

Fitzwilliam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130970
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	293680
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Judy Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neal West
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Second Avenue Fitzwilliam Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 5BA
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is an average sized primary school. Most children attend the Foundation Stage unit from the age of three. The school serves the semi-rural community of Fitzwilliam village, situated south-east of Wakefield. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well above average, and the proportion on the school's register of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds the Investors in People and the Healthy Schools awards.

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 with many outstanding features. Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, very well supported by colleagues with other responsibilities, means that the school is safe and runs smoothly. There is excellent evaluation of all the school's activities, so that the leadership is very clear about what needs to be done next and has good plans in place to achieve this. The school gives excellent value for money.

On entry to the Nursery, many children have difficulty communicating orally. Social skills of a significant number are poor. Outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception classes enables most children to make excellent progress in all areas, however, by the time they start Year 1 some children have not achieved the expected early learning goals. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is outstanding.

Good teaching throughout Years 1 to 6 leads to good achievement, particularly in literacy and science, so that standards at the end of Year 2 are just below average and by the end of Year 6 are average. Progress in number skills and mathematics over the last four years is satisfactory and therefore not as good as that in English and science. Highest attaining children are identified, but at present they are not given enough opportunities that challenge them to extend their powers of thinking beyond that of the rest of their classmates.

Children's personal development is outstanding because the school has exemplary systems for enabling every child to develop as an individual and as a valued member of the school community. All adults treat children with fairness and respect, and children respond by being polite to all and friendly and kind to each other. The good curriculum is enriched by many additional activities that help children to experience the wider world. Personal development is also supported through strong links with parents who are encouraged to support their children's learning and are helped to feel part of the school community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in mathematics in all years so that children achieve as well as they do in English and science.
- Provide more activities to challenge and extend the work of the most able children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many children enter the Nursery unable to speak clearly or put together simple sentences. Achievement in these years is outstanding, so that by the time the children leave the Foundation Stage they are well prepared to start the more formal education in Year 1, although standards of number and literacy are still just below average.

On the basis of the school's own good assessment system it is evident that by the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing, and close to (but just below) average in mathematics. In 2006, the latest year for which test results can be compared with national results, virtually all had made good progress from their starting points and the progress of some middle attainers was outstanding.

In relation to children's starting points on entry to the school, their achievement is good. The school reached its suitably challenging target for the proportion of children reaching expected

levels in mathematics and exceeded its target in English. However, the target for the proportion reaching the higher levels in mathematics was missed. Children enjoy reading from an early age and this is reflected in their enthusiasm for telling and writing stories. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they are very well supported through additional learning programmes and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants.

By the end of Year 6 most children can express themselves well in writing and standards of spelling and handwriting are good. Most cope well with number work, but the highest attainers are not given sufficiently opportunities to explore more complex mathematical ideas and therefore achieve more highly. In science and English too, the most able children are not always given work that is demanding enough. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good. Consequently, children, even in Reception, use computers confidently. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6 they can, for example, design lively presentations using a range graphics, text and sound.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children are very confident and their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy being in school and are proud to be part of their community. Attendance, a key issue in the previous inspection, has improved well and is now average.

Children know about and usually practise healthy eating. They can explain this to visitors, and know why the school achieves the Healthy Schools award. Children are extremely clear about the importance of keeping safe and enjoy working and playing together. Older children act responsibly with younger ones and the school council plays an integral part in the school's management. Children know right from wrong because good behaviour is praised and unsuitable behaviour dealt with firmly and fairly. Cultural development through art and literature is supported very well by frequent visits and visitors, and music is an everyday part of their lives, in for example, thoughtful and entertaining assemblies. Good spiritual development fostered by the school ethos is enhanced by close links with the local church.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, and in some lessons it is outstanding. As a result, children learn well and with enjoyment. Notable features are the consistency with which teachers encourage and assess children, and the important part played by teaching assistants. The clever use of 'thumbs' signing so that children can show whether they know the answer or are not sure means that all take part and the teacher can tell how many of the class need extra help. In this way also, children are encouraged to assess their own understanding and think about what they are learning.

