



Ashfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107877
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287938
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Clive Petts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Weston Lane
School category	Community		Otley
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire LS21 2DF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01943 463341
Number on roll (school)	189	Fax number	01943 463341
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Carole Bennett
		Headteacher	Mrs Y Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ashfield is a smaller than average primary school situated in a market town north of the city of Leeds. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is average. Although the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is about half the national average. Since the last inspection Otley schools have been reorganised. The school was established in September 2002 on the site of Ashfield Nursery and Infants School. In the last year the school has restructured its senior leadership team appointing two assistant headteachers following the move of the deputy headteacher to another school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support provided for them are good, with some aspects of care being outstanding for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents appreciate the good quality of care and support given to their children. They praise action taken by staff to keep pupils busy in their learning and to prepare them for successful transfer to secondary school. As one remarked, 'I cannot thank the school enough for the fantastic base [my son] has been given for the long road ahead.' Together, staff work very hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure, enjoy their learning, adopt healthy and safe routines and arrive to their classrooms ready to learn.

Children enter the Nursery with below average standards and make very good progress as a result of well-focused, imaginative tasks in lessons. A significant number of more able children leave the school to join Reception classes in other schools but children who remain continue to make very good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 many reach the standards expected nationally for children their age, with standards in shape, space and measurement being a strength. Effective new strategies for teaching reading are leading to improved skill in linking sounds and letters. National test data for 2006 revealed significant underachievement in Year 6 but school data shows improved standards for the current Year 6 cohort. Standards are now close to average overall, with much improvement in English, and an increased proportion of more able pupils expected to achieve higher levels. These improvements are the result of more robust assessment and tracking coupled with good teaching and clear, structured guidance for improvement. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning are good. Marking is thorough, supportive and sets specific learning targets, for example on how to improve spelling and extend vocabulary. Teaching areas are well organised with increasing use made of 'learning walls' to stimulate and reinforce learning targets. The learning mentor and teaching support staff are well deployed and, in their active support of learning, contributing effectively in the successful push to raise achievement. However, not all lesson planning has a sharp enough focus on how pupils' learning can be 'stretched'. The school's good quality curriculum makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils through personal, social, health and care programmes. This includes planned events for pupils to learn about safety. The 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative is being used successfully to enrich first hand learning experiences, for example using theatre groups to help cover curriculum topics.

Leadership and management are good. After a very unsettled and difficult period following reorganisation the school has regained the confidence of the community. Improvements in achievement reflect the resolve of the headteacher added to the drive and determination of senior staff to increase the pace of school improvement. Effective local authority monitoring and support is adding to this drive. However, evaluation of initiatives to secure improvement is not yet well enough embedded to allow these to have maximum impact on raising standards. After a period of slow progress addressing issues for improvement, the school is now successfully focussed

