



Ackworth Mill Dam Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130966
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 293678
Inspection date 15 February 2007
Reporting inspector Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mill Gate
School category	Community		Ackworth, Pontefract
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire WF7 7PH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 723110
Number on roll (school)	145	Fax number	01977 723111
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Susan Nunns
		Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Colquhoun
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection date 15 February 2007	Inspection number 293678
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school is situated in a village near to Pontefract. Most pupils attend the school from the immediate area with a few coming from further afield. The area is mixed socially and economically. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including two pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has a breakfast club on site. The Nursery provides part-time education in the mornings or afternoons. There were two temporary teachers in Key Stage 2 during the inspection and the headteacher has been in post for a very short time. The school was recently awarded Investors in People, Investors in Pupils and a 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: 3

Ackworth Mill Dam Junior and Infant School is satisfactorily effective with good features in the leadership of the recently appointed headteacher. It provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Parents appreciate the school's warm and friendly ethos and the approachability of all who work there. The headteacher works hard to provide 'love, limits and exciting opportunities' for all the pupils.

The standards pupils reach by the time they leave school fluctuate year by year because of the small number of pupils in each year group. They are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, although attainment in writing is below average and an area the school is working to improve. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 are below average and pupils do not achieve as well as they should because of some weaknesses in teaching. Teaching throughout the school overall is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress based on their average attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage. Personal development and well-being are effectively fostered. Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy learning. This was well reflected in the whole school music afternoon, where all pupils took part and sang and played drums with great enthusiasm and gusto. The recent re-accreditation of a Healthy School Award confirms the high priority given to healthy lifestyles and keeping fit. Arrangements to care, guide and support the pupils are rigorous. The attention to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and shows in the good progress they make. The curriculum is effectively enriched and provides a good level of excitement and enjoyment. Pupils spoke particularly highly of the history topics and visits they make.

A key priority of the headteacher has been to involve all staff in self-evaluation and to encourage key staff to take responsibility for their subjects. This is developing well despite the temporary absence of experienced staff. Actions to improve achievement in Key Stage 1 are being undertaken but as yet are not having sufficient impact on pupils' learning. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although there is a lack of resources to foster independent learning which limits children's learning through play. Again, the school leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to improve outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 so that all pupils achieve as well as they are capable.
- Provide a wider range of resources for the Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities to make worthwhile choices in their independent learning.
- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is typical of children elsewhere. They achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning apart from some aspects of communication, language and literacy - linking sounds and letters and writing. This satisfactory achievement is not built on well in Key Stage 1, where progress is inadequate because of weaknesses in teaching. Standards were below national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2006 national tests. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout Key Stage 2 and make up some of the lost progress. As a result, by the time pupils leave school their standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. They are still below average in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve better than their peers because of the well targeted support they receive and the close partnership with parents. More able children reach their potential in mathematics and science but underachieve in English, because of weaknesses in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils readily make friends and settle into the kind and caring community provided by school. The wide range of healthy eating options on offer at lunchtime is seen as 'most impressive' by the pupils. Older pupils show sensible levels of maturity, take responsibility for many day to day tasks around school and rise to the challenges provided by residential visits. They enjoy learning, in particular the recent chances to carry out science investigations involving mouldy food and evaporating salt. Teachers are always there for the pupils and they feel safe as a result of this. They look forward to getting a planner to help them keep a record of what they have to do as preparation for the high school. The school council now involves all pupils and takes decisions to provide them with even greater enjoyment through various celebration parties held after school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is well fostered and clearly evident, for example, in the frank ways in which Year 1 pupils were observed chatting about their understanding of Jesus during snack time. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Current attendance is satisfactory but has fallen in the past year. Steps to improve this include contacting parents on the first day a child is absent and effective liaison with the education welfare officer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Actions to improve this situation are just beginning since the appointment of the new headteacher at the start of the

term. For example, she has introduced a programme of support and monitoring with assistance from the local authority that is having a positive impact. Pupils are keen learners and pay good attention in lessons. Interactive whiteboards are used well in all classes. However, the teaching of writing is underdeveloped. Teachers do not always share precise learning intentions and success criteria with pupils, so they can know just what they have to do. Lesson planning is satisfactory, but there is too little account taken of the wide range of ability in some classes which occasionally results in a lack of challenge for more able pupils and work that can be too difficult for less able pupils. This was most evident in Key Stage 1 teaching. The school has identified inconsistencies in marking because in too many instances there is a lack of comment to show pupils how to improve their work. Although there are some strengths, teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good because of the lack of learning resources. As a result, there are limited opportunities for purposeful independent learning in free choice time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Over recent years actions to enrich learning through an increased focus on the creative arts, for example, a themed music and art week, are contributing exceptionally well to pupils' enjoyment and acquisition of basic literacy skills. This was vividly seen, as Year 4 and 5 pupils wholeheartedly and tunefully sang along to, 'I have a dream' reading the new words with gusto and enthusiasm. After school clubs and residential visits further enrich the curriculum and equip pupils for responsibilities in later life. Pupils also enjoy learning Spanish. Parents express high levels of satisfaction in the priority given to their children's personal, social and health education, which leads to their high levels of confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for because of the all round attention to the welfare of all pupils in classes and around school. Parents are very appreciative of the approachability of all the staff. Child protection and health and safety matters are appropriately dealt with. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet government requirements. Regular child well-being meetings are held with multi-agency teams as required. The confidentiality provided via the 'feelings box' means that sensitive issues can be discussed in private. There are good arrangements, led by the headteacher, to track the individual progress of pupils term by term and identify those pupils underachieving and needing additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The recently appointed headteacher is tackling weaknesses in teaching and learning and underachievement with determination and rigour. Her leadership and management

are good. The school development plan is a sharp, well focused document. The headteacher is empowering key subject leaders to take responsibility for standards in their subjects, securing support and training where required and steadfastly holding them to account for weaknesses in achievement and standards. This determination is making a palpable difference to the ethos of school and team spirit. Governors are kept well informed by detailed reports from the headteacher prior to each meeting and provide a good level of support.

Self-evaluation involves middle as well as senior leaders and provides a broadly accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, reflecting monitoring and analysis that are generally of appropriate rigour. Actions taken by the school are fit for purpose and are beginning to have a beneficial impact, such that progress is beginning to be evident in most of the areas in which it is needed. All learners are well included.

The school is satisfactorily resourced. Resources for the Foundation Stage both inside and outside are limited, although there are plans to address the lack of outdoor provision in the near future. Improvements since the last inspection, with respect to the role of subject leaders and the introduction of systematic monitoring and evaluation are good. The school has a good capacity to improve under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	3
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	Yes

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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	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

Thank you for making my visit to your school so welcoming. I enjoyed talking to you very much and listening to your musical talents in the afternoon. I am writing to let you know what I liked about your school and what needs to be improved.

This is what I liked about your school:

- you all work hard and behave well in lessons, I am sure your parents and teachers are very proud of you
- you have many jobs to do around school that are important
- many of you are very talented, as you all had a role to play in your recent production of 'Grease'
- your headteacher works very hard and cares about you all.

This is what I have asked to be improved:

- the standards you achieve in writing
- the equipment available for the children in the Foundation Stage
- the help you receive when you are in Years 1 and 2 so that you all achieve as well as you can.

You can help by making sure you ask when you do not understand what you are doing.

Thank you again and good luck in your time in Mill Dam School.