Training for teaching assistants is very effective and they make a significant contribution to children's learning. They run a number of well-planned programmes that focus on particular aspects of learning, and when they support lessons the teamwork with the teacher and the shared planning is evident at all times.

In all classes, teachers, teaching assistants and children make very good use of ICT to explain or stimulate ideas.

Teachers assess children's work well, so that they know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Records of progress are detailed and carefully analysed to enable teachers to set children suitable targets. Records also enable teachers to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to identify quickly those children who need additional help. Teachers do not use assessment so well to identify the most able. Sometimes these children cover the work required too easily and could be given more demanding activities such as finding out more about the science investigations they complete and write about successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is well planned to make the best use of time in the school day. The curriculum in Years 5 and 6 prepares children well for the range of subjects they will meet in secondary school and this is reinforced by good links with the local secondary school. There is a good range of activities outside lessons. For example, annual trips to the Local Authority centre at a seaside resort are an important feature of school life and greatly appreciated by children and parents. Learning in class is backed up by trips to local places of worship and local historical sites. The literacy curriculum is very well planned throughout the school. The mathematics curriculum is well planned but links between different themes and ways of dealing with, for example, calculations are not made as clearly as they could be.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage enables children to enjoy a wide range of activities to develop targeted skills such as language, collaborative play or ICT competence. Outdoor provision is very good, with plenty of opportunities for role play, dressing up and exercising. Transition into Reception is skilfully managed, and the Reception year planned so that children gradually become accustomed to some time spent sitting still, listening and working at writing and number. There are good arrangements near the end of the summer term for children from the Foundation Stage up to Year 5, and their parents, to get to know their new teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Children thrive and make good progress because care by all adults is exemplary. Staff know children very closely and plans for their individual needs are based on thorough and well documented assessment of the child and knowledge and his or her background. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for and helped through additional support and modification to the usual timetable.

There are good opportunities for children to take responsibility, for example, through looking after playground equipment and distributing fruit at playtime. Much of the success of the school council comes from the way children are encouraged to run it themselves and take decisions about, for example, playground equipment.

The school is secure and appropriate arrangements for safeguarding children are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders is outstanding. Planning is impeccable and highly focused on the needs of the children. Evaluation is built into every aspect of school life, so that senior leaders can tell quickly what works best. As a result, the school's evaluation of its work is accurate and leads to improvement. There is already detailed planning to make the teaching of number calculations more structured throughout the school. Professional development for all adults is very good, and ensures consistency. For example, all adults, teaching and non-teaching staff alike, have the same approach to learning and discipline. All use every possible opportunity to encourage children through constructive guidance. Expectations of work and behaviour are the same throughout. Monitoring of teaching by subject leaders is thorough and effective. Monitoring is assisted by the very good use of the school ICT system because all staff have easy access to all planning documents as they are updated.

Good financial planning and imaginative use of the mainly old buildings mean that the school is well resourced and the building is attractively decorated and well cared for. A key issue from the previous report was to improve the outside play area and this has been done exceptionally well so that all play areas are safe and attractive, and the Foundation Stage area is an exceptionally good learning environment.

A strength of the leadership is the way it truly invests in its people. Teachers and ancillary staff are very well trained and encouraged to take responsibility. This extends to the school council which is run almost exclusively by the children. The governing body is an integral part of the leadership and makes a valuable contribution to decision making. In view of the excellent self-evaluation and outstanding leadership and management, the school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

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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>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
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

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

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed my day with you very much and saw many interesting lessons. Thank you for letting me see your work and for being so helpful and friendly, especially at lunchtime. I was also very pleased to talk to a group of you at lunchtime and hear about all the things you like about the school.

I found that your school gives you a very good education. You enjoy your lessons and make good progress. I like the way you use your thumbs to tell your teachers how you think you are doing and I like the way you all join in so well. Your teachers and other adults take excellent care of you and make sure you all have the help you need.

Your school is very attractive because it is well furnished and because you and all the adults take very good care of it.

I am asking your teachers to help you make even better progress in your mathematics, by planning the way they teach calculations even more carefully.

I am also asking teachers to make sure those of you who can reach high levels more easily are given work that makes you think very hard and reach even higher standards. I feel sure you will enjoy the challenge.