

# Ackton Pastures Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108241
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	288049
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Bloomer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ralph Jaggard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	College Grove Whitwood Castleford West Yorkshire WF10 5NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 723030
<b>Fax number</b>	01977 723030

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized community primary school located on the western outskirts of Castleford. The school serves an area of increasing social disadvantage. Just over a quarter of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A third of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ackton Pastures provides pupils with a satisfactory education. It is a friendly school, which is working hard with pupils, parents and the local community to improve the quality of care and of learning. Parents are extremely supportive because they know that their children's well-being is central to what the school does. A good example is the way Foundation Stage staff work very closely with parents and pre-school children in the adjacent Children's Centre, preparing them for a better start to their Nursery education.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and share trusting relationships with the adults. Pupils are aware of the need to keep to a sensible diet and they enjoy the selection of sports activities available after school. Attendance has recently improved to meet the average level. Behaviour is satisfactory. A few pupils, however, express concerns about the number of playtime squabbles which occur. Staff members are aware that a minority of pupils, mostly in Years 5 and 6, are not always good role models for younger pupils and are working hard to provide the support and guidance needed. This is having positive impact on behaviour, especially in lessons. Pupils are keen to become involved in community activities. They organise art competitions to raise funds, become involved in community environmental projects such as tree planting and recycling, and help with daily routines in school.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. On entry to the Nursery most children have skills which are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Foundation Stage and Year 1 because of good quality teaching and learning. Throughout the rest of the school there are pockets of good progress where teaching is stronger. Over a five year period, with the exception of 2006, standards at the end of Year 6 have been steadily rising. Some pupils, mostly in Years 5 and 6, have missed some important learning. This has meant that they have not made as much progress in the past as they should. Consequently, even though progress is satisfactory and standards are rising, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science.

The quality of teaching has improved in recent years. However, staff changes have caused some interruptions to school development. For instance, issues identified through monitoring have not been rigorously followed up and systems for assessment, including the use of marking, are not embedded consistently in day-to-day practice. Consequently, pupils do not always know how to improve and have not regained sufficient ground to lift standards and raise achievement beyond satisfactory. The curriculum is planned well for children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and is satisfactory elsewhere. There is sufficient emphasis on basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, but as yet there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise their skills across different subjects. Some pupils hold the view that some lessons are not interesting enough because there is too little practical activity. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities when they are withdrawn from lessons to work on specific skills such as reading. When they are in whole classes, work is not always matched as well to their varying abilities.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher cares passionately for the school and the welfare of pupils. His vision is shared clearly with the whole-school community. There have been satisfactory improvements in attendance, standards, and the roles of some senior leaders since the last inspection. More recently there has been good progress in quality and provision in the Foundation Stage. The school, with the help of the local authority,

has established good systems for the regular tracking of pupils' progress. This has also helped the school to form an accurate view of its overall performance. There has been limited development in the roles of teachers with management responsibilities. This has been partly due to the employment of new staff, which has slowed the momentum of change. However, senior leaders are developing a clear view of the direction the school is to take. Governors are entirely committed to establishing the school as central to the community. They manage finances carefully to provide satisfactory value for money. They take an active interest in the school's work. The school improvement plan is firmly rooted in the principles of Every Child Matters. Given the progress made since the last inspection and with local authority support and that unsettled teaching has been resolved, there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels plan, implement and evaluate outcomes of action more rigorously to improve the quality of teaching and pace of learning throughout the school.
- Use assessment more precisely so that work is closely matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Involve pupils in their own learning so they are fully aware of what they need to do to improve.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. When children start in the Nursery their attainment levels are well below what is expected for their age in all areas of learning. They make good progress because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum, though many are still working towards the nationally expected learning goals by the time they leave Reception. Good progress continues in Year 1 because the teachers build effectively on children's earlier learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in Year 2. National test data for 2006 show a marked improvement in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, following a significant dip in the two previous years. Nevertheless, standards remain just below the national average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is patchy but satisfactory overall. Inconsistencies in teaching quality in previous years have left pupils in the Years 5 and 6 mixed-age classes struggling to make up lost ground. As a result pupils' past progress has not been as good as it could have been which has impacted on the standards that pupils attain. Year 6 pupils currently make satisfactory progress. However, there is more to be done to raise standards which are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Events such as the Indian dance workshop as well as learning about European countries, reflected in art work, raise their cultural awareness. Most pupils are respectful and show caring attitudes to others. They are thoughtful and reflective during assemblies and in class discussions about everyday life situations. Behaviour is satisfactory overall but a minority of older pupils find behaviour and relationships with others difficult. Pupils strongly agree that they have a healthy school. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school