on tackling weakness. The recently appointed chair of governors is keeping a watchful eye on the school and governors have strengthened their commitment at this critical time. As a consequence of this and in the light of recent good improvement, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lesson planning stretches pupils to do as well as they can.
- Rigorously evaluate the impact of initiatives to secure improvements so that they have the maximum impact on raising achievement and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory in relation to their below average standards when they start school. In the Foundation Stage, children make very good progress due to the excellent quality of the provision. Standards by end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been very variable in recent years. Results of national tests and assessments in 2006 showed there to be significant underachievement, especially in girls' reading and writing at age seven and English for 11 year olds. Many more able pupils failed to attain the higher levels in English. Despite several mitigating factors that adversely affected results, standards were not high enough. However, there have been good improvements thanks to good teaching and improved systems for assessment, tracking and target setting. For example, weaknesses in literacy, particularly writing, are being successfully addressed. Standards are now close to average. Pupils who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well focused learning plans that guide teaching and the effective adult support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good overall. The school has established an extensive range of strategies to help pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and encourage good behaviour. All are taking effect well, though some pupils remain immature or lack self-discipline. Attendance has improved significantly and is above the national average as a result of the robust systems now in place. There are good opportunities to celebrate achievement and reinforce good behaviour and effort. These are working well in promoting confidence, raising self-esteem and enjoyment in learning. The school council gives pupils a say in how their school is run. It introduces them to democracy and corporate decision-making and provides valuable skills for later life. Pupils respond well to the good emphasis placed on leading a healthy lifestyle, for example through access to a range of sport development opportunities. There is a very positive ethos about the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In many lessons, well thought out tasks complete with probing questions and interventions maintain a good level of challenge for pupils and a brisk pace of learning. For example, in writing, carefully structured, well timed tasks, supported by good guidance for improvement, are successfully contributing to improved achievement and standards. This reflects the impact of the school's efforts to raise standards. Staff know their pupils very well and good use is made of praise to maintain interest. However, lesson planning does not always indicate how teachers intend to present and sustain challenge for pupils to learn more quickly. As a result pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always effectively extended to the highest levels. When concentration begins to drift, more effective teaching ensures that pupils promptly regain their focus without compromising the good relationships.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured with some good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and personal skills outside of lessons, for example in the provision of residential experiences and activities to stretch gifted and talented pupils. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory though improving all the time. Increased use is made of interactive technology in teaching in Years 3 to 6 and the recent construction of an ICT suite is allowing more pupils to enhance the quality of their work. The curriculum is well planned to promote pupils' understanding of multicultural diversity and reinforces the school's strong commitment to inclusion, for example celebrating Native American culture and Islamic art. This helps prepare pupils well for life in a multicultural community. In lessons pupils learn skills that will help them as future adults, for example talking partners work and residential team skill activities. However, opportunities to develop enterprise skills are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils who say they feel safe and that adults will listen to their worries or concerns. The learning mentor plays a very significant role in this respect. There are effective systems in place to track pupils' academic progress although the information is not always put to best use to plan challenging tasks for all abilities. Pupils know their learning targets and the thorough marking of their work shows them how to improve. There is very effective and sensitive support for those pupils with physical or learning difficulties and so these pupils make particularly good progress. For example, highly skilled and exceptionally effective support for pupils with disabilities ensures that confidence is gained to live and learn independently. Pupils say that any isolated incidents of bullying are sorted out quickly and successfully.

Peer mediators (pupils who are trained to help resolve minor conflicts) contribute well to the harmonious play at break times. The school has rigorous systems in place to ensure safety in school and on educational visits. Staff are well trained and vigilant in child protection matters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff are strongly committed to raising standards. They provide a welcoming, positive learning environment and a good level of care, guidance and support. Vetting procedures for adults who work with children are all in place. The recently appointed chair of governors is effective in holding the school to account. A revised governing body committee structure is more influential in overseeing school improvement. Actions taken by senior leaders to raise achievement and standards, for example introducing rigorous tracking and target setting practice, are having a positive impact as initiatives become embedded across the school and achievement is raised. Good use has been made of local authority expertise to support this process. All are working hard to secure good value for money. However, evaluation of the impact of these initiatives is not yet rigorous enough to identify exactly how well the school is doing. The school's self-evaluation, although generous, accurately identifies key priorities for development and contributes well to development planning.

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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?	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	1
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	NA

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	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	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	3

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.

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	3
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	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 for the friendly welcome to your school and for being so polite and helpful when you met us. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with school staff and joining you in lessons, in the dining hall and assembly. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

What we most liked about your school:

- the way you enjoy your lessons and show interest in your learning
- your good attendance and punctuality
- your improved behaviour and the way your headteacher and staff make sure good behaviour is rewarded
- the care and support given to you by all staff to help you learn and listen to any worries and concerns you may have.

We think there are some things your headteacher and teachers can do that would make your school even better:

- making sure that all your lessons are planned to help you learn as well as you can
- carefully checking new ways of helping you learn to make sure they are working well.

I hope that you will continue to attend school regularly, work as hard as you can and remember to listen very carefully to staff in all lessons.

I wish you well in the future.