



Featherstone Girnhill Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108168
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288038
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Howard

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Hardwick Road |
| School category | Community | | Featherstone, Pontefract |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 | | West Yorkshire WF7 5JB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01977 722690 |
| Number on roll (school) | 101 | Fax number | 01977 722690 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Maureen Tenant-King |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Sally Lowe |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 October 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a community of mainly council owned properties in an area of well above average social and economic deprivation. A much higher than average proportion of children is eligible for free school meals.

The proportion of children in school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is low and very few are in the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges its own effectiveness to be good. By helping the pupils to develop their personal skills and make good progress in their work, the school successfully meets the challenging needs of pupils from this economically disadvantaged community. The school's achievement of the Healthy School award reflects its commitment to help pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy school and they want to do well. They feel safe in school and their behaviour is good. Levels of absence are high, mainly because many parents and carers do not appreciate the value of regular attendance, and this prevents some pupils from getting the best out of school. Despite its diligent approach, the school struggles to improve attendance.

Children start school with skills, which are well below the levels expected of children of this age. They make satisfactory progress, but they remain below the level expected of children of their age in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. Senior managers have worked effectively to improve teaching and the curriculum in the Foundation Stage, for example, in improving the outdoor area. However, the impact of these refinements has yet to be seen in the progress the children make, which is improving, but still satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build on this sound start well. The pace of learning picks up and in some years pupils reach standards that are broadly average. In 2006, the high level of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Year 2, particularly boys, was reflected in lower attainment in English. Overall, pupils make good progress from the well below expected levels of knowledge and skills pupils bring into school.

The quality of teaching, curriculum and the care given to pupils are good. Teachers manage their classrooms well and other adults make a valuable contribution to pupil's learning. Teachers employ an effective range of practical strategies to involve pupils in their learning. Learning is well planned in the Foundation Stage, but these plans are not always translated into successful learning. Well considered changes to the curriculum to focus on developing key skills are having a positive impact. However, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently relevant to boys, whose achievement falls behind that of girls. Staff are very caring and arrangements for the support and protection of pupils are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher, gives the school very effective leadership. The way that senior staff check for themselves how well the school is doing and then plan for improvement, has contributed to improvement since the last inspection; for example, in improvements to teachers' planning, the teaching of English and the development of outside teaching areas. Governors are supportive of the school and have made a good contribution to the development of the Children's Centre on-site. Effective partnerships with outside agencies, such as the education welfare officer and other schools in the area are making a good contribution to the school's development. The effective management of the improvements to provision and well considered plans to take the school forward, indicate that the school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Revise the curriculum so that it more closely meets the need of boys and thus raise their achievement.
- Provide more challenge to children in the Foundation Stage to raise their achievement.
- Work in partnership with parents and the local authority to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children, particularly boys, enter school in the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are well below expectations for children of that age; many have communication difficulties and low levels of numerical skills. They have a sound start in Nursery and Reception, where recent improvements to teaching and organisation are having a positive impact on achievement, but the level of challenge is insufficient to ensure that children in these classes make better than satisfactory progress. By the end of Reception, the children do not meet the levels expected of children of their age. The trend in overall attainment at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average. However, in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2006, overall standards are expected to be below average. While attainment in mathematics remained broadly average, results in both reading and writing are not as strong and reflected the low starting point of this group of pupils. Achievement is good and pupils make good progress. The current Year 2 are on track to attain standards that are broadly average. However, within this positive picture, the attainment of boys lags behind that of girls. Given the low starting point on entry, pupils make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups receive effective support and are also making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school works very effectively to provide many opportunities for the pupils to develop the personal skills that will equip them for life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a positive ethos, which contributes strongly to the pupil's understanding of right from wrong. Pupils are developing strategies to keep themselves safe; they know how to cross the road safely and are beginning to understand the dangers posed by drugs. Pupils are learning about the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle and are already making healthy choices in the school meals. They know there is someone to go to if they are worried or concerned. Although attendance is unsatisfactory, pupils enjoy school, talk with great affection about their school and their teachers. They want to learn and they behave well. The effective school council contributes to their developing sense of responsibility and pupils are proud of their role in choosing new playground equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff in Nursery and Reception plan a good range of activities, well designed to improve children's personal development and help them take the first steps in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, in their teaching, staff do not consistently take advantage of opportunities to extend children's learning. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have high expectations and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Many pupils need additional support, and teaching assistants and other adults make a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work planned to enhance the learning of pupils needing extra help is particularly effective. Staff work very well together and their effective collaboration contributes to well planned lessons and consistent practice throughout school. First hand experiences, investigations and learning through play are successful features of teaching. Constructive strategies to help pupils understand what they do well and what they need to work on to improve, have been introduced, and are already having a positive impact.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An improved range of opportunities to work with staff and also choose activities they can access independently is beginning to impact positively on children's learning in the Foundation Stage. Offering the same mixed provision in Key Stage 1 helps pupils build on prior learning and sustain their interest and concentration. Good use is made of outside areas to promote learning in the Foundation Stage, and recently completed areas constructed for Key Stage 1 are beginning to give older pupils similar opportunities to extend their learning. The school is introducing a revised curriculum in Key Stage 1 concentrating on developing skills across the curriculum, rather than teaching subjects in isolation. For example, a strong focus on problem-solving in mathematics is having a positive impact on rising standards. Action is already being taken to modify the curriculum, by providing more opportunities for active learning and introducing topics, such as the one on 'space', to more closely meet the needs and interests of boys. However, this has not yet gone far enough. A well considered approach to teaching personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes well to pupils' personal development. Enrichment of the curriculum, by visits, out-of-school clubs and visitors, such as artists and musicians is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are very committed to the welfare of the pupils in their care. There are good partnerships with the agencies that support children and there is a very effective team in place to meet pupils' significant social and emotional needs. This support is

