

# Wakefield Methodist Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108252
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	288052
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Sharples HMI

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs S St Clair Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ronald Egan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 December 2002
<b>School address</b>	Field Lane Thornes Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 7RU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303630
<b>Fax number</b>	01924 303631

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Wakefield Methodist is a slightly above average sized school which includes a specialist speech and language and autism support unit. Most pupils are White British with around 7% from minority ethnic backgrounds which is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties including statements of special need is slightly below national averages. The number of pupils entering the school within the school year is higher than normal. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average, though some pupils come from areas with higher than average levels of social and economic deprivation.

## 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 caring school which feels secure and everyone is friendly.' 'School is fun and staff are loving, it's like having your family at school!' These comments from pupils sum up the feelings of so many other pupils, and parents, that Wakefield Methodist truly is a good school.

When entering the school there is at once a feeling of a friendly, warm and caring atmosphere. The Christian ethos is evident throughout the school. Pupils are cheerful, polite and enjoy being at school. Pupils say they feel safe and secure knowing that any problems will be sorted out by a member of staff. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This is a key contributing factor to the good rates of progress and standards achieved by pupils across the school. Teachers are liked and respected by the pupils. Lessons are generally planned well and in most cases meet the pupils' different needs and varying abilities. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively and in most cases use the assessments well to help planning, check progress and set targets. However, there are still aspects of teaching and learning which could be improved so that they are of a consistently high standard across the school. For example: matching tasks to engage all abilities, making more use of pupil assessment, and ensuring that pupils are clear about individual targets. Teachers' planning and the breadth of curriculum provided ensure that a wide range of topics contribute effectively to the pupils' pastoral growth as well as their academic development.

The overall standards of work and progress made by pupils by the time they leave school are good. The Nursery and Reception classes offer good provision for the children and lay a good foundation for movement up into the mainstream school. As one parent said, 'Staff in the Nursery have been excellent in supporting our daughter. The curriculum in Nursery is well planned, with projects and topics conveyed to parents in a half-termly newsletter.' By the end of the Foundation Stage children make good progress and achieve standards which are above national expectations for their age. This good progress continues throughout the school and standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are above average.

The pupils and parents are generally pleased with their school and want to be a part of it. This is reflected in the improving levels of attendance, punctuality, good behaviour and the number of pupils moving into the school throughout the year. Pupils have an important voice through the school council and have made several suggestions for improving the school. For example, they had a big say in the development of playground facilities and the re-introduction of the tuck shop. Pupils are making a positive contribution to the school and local community.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The recently established communication resource is a strength. It is somewhere where pupils with varied learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well in a warm and caring environment. The school has a fully inclusive strategy for all pupils and looks to integrate all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into mainstream lessons wherever possible. This is a good, well planned strategy but one that does not sit easily with every parent. The role of the communication unit and the inclusion policy is not clearly understood by all parents.

The headteacher and his supporting team provide good leadership and management. This ensures that standards remain high across the school. However, this has not been easy over the past year with a period of unrest caused by three long term senior staff absences. Overall the headteacher and governors, through the appointment of temporary staff, have managed to maintain a stable situation across the school. Inevitably, this has not been without some

disruption and unrest in those classes concerned. There are good systems in place for evaluating the progress of the school in all aspects of its day to day life. The staff and governors know its strengths and weaknesses well, as seen through the quality of the school's self-evaluation report. In all cases the inspection judgements agree with those of the school. Governors are developing well as critical friends to the school. They are fulfilling all their legal duties. Aspects of their work, including the formal running of committees, greater involvement in training and running of the school by more members, could be improved. The capacity for the school to improve further is good.

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

- Ensure that the good features of teaching and learning are embedded and applied consistently across all lessons.
- Ensure that all governors have a greater participation in training and involvement in the running of the school.
- Ensure that all parents have a clear understanding of the school's inclusion policy, including the role and value of the communication resource.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Nursery staff complete an assessment of all new children to record their attainment on entry. Children enter the Nursery class with levels of attainment which are broadly average for their age. Their progress is measured and tracked well throughout the Nursery and Reception classes against the Foundation Stage Profile. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and achieve standards which are above national expectations for their age, with particular strengths in communication, mathematical and personal development. This provides children with a good start for their move up into Key Stage 1. The school rightly recognises as a strength the management and provision of the Foundation Unit which is the main reason for the good progress made by children. By the end of Year 2 pupils continue to make good progress and standards of attainment are well above national averages, with strengths in reading and writing. Similarly, by the end of Year 6 pupils again make good progress and overall standards are above average with a strength in mathematics where attainment is well above the national average. The school sets challenging targets which once again look set to be exceeded given the early analysis of this year's national test results. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall rising to good in some individual cases. Although comparisons for these pupils are difficult given the small numbers, the standards they attain are above national averages by the time they leave school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The social, moral, spiritual, cultural and emotional development of pupils is good. Pupils are given a wide range of experiences during their time at school which develop these aspects well. For example: visits from local clergy, residential and day excursions, fundraising, and social events organised by the parent-teacher association. Discussions with pupils, and observation of their attitude in lessons and around school, show that pupils enjoy their time at school.

Overall the standard of behaviour is good. However, the school is not complacent and continues to support staff in behaviour management strategies particularly in classes where a small number of pupils are more challenging in their behaviour. Pupils say they feel safe in and around school.

The staff and pupils are very health conscious. Healthy living is promoted in many ways including healthy meal options at lunchtime, the provision of fruit and milk, a wide range of robust play activities at lunch and break times and through the teaching of Religious Education (RE). Year 6 pupils are given opportunities and responsibility for many aspects of life around the school such as organising the fruit distributions, maintenance of the outside animals and environmental area, and the role of peer mediators at break times.

