



Castleford Airedale Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108228
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288044
Inspection dates 14–15 February 2007
Reporting inspector Tony Painter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Poplar Avenue
School category	Community		Townville, Castleford
Age range of pupils	3–7		West Yorkshire WF10 3QJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 722980
Number on roll (school)	175	Fax number	01977 722981
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Matthew
		Headteacher	Mrs J Winterbottom
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–7	14–15 February 2007	288044

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school, which shares a building with the junior school to which its children normally transfer. This is set within a campus with childcare facilities and two further schools. Children mostly come from the surrounding area, characterised by high levels of unemployment and socio-economic disadvantage. Nearly half the children are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. Almost all children come from White British backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Over recent years the school's provision has been recognised in a number of awards including ArtsMark Gold, ActiveMark and Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

On entering the school one is immediately struck by the extremely high quality of children's artwork and displays. These create a vibrant and exciting atmosphere in this good school, which is a strong factor in helping children to do well. The headteacher has worked effectively with all staff to ensure that the school sets good examples for children. The focus on art and design and its links with other subjects is creating a good curriculum, making school exciting and pleasurable for children. This is having a positive impact: attendance has risen and behaviour is good. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about everything the school offers their children. Children join the school with very low levels of attainment. Most have had limited early experiences and many have very restricted language and social skills. The very caring atmosphere and supportive staff in the Foundation Stage classes help children to settle quickly. Good teaching includes a wide range of well planned activities that motivate and interest children well. These ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good with effective partnerships between teachers and support staff. Children continue to achieve well although the pace is not always as strong as in the earlier years. Children's standards remain below average by the time they leave the school. Teachers collect a lot of information about how well children are doing and this is regularly reviewed. This often leads directly to action to meet weaknesses, particularly in identifying additional lessons or support that successfully help children learn. However, action taken in lessons does not always have the impact it should. Teachers do not consistently use all the information they have to make sure that children are challenged in all their lessons. This is apparent in the somewhat weaker achievement of those children of average abilities. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good from their starting points because their needs are well analysed and met. They get good support for their learning although sometimes this inevitably remains slow. The care, guidance and support of children are good. In particular, very good attention is paid to caring for children and ensuring their personal development. This leads to outstanding personal development and well-being, with well-motivated children who enjoy what the school has to offer. They increasingly know how to keep themselves healthy and safe and are confident of the adults in school. They become well aware of the wider world and develop tolerance and understanding of others' thoughts and feelings. They make good use of the many opportunities given in school to reflect on and explore their own feelings. The headteacher's vision of a high quality learning environment to encourage and motivate children has been a successful beacon light over recent years. Other staff are now taking increasingly effective management roles and the school has good plans to continue this process. Governors, too, play a good part in ensuring the school meets its responsibilities. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and based on sufficient levels of monitoring of data and teaching. However, lesson observations do not always pay enough attention to how well children are learning. As a result opportunities are sometimes missed to identify how teachers can continue to improve children's achievement. The school has made good progress since the last inspection

and has everything in place to make good progress in the future. It represents good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers use all the information they have to plan lessons that challenge children, particularly those of average ability in Years 1 and 2, to make the best progress they are capable of.
- Ensure management's monitoring of teaching pays sufficient attention to children's learning and identifies how this could be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well throughout the school, although the stronger progress is currently in the Foundation Stage classes. This is because children, despite often having very limited social and other skills, are helped to settle quickly. A good range of activities helps them to learn well in all areas. Although children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress as other groups, often this progress is in small steps and this is reflected in the school's overall standards which are below average at the end of Year 2. The school's recent results in the Year 2 national assessments have remained below average overall. However, relatively higher proportions of the children reach the higher levels. The school's tracking shows that improvements are beginning to have an impact. Standards are rising and targets are being adjusted upwards accordingly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

