



Hemsworth Grove Lea Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130968
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 293679
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ralph Higgs

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Community		Hemsworth, Pontefract
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire WF9 4JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 722240
Number on roll (school)	224	Fax number	01977 722240
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr George Mellows
		Headteacher	Mrs J McNichol
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is situated in a residential area of an ex-mining town. Most pupils are drawn from the local community but, due to the school's popularity, about a third of the intake is from further afield. Pupils mostly come from relatively prosperous homes but there are pockets of disadvantage. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. There has been considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection. The headteacher took up post in April 2003 and was joined by a new deputy headteacher in September 2006. In recent years, the school has had to make frequent use of temporary appointments, though the staffing situation is more stable now.

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 good school which provides good value for money. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. This is because the headteacher has actively pursued a clear vision for improvement with the effective support of the governing body. Staffing and resource issues have been largely overcome and the staff team is committed to the success of the school. This shows that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because provision is good. Good teamwork between the Nursery and Reception staff ensures that children enjoy a rich and varied mix of activities, which are well tailored to their needs. As a result, from their broadly average starting points, most children reach above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. This good rate of progress is sustained across Key Stages 1 and 2 by all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils mature into confident young citizens during their time in the school. They enjoy their education and appreciate being listened to. 'We are encouraged to speak our minds', older pupils affirmed. This means they respond well to lesson activities which make them think and they work hard to succeed at them. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because the school is successful in encouraging parents not to take their children away on holiday in term time. Pupils behave well around school and feel safe from bullying, which they say occurs rarely. They clearly know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep fit. These qualities are promoted effectively through a good, rich curriculum and by the effective support and personal guidance provided by a caring staff.

Pupils' learning and achievement are good. This is because the quality of teaching is good across the school with some that is outstanding. It is underpinned by strong relationships and effective planning which takes good account of pupils' needs. Teachers use their subject knowledge and interests successfully to help make learning enjoyable and productive. However, the quality of marking and feedback in lessons is inconsistent. Pupils have a sound, and some a good, understanding of what they should be aiming for. However, targets for improvement are not always sharply focused on what needs to be done next and some of them are not easily understood by the pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The school knows itself well as it frequently and rigorously checks on its work. Governors make an effective contribution to this process. The strong connections they have with the local community are used beneficially to carry out their duties. The information gathered from self-evaluation is used effectively to keep improvements on track. For example, the close scrutiny of pupils' work in English has ensured that new techniques for helping pupils to improve their writing are successfully established.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work consistently and clearly indicates what they should do next to improve.
- Improve the quality of assessment in lessons in order to involve pupils more effectively in evaluating their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good from entry to the end of Key Stage 2. Children typically enter the Nursery with broadly average attainment, although a small proportion has weak language and social skills. They settle well, quickly adjusting to working and playing together to make good progress in their basic skills.

Good, lively teaching coupled with the positive attitudes of pupils leads to above average standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. All groups of pupils make good progress because lesson planning pitches work at the right level and pupils who need extra help quickly receive it. The school rapidly responds to any changes in overall attainment with effective action. Consequently, the national test results in Year 6 recovered strongly in 2006 from a dip the previous year and this improvement is continuing. The school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics. There was a marked improvement in writing, which is also now above the national average. Consequently, the school is now setting more challenging targets for future whole school performance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From an early age they develop good social skills and a strong sense of right and wrong. Their self-esteem is high because the school values their opinions and encourages them to discover their special gifts and talents. They attend school regularly and arrive on time. They are keen to help one another and to help out in school. For example, volunteers wearing 'buddy bands' support pupils who feel lonely and need a friend in the playground. Pupils also make a positive contribution to their community through the school council and by taking part in recycling schemes. Fund-raising events for others less fortunate than themselves are strongly supported. Older pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular clubs. Pupils also know about making healthy dietary choices, which positively influences their choice of school lunches. Pupils' good basic skills and the confidence gained from the excellent transition projects in Year 6 prepare them very well for their future education at secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Classrooms are well-organised and welcoming. Teachers set clear expectations for learning and behaviour. Teaching is typically enthusiastic and well informed. Teaching assistants also contribute well to the good quality of pupils' learning, particularly for low attaining pupils. A recent re-organisation of the curriculum has allowed teachers to specialise in a number of subjects, especially in Key Stage 2. This means that lessons are often challenging and fun. Lessons in physical education and music, for example, have benefited from this approach. The very best of these lessons encourages pupils to think independently and to be creative in their responses.