contributing to pupils' personal development and helping to raise achievement. The school has worked very hard, employing a wide range of strategies, to improve attendance, but has so far been unable to change the attitudes of a significant proportion of parents and carers who do not ensure their children attend school regularly. Assessment of where pupils are in their learning is good and teachers use this information to plan interventions for those who need extra help and set targets to guide pupils' learning. Arrangement for health and safety and child protection are thorough and well managed. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils move from one phase of their education to the next as smoothly as possible.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's future and provides very effective leadership, which inspires the school's attention to pupils' personal development and the drive to maintain and raise achievement. The leadership team has worked well together to promote pupils' personal development and to raise achievement. The headteacher has worked successfully to create a team ethos and a commitment to continuing professional development among the staff. Middle managers make an increasingly effective contribution to leadership. Governors are very supportive of, and committed to, the school, but their understanding of data about pupil performance is in the early stages of development. The school's self-evaluation, underpinned by effective checks on teaching and learning, is generally accurate and provides a good foundation for further improvement. Planning for the future is well organised and the school has a good understanding of how its planned improvements will lead to raising achievement and standards. The issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school gives good value for money. The school responds well to the needs and views of parents. When asked, and despite the continuing issue of attendance, parents give the school their overwhelming support.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 4 |
| 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

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| 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 | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school and being so polite and friendly. I enjoyed my visit very much.

What I liked most about your school:

- how well you behave and work so hard
- how much you enjoy your work, for example in the numeracy and science lessons I saw
- the good range of activities the teachers plan to help you learn
- how hard all the staff in school work, how well they look after you and keep you safe and how much they want you to do well in school.

I know everyone wants to do even better and I have suggested some things that I think will help:

- giving boys more work that will specially interest them
- helping children in nursery and reception to learn even more by involving them more in lessons
- working with your parents and carers to help make sure that more of you attend school every day.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and by taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by your good school.

I wish you all the very best for your future at Featherstone Girnhill School.