From low levels of personal and social development when they start school, children develop very positive attitudes to learning and love coming to school. The school has been successful in promoting and improving attendance so that it is now around the national average. Children are very clear that coming to school is important to them. They relish the rich range of opportunities they have and make good gains in a range of skills that contribute to their future economic well-being. Children have a number of good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the wider community and use the positive links with local schools. Despite their young age, children take increasing responsibilities in the effective school council, having a say and making suggestions for improvement. Children are learning how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and are becoming well aware of the importance of healthy eating, reflected in the school's Healthy Schools award. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and this forms the basis of the warm and welcoming ethos that permeates the whole school. Relationships at every level are positive and productive. The stimulating and colourful environment, with a strong emphasis on art, nurtures children's aesthetic awareness particularly well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work together very well. They establish and build on very good relationships to ensure effective learning. In the Foundation Stage classes, for example, very well organised activities have a strong focus on improving children's personal development. Children respond well and they quickly gain confidence to take part and understand the school's expectations. Their learning is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make good use of a wide range of resources to capture children's attention and make their work interesting. There is a strong emphasis on developing language skills through school, with increasing opportunities for children to discuss their learning. Detailed assessment and monitoring of progress throughout the school ensures teachers know children well. Planning is usually detailed and ensures lessons have sufficient pace, supported by teachers' good management of classes. However, teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not consistently make full use of all that is known about children's progress when setting tasks. As a result they miss some opportunities to challenge pupils and ensure the very best progress for all.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding support for children's creative development is obvious in the high quality artwork throughout the school. This is often closely and effectively linked with children's learning in other subjects, helping them to do well. Exciting thematic work, for example about Italy, has widened children's understanding and encouraged them to produce vibrant artwork and successful writing. These links between subjects within a strong framework of basic skills ensures children learn well across the whole curriculum. Appropriately planned clubs and other out of school activities further support learning. Past weaknesses, such as the use of computers in classrooms, are now strengths. The strong emphasis on promoting creativity also has a positive impact on children's willingness to 'have a go'. For example, children have increasing confidence to take different approaches to writing tasks. Other effective measures to promote children's personal development are similarly successful and can be seen in the children's very positive attitudes to school and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are very supportive of the school's work, valuing in particular the way they can always talk to staff. The school takes very good care of its pupils, who work hard in class, behave well and play together amicably at playtime. Teachers' sensitive support ensures the few children with challenging behaviour are learning to meet the school's clearly stated and consistent high expectations. Children report that they feel safe:

they know where to turn for support and have no fear of bullying. All adults are thoroughly vetted to ensure their suitability for working with children and there are thorough Child Protection procedures. The school takes particularly good care of children who are vulnerable or have special needs by identifying their concerns quickly and providing well targeted support. Very good systems have been established to carefully track all children's academic progress. However, the detail of information gleaned from assessments is not consistently used to plan work matched precisely to children's needs. As a result teachers do not always ensure that each individual is challenged to achieve their very best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who has a clear vision and strategic plan for the school's future development. Key features of her leadership include meticulous organisation and high quality presentation. She sets high standards for all and is a strong role model, having successfully overseen extensive developments in recent years. For example, the school's action to promote inclusion has been recognised by independent assessment at a high level. The other leaders provide good support and are playing increasingly important roles, with plans for further development. Governors are committed and knowledgeable about the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. They provide valued support, but are not afraid to challenge when necessary. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the development plan gives a good steer to school improvement, identifying the right priorities. It is comprehensive and realistic, but insufficient attention to success criteria makes it difficult for staff to measure the impact of each objective. The monitoring of performance is systematic and regular, with links to professional development. However, its impact is diluted because observations of teaching do not focus enough on how well children are learning and how this can be improved.

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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?	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	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?	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

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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?	2
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?	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	2
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	2
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

We enjoyed visiting your school recently. In particular, we were really impressed with how much lovely artwork you had done. It has made every part of the school look so exciting! No wonder you're all so keen to come to school and do this great work.

We enjoyed watching some lessons and talking with you and your teachers very much. Thank you for being so polite and helpful. You all behaved very well and everyone was so friendly. You can really tell that all the adults and children get on very well together.

You said that you thought your school was good and we agree. We were impressed with the way your teachers are working together to make sure you do well in your lessons. They care for you well and make sure that you are safe. They are extremely good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.

The teachers are good at checking how well you are learning. We have asked them to make sure they use this information to plan work that will really stretch each of you to learn as well as you can. We've also asked them to help each other by concentrating on how well you are learning when they are watching each other teach.

Your teachers are working hard to keep making the school better. You can help by continuing to do your very best in everything you do. We wish you and the school the very best for the future.