There are some good features to the assessment of pupils' work but there are also some inconsistencies. Although pupils are encouraged to evaluate their understanding of lessons, their views are not always followed up effectively. Teachers mark pupils' books frequently. Whilst some practice is good, and pupils are given specific points for improvement, some comments are too general or only give vague praise. Consequently, pupils do not always have a clear enough understanding of their targets or what to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum effectively meets all pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy a good and interesting curriculum that benefits from a strong and relevant focus on improving standards in English and mathematics. The introduction of new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, is allowing teachers to make use of exciting resources for learning and to make further beneficial links between subjects. For example, the study of weather patterns in Year 6 made good use of the Internet and pupils' skills in using spreadsheets. There is good provision for physical education and sport, and for personal and citizenship education. The school makes the best use it can of the aging facilities and the limited spaces for a library and for independent learning.

Educational visits, residential experiences and visitors to the school, such as theatre groups, enrich the curriculum. A good range of after school clubs and activities adds to older pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and valued because the school puts a high priority on their well-being. The procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are robust. Pupils and parents have a great deal of confidence in the school. Pupils appreciate there is always an adult to speak to if they have any worries. They particularly value being able to confide in the learning mentor, who is very effective in helping pupils get the most out of school.

Parents are kept well informed about their child's education. Effective liaison with specialist agencies supplements the good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. New children settle into the Nursery very well due to sensitive and thoughtful induction. A very imaginative programme for Year 6 pupils makes an outstanding contribution to their preparation for secondary education. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress are well established across the school. However, the day-to-day guidance that pupils receive in lessons is not always effective because it is too general or not easily understood.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are successfully focused on securing improvement. Good systems for self-review are in place, which ensure that the school accurately identifies the areas it needs to work on. New staff appointments have been made with a very good understanding of the schools' needs. Thorough induction for these new teachers has helped them quickly become part of the school team. Performance management is also skilfully used to promote school as well as personal professional development. Consequently, teachers work effectively together in their different teams to bring about improvements. For example, a well led intensive development programme has resulted in teachers rapidly becoming confident in using the new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, recently installed in their classrooms.

The school effectively uses the good links it has with other institutions to extend opportunities for learning and to aid developments. Good liaison with a specialist college is used to enrich the curriculum. Also, involvement with the University of the First Age has helped staff extend their teaching techniques. Increasingly, the views of pupils and parents are sought to help improve the quality of provision. For example, this has led to changes to the school behaviour policy and improvements to parent/teacher consultation evenings.

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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	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	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?	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

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	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	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

Thank you for the really warm welcome you gave to me and my colleague when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed the discussions we had with you. They really helped us to understand your school.

These are the good and excellent things we found out about your school, which provides you with a good education:

- you make good progress in your lessons because you enjoy your work and try hard to do your best
- you develop into mature young people because of the good personal guidance you receive
- you behave well and get on well with each other and with adults
- you clearly know how to stay healthy and keep fit
- lessons are good as teachers make them interesting
- there are lots of clubs and sports after school, which you enjoy
- the staff take very good care of you
- the Gazette, Transition and Technical groups for Year 6 pupils make an excellent contribution to making the move to secondary school really easy
- the headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job in improving your education.

We have asked your school to find ways of making your education even better by:

- making sure that you get good feedback in all lessons to help you understand what to do to improve your work: you will have to think hard to make this work well
- making sure that the marking of your books always gives you clear and easily understood pointers for improvement: again, you will have to try hard to make the improvements your teachers suggest.