullying because 'we are all friendly and get along together'. They feel their views are valued, for example when they helped interview prospective staff. The school council is currently organising a 'playground buddy' system because pupils themselves want to take responsibility for sorting out minor disputes. It is a measure of the pupils' enthusiasm for school that over 100 applied for the 21 jobs as buddies. Pupils relish the different sporting opportunities open to them and this, together with running the healthy tuck shop, planting vegetables and being part of a 'green team' to check where energy can be saved and materials recycled, gives them outstanding health awareness. This has been recognised by the national award the school has gained. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, and their cultural development is satisfactory. Recent links with a school with a more diverse ethnicity is further expanding pupils' multicultural awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are interesting and capture pupils' attention well. Teachers have clear expectations of what pupils need to learn and increasingly involve them in assessing the progress that they have made. In the most effective lessons, teachers assess frequently the developing levels of understanding and knowledge, and adjust the challenge and pace of work accordingly. They use a range of questioning techniques so that pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and explore alternatives. Pupils enjoy their learning and show good attitudes to each other and to their teachers. They say that 'learning is fun'. They listen carefully, are well motivated, and show a desire to succeed. They share their views and develop their ideas sensibly with their 'talking partners', and collaborate effectively in teams. Interactive technology is used thoughtfully to engage pupils' interest. In a small number of lessons, activities are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. This means that not all pupils work at an appropriate pace and progress slows. Teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils. Classroom displays are stimulating and helpful in celebrating pupils' achievements, as well as in assisting their progress. Marking is regular and positive, and provides pupils with good advice about what they need to do to improve, particularly in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is interesting and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and visitors to school. This contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. It makes good provision for pupils to use and apply their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Special weeks each term give pupils the chance to experience learning in a wider context, such as in a recent 'Pirate week' designed to promote writing in an enjoyable context linked to art, music and drama. Yearly 'health weeks' and regular discussion times contribute successfully to pupils' outstanding awareness of the importance of healthy living. The school has made a start on linking subjects creatively together in order to promote learning new skills with enjoyment but this is in the very early stages of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There is good provision for pupils' care and welfare, while academic guidance is satisfactory. Child protection procedures and those to safeguard pupils meet current government guidelines. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy. Friendly relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils have someone to turn to should they have concerns. An outside agency gives additional support in the spring term to younger pupils who may lack confidence, thus providing well for those who are vulnerable. Good quality individual education plans and good support from teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well. Systems to check pupils' progress are at a very early stage of development, concentrating principally on literacy. These have yet to be refined and extended to include numeracy and so track achievement across each year group and over time. The use of targets and success criteria in all classes is having a positive impact on learning because pupils are more involved in assessing their learning and in understanding what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management across the school are satisfactory. In a short time, the headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and governors, and has developed a 'common sense of purpose' among all staff. Parents say that they feel welcomed into the school at all times, and that their views are taken into account. Staff talk about a positive and supportive climate where pupils and adults learn increasingly alongside each other. The headteacher has a clear vision for developing the talents of every pupil and an aspiration for Newlaithes to become a truly inclusive and outstanding school. The senior leadership team is highly supportive of the headteacher and committed to raising standards further. Short-term strategies have already resulted in improvements at the higher attainment levels in English and in the performance of boys. There has not yet been sufficient time for such measures to become embedded and for a track record of improvement to be sustained. A good range of links with local primary and secondary schools, public services and Leeds Metropolitan University enhance pupils' learning and well-being.

The senior leadership team is highly supportive of the headteacher and committed to raising standards further. Subject coordinators are developing their roles and plans are in hand to provide them with more bespoke time to evaluate the quality of pupils' performance at first hand. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is insufficient analysis of the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning. Newly developed tracking procedures are not yet used rigorously to raise pupils' achievement further. Governors are very supportive and ambitious for the future of the school. They are confident and know what the school does well, and are developing an understanding about how well pupils achieve.

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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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	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	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

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?	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	2
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**

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you all, talking with your school council representatives and seeing the fantastic wildlife and horticultural areas. You are really lucky to have such wonderful school grounds!

In particular, we enjoyed being in your lessons, seeing how hard you work, talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that you do in and out of school. Your sporting successes are excellent! You work responsibly on your own and you get on sensibly with your activities. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and your behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school.

We agree with you that your school is good. It gives you a good education. We saw how much you enjoy your lessons and how well you get on with your teachers, other adults and classmates. Most of you are achieving well and reaching standards in English, mathematics and science that are higher than those seen in schools nationally.

Your teachers are good at making lessons fun, as well as making sure that you learn. Your school prepares you well for your future lives. This is because all the staff care about you and they clearly enjoy working in such a friendly and stimulating environment.

It is part of our job to point out what schools should do to get even better (that is, to improve their work). Your headteacher and all the other adults want you to do well so we have asked them to:

- use more effectively the information they have about how you are working to help you to attain higher standards and make even better progress in the future
- think more carefully about the effects that teaching are having on how well you learn and achieve.

You can help by always doing your best to achieve your targets. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you every success in the future.