parliament is promoting the sale of fruit at break times to supplement the healthy lunch menus. Pupils acquire valuable life skills by taking on responsibilities. They help with charitable fundraising, improvements to the environment and enjoy the opportunity to take part in musical performances and festivals. Development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, however, does not yet contribute strongly enough to secure their economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. As a result pupils' progress is satisfactory. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and in some classes in Years 3 to 6. There are strengths, where teaching is good, in the way teachers plan and structure lessons. Learning objectives are made clear so pupils know what is expected of them. Time at the end of lessons is used well to discuss and assess what has been learned. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use resources, including interactive whiteboards, effectively to help pupils learn more purposefully. The skilful team of teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' progress. They are particularly helpful to pupils who need specific support because they know them well and are sensitive to their individual needs. However, when planning work, in some classes, the different abilities of pupils are not always taken fully into account. This results in a lack of challenge for the most able or work which is too challenging for others, restricting the progress they make. There are inconsistencies in teachers' use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning and in marking to share success and accelerate day-to-day progress. In some lessons pupils' behaviour is not always managed effectively.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and adequately meets the needs of most pupils. It does not fully meet the needs of the most able. Sufficient time is given to the teaching of basic skills in writing, mathematics and ICT but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to learning in other subjects. However, individual teachers are beginning to plan more creatively and there are some promising links developing, for example between literacy and science and the use of ICT in geography. There is a satisfactory range of activities outside of lesson time to help pupils foster sports skills and encourage interest in art, singing and ICT as well as visits and visitors to enrich learning. There is a well-established programme for personal health education and citizenship. This effectively prepares pupils for making informed choices about their own safety and well-being.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for all pupils but within that there are elements of exceptional care and support for some of the most vulnerable. The way in which mentors help individual pupils through particularly difficult times increases their feeling of security. The help given to some pupils with their spiritual development is also an example of how far the school is prepared to go to raise self-esteem and help pupils to learn. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Pupils are given clear reminders about the benefits of keeping themselves safe, maintaining secure relationships and trying their best through the

many thoughtful displays around the school. Support and guidance for academic progress is not as strong as the pastoral support. Although systems for analysing assessment data and tracking pupils' progress are good, teachers do not always use the information well enough in their planning or for setting challenging targets in order to speed up their progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. Leaders are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have set the school on a path to improvement. The headteacher's charismatic leadership style is inclusive in that all staff roles are clearly defined. Even though some improvement in pupils' achievement is evident, evaluation by senior leaders and their impact on learning has lacked some urgency. Earlier staffing difficulties have caused some interruptions to school development. However, the staffing is now stable and there are signs that better progress and standards are working through the school. Governors support the school fully and fulfil their statutory duties. They know the overall strengths and weaknesses of the school and hold the school to account. However, they do not have sufficiently detailed systems for checking the effects of spending decisions on pupils' learning.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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**

Ackton Pastures Primary School, Castleford, WF10 5NS.

Thank you for helping to make us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to and finding out about the things you enjoy and the progress you are making. We were pleased to see that your attendance is getting better. That's very important so keep it up! We also noticed how healthy you all are and that must have something to do with those super school lunches. In fact we think that all of the grown-ups take good care of you.

We found out that you are making satisfactory progress and that most of you behave well. A few of you though, sometimes let the school down so it would be better if everyone tried hard to behave their best all of the time. Your headteacher, teachers and parents would like you to make good, rather than satisfactory progress. You can help to make that happen by working as hard as you can to become better at English, mathematics and science. We have also asked your headteacher and teachers to check more regularly on the progress you make and to help you by making sure you always know what you must do to make your work better.