

Wakefield Lawefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131734
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	293833
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost HMI

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jerry O'Mahony
Headteacher	Mr Craig Batley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lawefield Lane Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 8ST
Telephone number	01924 303670
Fax number	-

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Lawefield is an average sized primary school in an area of social and economic disadvantage close to the centre of Wakefield. A higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. Over 50% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion entering the school from Eastern Europe who speak little or no English is increasing. The proportion of pupils who have a learning difficulty and/or disability is also above the national average. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below what is expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. The school has achieved the Activemark and Investors in People national awards.

When the school was last inspected in May 2005, it was found to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management, and achievement and standards. A subsequent monitoring visit in November 2005 found that the school was making satisfactory progress.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The previous designation that the school has serious weaknesses no longer applies.

The school has moved a long way in a relatively short space of time and now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school population is diverse and constantly changing, but all pupils show respect for each other and adults and they have developed very positive attitudes to learning in all lessons. Their personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive are major strengths.

The school is set in a deprived multicultural area and increasing numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe have joined the school over the last year. Most of these speak little or no English. A strong feature of this school is the way they celebrate the many different cultures and languages within the school and how they respond to the complex needs of some pupils when they join the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. They are very well behaved, enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. The support staff ensures that pupils are well cared for and there is a very positive, friendly atmosphere at all times.

Achievement and standards have been unsatisfactory for a number of years. However, in 2007 standards rose dramatically in both key stages so that they are now in line with national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. Most pupils are now working at appropriate levels for their age and making satisfactory progress. Standards in English, especially writing, remain below that of other subjects in both key stages.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. An increasing amount of teaching is good. This is because teachers are better informed about the progress of pupils and they are using assessment information more accurately to check progress and plan lessons to meet different needs. Teaching assistants work well together so that pupils who have a learning difficulty receive extra support and bi-lingual teaching assistants help younger pupils to improve their spoken English. However, the school is not yet making full use of the data available to them to compare how different groups of pupils are performing across the school so that they can best focus their support for specific groups of pupils. The work set for gifted and talented pupils is not consistently challenging enough in all lessons.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is satisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities has increased and after-school clubs are well attended. The school concentrates its work on improving basic skills, but there are many opportunities for pupils to experience creative learning, for example, good artwork was evident in displays and in classrooms. The development of the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) are having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being.

The headteacher has been in post for a little over a year but in that time he has motivated both pupils, governors and staff to work together to make major improvements within the school. He has reorganised the staffing structure so that more people are involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Areas of weakness have been identified and the actions planned for improvement are beginning to have an impact across all areas of school life. A drive to raise standards and improve the learning environment for pupils has been successful and the school is on track to sustain these improvements. There has been good development of senior and middle leaders but the school acknowledges that the role of foundation subject leaders is still underdeveloped. The governing body offers a good balance

of challenge and support. The school self-evaluation is accurate: they have made good progress since the last inspection and have the capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. An appropriate balance of teacher-directed and play-based activities is on offer and the new provision for outdoor play is good. Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below what would be expected for their age in language and communication skills and much work is required to develop basic skills. By the time pupils leave the Foundation Stage they have made good progress in social, physical and creative development but are still lagging behind what is expected in language and mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The support from the bi-lingual teaching assistants helps pupils settle into school very quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for all pupils.
- Analyse performance tracking data in more detail so that the progress of different groups of pupils is identified and leads to more focused support.
- Ensure that pupils on the gifted and talented register receive more challenge in all lessons.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in foundation subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are now satisfactory and improving. The school has put considerable support into the Foundation Stage to help pupils develop their low levels of skill on entry. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but even so, at the end of Reception their standards in communication and literacy are still low for their age. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, children continue to make satisfactory progress. Tracking systems adopted to check how well pupils are doing are having a positive impact and have reversed the previous downward trend, so that pupils at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are in line with national levels in their tests. Pupils' writing remains an issue and teachers provide planned interventions to improve speaking and listening skills throughout all key stages. The impact of the school's hard work to improve standards and achievement is evident in lessons and the achievement of pupils throughout the school is satisfactory. This now forms a sound base for their future learning and economic well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very positive about their school, say they enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. They say that, 'lessons are fun and everyone just gets along'. They feel that both lessons and behaviour have recently improved and that, 'teachers are kind and help you'. Behaviour throughout the school is good, both in classrooms and around the corridors and playgrounds. Pupils know how to keep safe, they play together well and are polite and supportive of each

other. They make good use of sporting extra-curricular activities, know about leading a healthy lifestyle and they understand about making 'healthy choices'. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are all good. This is fostered through effective assemblies where pupils are given the opportunity to reflect, and through PSHCE, Circle Time and the SEAL project. The school supports its cultural diversity through a range of activities including celebrating religious festivals such as Eid and Christmas. Attendance has now improved and is in line with national levels.

