



# Ackworth Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant

## School Report

**Unique Reference Number** 130977  
**Local Authority** Wakefield  
**Inspection number** 293681  
**Inspection dates** 4–5 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Brennan

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Low Ackworth, Pontefract
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		West Yorkshire WF7 7HH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 722275
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	152	<b>Fax number</b>	01977 722275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Susan Wrightson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Susan Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 October 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4–5 December 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 293681
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This smaller than average primary school admits pupils from the village of Ackworth and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Children's skills on entry to school vary from year to year but are typically above expected levels. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is significantly higher than average. The school has gained the Healthy School award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## **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 as one parent said, and others echoed, 'successfully lays down the building blocks for the future'. Standards are very high and pupils' personal development is good. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and are effectively prepared for the next stage of education. The school has improved well since the last inspection, gives good value for money, and is well placed to continue to do so.

Good leadership has succeeded in creating a school which has a warm and encouraging atmosphere. Pupils enjoy coming to school because the curriculum is good, with many interesting and practical things to do, and because good care is taken of them. The caring attitude of staff is underpinned by the use of strategies such as 'worry boxes' for pupils to express their concerns. As a result, pupils feel positive about school. Provision for music is particularly strong. Pupils sing with a great sense of joy and vigour. They are very active and eat healthily. The organisation of learning in the Foundation Stage is working well so that children's schooling gets off to a good start. Throughout the school teaching is good and pupils achieve well, especially in reading, mathematics and science. However, achievement is not as strong in writing. Fewer pupils go beyond expected levels for their age in writing than in other subjects. This is because too few opportunities are provided in some classes for children to use their writing skills in other subjects, which limits their progress. Relationships are good and help to create an open atmosphere in which pupils feel that their views are valued. They are also encouraged to work alongside others. As a result, pupils are mature in their thoughts, words and actions. They are mindful of the needs of their peers and readily help each other with their work. Good strategies have been put in place to encourage pupils to take responsibility. This includes applying and presenting themselves for interview as they eagerly seek jobs such as 'playground buddies.' However, the use of targets to help pupils make even better progress is too complicated and does not always give them a clear enough idea about how to improve their work.

The close analysis of performance data enables leaders to pinpoint areas for improvement sharply and gives good direction to the school improvement plan. The plan itself though is not always explicit enough about how initiatives will be monitored to bring improvement about. Where leaders have been highly focused, for example, in the checking of teaching and learning, as is the case in information and communication technology (ICT), improvement has been good. However, the monitoring of the impact of changes to develop writing has sometimes been too general to ensure that actions have been fully successful.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of opportunities across the curriculum to improve pupils' writing.
- Ensure leaders check up on how well key changes are implemented with greater consistency and rigour.
- Ensure that learning targets tell pupils clearly how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in learning to read, count and write. Almost all reach expected goals and a very high proportion go beyond them. Careful attention is given to meeting the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, they achieve well. Almost all reach at least the expected standards by the time they leave the school. School data and work seen show that many pupils are working well beyond expected levels and that standards are very high. National tests results in Year 2 and Year 6 show an increasing proportion of pupils go beyond expected standards and that challenging targets are met. In the 2006 national test at Year 6, an extremely high proportion reached the higher levels in reading and over half reached this level in mathematics and science. Fewer reached the higher level in writing. The school has identified this as an area for development and has introduced strategies to bring about improvement. However, the impact of this work is yet to be seen.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils develop into confident and articulate citizens who work very well, both independently and alongside their peers. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Work is often interesting and there are lots of extra activities that motivate pupils to work hard, to behave well and enjoy school. Attendance rates are above average and as one pupil said and others endorsed, 'school is cool'. Pupils develop good skills to help them in their future lives. The influential school council provides an opportunity for pupils to take on responsibility for their school. Pupils show their understanding of the needs of others and their responsibility to the wider community through varied fundraising activities. Pupils are keen to talk about their healthy eating habits and are physically active. They have a good knowledge of other cultures but know less about their local culture.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Strengths lie in the warm relationships teachers establish with pupils, which underpin learning well. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places. Teachers build on this by encouraging pupils to talk through their learning, which in turn deepens their thinking. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to add interest to lessons. Good partnerships with teaching assistants enable teachers to set pupils practical tasks that foster both independent and collaborative work. Most lessons have a clear sense of purpose. Accurate and regular assessments are used to set pupils key improvement targets. However, the impact of these is reduced because they are too complicated

and not always easy for pupils to understand. Marking is thorough and evaluates how well pupils have done. However, it does not consistently refer back to pupils' targets and how far they have achieved them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum includes a thorough programme for pupils' personal development, which helps pupils relate well to each other and to get the most out of school. In the Foundation Stage, imaginative use is made of limited space so that key skills are woven well into indoor and outdoor learning. This practical approach to learning has been extended successfully to Years 1 and 2 through, for example, the use of role play areas. Considered use is made of a variety of subjects to develop computer skills. Pupils speak in glowing terms of 'laptop' times. However, too little thought has been given to using subjects other than English to promote writing. There are times when pupils write with expression and imagination in subjects such as history. However, some of what they write is limited by the use of worksheets, which require little in the way of thoughtful writing. There is a good range of clubs for pupils to take part in, especially in sport and music. A wide range of trips and visits out of school enrich learning. Music enjoys a very high profile in the school; a high proportion of pupils learn musical instruments.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Children who join the Foundation Stage are helped to quickly settle to school and make new friends. Suitable arrangements for child protection and health and safety are in place. The small number of pupils with the most profound needs benefit greatly from this supportive environment and are fully included in school life. The careful tracking of pupils' progress enables the school to identify those whose learning needs a boost. Well informed and well deployed teaching assistants are central to providing additional help, including providing some 'master classes' for the more able.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, aided by other staff, has helped create a school in which an encouraging climate provides well for both pupils' personal and academic development. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school. Consultation with them showed that a small number of parents had concerns about communication. The school therefore extended communication channels but has yet to check whether or not present arrangements now satisfy all parents. Revamped assessment procedures have given the school a detailed picture of pupils' performance. The school is accurate in assessing its overall effectiveness and, as a result, knows its strengths and areas for development. This helps give a sense of direction and purpose to the school improvement plan. However, although well directed and manageable in scope, it is not always detailed enough in spelling out exactly how new initiatives will be monitored

and evaluated to check on their success. Some monitoring arrangements have been highly focused and have led to good improvements, such as in ICT. Checks on actions taken to improve writing have not been so well focused and, as a result, improvements have been slower to take effect. Governors know the school well and use their expertise effectively to give good support to the school.

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## 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>	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	1
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

<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	2
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.

## 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	3
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 very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. It felt like we were visiting one big happy family. You told us, and we could see for ourselves, that you go to a good school where there are many interesting things for you to do. We could see how much you enjoy school and we were impressed with how hard you work and how good you are at working on your own and with your classmates. You look out for each other and take care of each other well.

There are lots of clubs and activities for you to join. We were especially impressed with how many of you are learning a musical instrument. The singing in assembly and at the coffee morning for your parents was some of the best we have heard. You seem to really like work that makes you think. You told us how much you enjoy using the computers. We could see that you have used them in some very imaginative ways when you are working in other subjects. We have asked the school to think carefully about how those of you who are good at writing might do the same when you are writing in other subjects.

We were very impressed with how well you talked to us about your school and how keen you were to make your work better still. We did feel that the targets you are working towards could be made clearer so that you have a better idea about how to improve your work.

Although you go to a good school, the headteacher and teachers are keen to make it better still. We have asked them to think how this might be done and to visit each other's classrooms more often to see how things are going.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.