The school has made some good progress in addressing the issue around attendance from the previous inspection. Attendance is improving and the school's positive action to reduce lateness and unauthorised absence has impacted on the situation. Overall rates of attendance are now satisfactory and improving. Electronic registration, checks with parents within the first hour of absence, absence letters and the early involvement of the home-school liaison officer are effective strategies which have brought about this improvement. The school develops well those skills which will prepare the pupils for future life. For example literacy, numeracy, group work, speaking and listening are all developed daily across the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning overall are good; they are key factors in the good rates of progress and above average standards achieved across the school. The school rightly recognises as a strength the management and provision of the Foundation Unit. Activities are well planned, providing children with the opportunity to move freely between the classroom and outside areas. Within the lessons there is a good balance of well structured outside activities linked closely to the focused classroom tasks.

Through the lessons seen and the samples of pupils' work it is clear that pupils make good progress overall. Lessons are generally well planned and pupils know the learning objectives for the lesson. The school has a healthy number of classroom assistants on the staff roll and they are used well to support the needs of individuals or groups of pupils. Discussion with pupils shows that they understand the tasks in hand and respond to questions from the teacher well. They are able to draw on previously gained knowledge and skills and apply these to work in lessons. Teachers use a range of teaching and learning styles, and the interactive whiteboards are used well to motivate and captivate the pupils' interest. Pupils work well as individuals and cooperatively in small groups or pairings. The quality of displays within classrooms and around school is good and provides a colourful and lively environment to stimulate and motivate pupils.

Although there are many features of good teaching and learning across the school, they are not yet consistently applied at all times. There are still aspects of teaching and learning which could be improved so that they are of a consistently high standard across the school. These are matching tasks to meet all pupils' abilities, allowing pupils freedom to assess their own and others' work and ensuring that pupils are clear about their own targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets all legal requirements and teachers ensure there is a breadth and range of activities covered when planning lessons. The curriculum is structured in a way that interests and meets the varying needs of all pupils. Areas of the curriculum such as personal, social,

health and citizenship education and religious education ensure that the personal and pastoral development of the pupils is well covered. Similarly, through various aspects of the curriculum pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and health issues and how they can keep themselves and their families safe from harm. Pupils' experiences are made even more interesting through educational visits to places of interest and by visiting speakers. The curriculum builds effectively on all these experiences and utilises well the school environment and other places of local interest.

Staff adapt the curriculum well to meet the differing needs and abilities of pupils. For example, the content and teaching methods for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are adapted to meet their varying needs. Provision for the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good. The content of the curriculum and opportunities on offer all help to prepare pupils well for life after leaving school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs available to pupils throughout the week if they choose to take part.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a caring and fully inclusive school where all pupils and staff are valued and their needs are taken into account. The school has been taking in more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has recently created a 'Communications Resource' which provides well for pupils with autism and speech and language difficulties. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is a strength of the school. This is seen through the standards of work they achieve during their time in school. Classroom assistants are used very well to support all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school meets all statutory requirements in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. All staff are trained and updated on child protection and other safeguarding policies. Links with and support from external agencies are good. They respond promptly to requests from the school and statements for pupils with learning difficulties are completed quickly. All pupils are supported well at key points of transition in their school lives to the extent that pupils who are vulnerable or lack confidence are given extra time and support to help the transition. The school has some good links with the local high school which help the pupils move smoothly from Year 6 to Year 7.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are focused well on raising standards and rates of progress for all pupils, as seen in the school's results in external tests, within the school's Christian values of developing and supporting each pupil. The pupils' health, well-being, personal development and academic progress are all equal priorities for the school.

There is a good school development plan which clearly identifies the key areas for improvement and this is shared with all staff and governors. There are good systems in place for monitoring progress against all action plans and governors receive half termly progress reports from the headteacher. Good links with outside agencies have been established. The great majority of parents are very positive about the way in which the school is led and managed. The school communicates effectively with parents and encourages a two way dialogue through various

media including governor and headteacher newsletters, parents' evenings and a good quality school website. The governors continue to produce an annual update report for all parents, which includes a calendar of events for the year, results from national tests and governors' contact details. Governors carry out all their statutory duties satisfactorily. However, they are not all yet fully involved in the life of the school or take the opportunity to attend training. Equally, the running of governors' committees needs formalisation. The school manages its resources well and has made some effective improvements to the building over the last few years including the extension of most classrooms. The school offers good value for money.



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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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	2
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Wakefield Methodist VC Junior and Infant School, Wakefield, WF2 7RU.

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed the chance to talk with you about your work and to listen to what you think about your school. I have decided that Wakefield Methodist is a good school. I also found out that you, along with the teachers, governors and most of your parents are all proud of the school and are working hard to see it become even better.

What I liked most about your school

- The good progress you make during your time in school and the standards of work you produce.
- The good leadership provided by the headteacher and his team.
- The good teachers and classroom assistants and the way they help you to do well.
- Your good behaviour and polite manners around school.
- The way that you feel safe around school and enjoy being there.
- The way that all the adults guide and care for you and want to see that you come to no harm. This helps create the happy family feeling which is all around the school.
- The way that everyone is included in the life of the school and made to feel a part of it.
- The many ways you help make the school good and enjoy being there.
- The way that your friends who struggle with their learning are helped to do their best.

What I have asked your school to do now

- I want the school to make sure that all bits of teaching are good in all lessons.
- Make sure that parents are fully aware of how the school wants all pupils involved and what the Communication Resource is for.
- That all governors take part in more training and play a greater part in the life of the school.

I hope you are pleased with the things I have said about your school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved. I very much enjoyed my time with you.