The school council is proactive and the school has taken on board many of their suggestions, including redecorating areas of the building and re-designing the Reception playground. They have organised and carried out fundraising activities, such as the Blue Peter Shoe Appeal. Year 6 pupils apply in writing for roles of responsibility within the school, which they undertake maturely, and this helps develop their life skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in an increasing amount of lessons teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and activities are usually matched to the often diverse needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in the best lessons seen teachers use good questioning skills to challenge pupils' thinking and move them forward in their learning. Teachers are using assessment information more rigorously to check how much progress pupils have made so that underachievement can be identified quicker. Interactive whiteboards help to engage pupils and make learning fun. The presentation of pupils' work is high quality and marking is of a consistent standard throughout the school. However, pupils need more independence in deciding for themselves how well they have done and what they need to do next. While teachers set different work for different ability groups there is often not enough challenge for the gifted and talented pupils. In addition, analysis of performance data needs further refinement so that the school can track specific groups of pupils across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to enrich the curriculum through many visits and visitors to the school. The cultural diversity within the school is also well used and parents and staff are involved in running extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. The curriculum puts extra time into studying the basic skills and developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. There needs to be more opportunities for pupils to make cross-curricular links between subjects to make the curriculum more vibrant and meaningful.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils and their parents value the care and pastoral support offered by the school. The school seeks opportunities to encourage safe practices through, for example, recent road safety initiatives and visits from the fire brigade. The learning mentor has been very effective in helping all pupils access the curriculum fully and supporting parents to help their children at

home. Parents are becoming more involved in school life and are taking increasing advantage of family learning initiatives facilitated through the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel valued and each individual's contribution is celebrated. They say that instances of bullying are rare and promptly dealt with. There are systems in place to identify and support vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Individual education plans are of a high quality and ensure that pupils receive the additional support they need. Teaching support staff carry out their roles effectively and help ensure access to the curriculum for all pupils. Rigorous procedures, which meet statutory requirements, are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and to promote their safety and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and have improved substantially since the last inspection. The current headteacher has set a clear direction for the school: he has clearly outlined the areas for improvement and worked with all staff and governors to ensure that previous weaknesses in leadership and management, from the last inspection, no longer exist. Senior managers have clear responsibilities and share the headteacher's drive to raise standards and achievement. A newly created middle management team have made a good start to leading their areas of responsibility and work well as a team. The role of the subject leaders in foundation subjects is still at the early stages of development and further work is required to ensure that they have a clear overview of standards in these subjects. The governing body play a full part in the life of the school and act as a critical friend. Financial management is sound, governors are well informed about the issues facing the school, enabling them to make informed decisions and check that planned actions are having an impact.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	3
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.

Annex A

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of Wakefield Lawfield Primary School, Wakefield, WF2 8ST.

Thank you so much for the tremendous welcome you gave Mr Wilson and me when we visited your school recently to check how well you were doing. We decided that your school no longer has 'serious weaknesses' because your headteacher and teachers have made many improvements. We were especially impressed with your behaviour around school. You get along together very well and work hard in your lessons. You told us that your school is a happy and friendly place to be and we agree with you. You are very respectful to each other and adults in the school and you have developed good attitudes to learning.

We have asked your teachers to make a few more improvements and these are:

- improve your writing skills
- keep a closer check on the progress of different groups of pupils to make sure that you are all doing as well as you can
- make sure that those of you who can do more difficult work are challenged more in lessons.

We have also asked your headteacher to continue his improvements to make sure that teachers who are responsible for subject areas have a better understanding of how well you are doing in all subjects not just English, mathematics and science.

We enjoyed talking to you and we think that your school is on track to improve even further. You can help your teachers by continuing your good attitudes to learning and continuing to behave as well as you do.