



Cobblers Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134278
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 294123
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
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	Harefield Road
School category	Community		Pontefract
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire WF8 2HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 722630
Number on roll (school)	285	Fax number	01977 722631
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Tams
		Headteacher	Mrs J Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	21–22 September 2006	294123

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a new school created by the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school. It has been open for one year. The school is using the previous junior school premises until a new building is completed in spring 2007. Almost all pupils are White British and come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Social deprivation is above average in the area served by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. It has created an orderly learning environment and a satisfactory curriculum, despite the difficulties posed by its temporary accommodation. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This progress in establishing the new school demonstrates that it has the capacity to further improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter school with broadly average attainment, although few are above average. Many have speech and language difficulties and have limited social skills. In the Foundation Stage, a rich curriculum and good teaching, which is very well tuned to children's needs, ensure good progress. By the time children start Year 1, most are reaching, and a few exceeding, the national expectations for their age. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory. Results in national tests in 2006 were broadly average but fell a little short of the targets set. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils in relation to their starting points.

Parents are generally pleased with the education provided by the new school. Their children mostly enjoy school and attend regularly. An older pupil said, 'This is a really nice school, I wouldn't want to change it.' Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well and work steadily. A few, mostly boys, are restless in lessons and can be boisterous around school. Pupils receive good care from a committed staff team. Hence, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They are well aware of the dangers posed by the building site and temporary parking arrangements. Their understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit is also good.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but it is inconsistent. Pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, as the good teaching here compensates for the slower progress made in some year groups. Progress is good in lessons that keep a good pace and where the teacher has sharply focused expectations. However, the work set is not always pitched accurately for different ability groups and the diffident attitudes of some boys are not dealt with effectively. The guidance from teachers on how pupils can improve, for example, through marking and target setting, is often not clear enough.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with good features seen in effective teamwork and a caring, supportive ethos. The headteacher has steered the school effectively through its amalgamation and has a good partnership with the governing body. However, school self-evaluation is not secure and has led to an optimistic view about its provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 in order to improve the progress of all groups of pupils, especially those boys who are more reluctant learners.

- Involve pupils in assessing their own learning and progress so that they understand how to improve their work and meet challenging targets.
- Establish more robust self-evaluation systems, including the analysis of performance data, to identify and review priorities for school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory, taking account of the pupils' standards on entry. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, as they make good progress in developing their basic skills. The majority are working within the national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. The teaching team closely monitors their learning and varies activities well to keep them interesting, despite the limitations of the accommodation. The standard of work seen in Years 2 and 6 is broadly average and this reflects the most recent national test results. Pupils make satisfactory progress, although the pace of their gains varies across the school due to inconsistencies in teaching. Girls do somewhat better than boys in both key stages as they tend to have more positive attitudes and are keener to take part in lessons. Not all teachers use effective questioning strategies to ensure that reluctant pupils, particularly boys, participate in discussions. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress due to the considerable individual attention they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils generally work well together in the classroom and show consideration to each other in the playground. They follow school rules, responding quickly to instructions. Pupils say they largely enjoy what the school has to offer and get on well with their teachers and other adults. Their attendance is average. During their time in school, pupils develop satisfactory skills that will help them as they move on to the next stage of their education.

Pupils know how to keep themselves fit, healthy and safe. They are willing to involve themselves in community activities. A recent campaign to raise money to save the turtle has captured their interest and support. A Year 6 pupil said, 'I like learning about endangered animals because we can then do something about it.'

Pupils' social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their spiritual and moral development is good, as shown by their concern for others in the world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have a secure command of their subjects so that lessons usually have clear

objectives, which are shared with pupils, and follow a common pattern. Teaching assistants and learning mentors work closely with individual pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or small groups. In this way these pupils, or others who are

showing signs of disaffection, are helped to make satisfactory progress.

Good teaching for older pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 ensures that pupils make the progress expected of them but, in other year groups, activities are not always well tailored to different ability groups. This is due partly to the reliance placed by some teachers on the use of commercial planning schemes. How some teachers use questions to actively engage all pupils is also limited.

Assessment is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage, where it is sharply focused and is used effectively to plan future learning. The quality of marking in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inconsistent, as teachers are just beginning to apply a new policy. Teachers set targets, but a variety of different approaches is being used. Currently, pupils have little involvement in setting their targets or in evaluating their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several positive features. It meets national requirements. It is good in the Foundation Stage, where planning is detailed and tightly focused on enabling children to progress towards the goals set for them. Appropriate attention is given to promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and for learning with computers. Lessons in personal development make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves and to their health education.

New policy and guidance is being developed to bring the approaches of the two previous schools closer together, but the impact is yet to be seen on the progress pupils make in lessons. A series of different topics link some subjects together. This helps pupils in their learning and promotes enjoyment by providing the opportunity for them to pursue interests in some depth. However, this approach is new in Years 1 and 2 and so its effectiveness has not yet been evaluated.

A satisfactory range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. A good feature is the residential visits to the Hornsea Centre for Year 2, and for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Further opportunities for learning are provided by a number of clubs and activities outside of normal lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils like the care provided by the school and say there is someone to turn to if they have a problem. Arrangements for child protection are effective and the school ensures that pupils are safe. The breakfast club gives those pupils choosing to attend a good start to the day. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, making effective use of outside agencies. Considerable efforts are made to involve parents in their child's learning. The high number of teaching assistants and the learning mentors help individual pupils to overcome barriers to their learning. The guidance other pupils receive on how to improve their work, however, is inconsistent.

The induction arrangements for children into the Reception class are good and help them to settle quickly into school life. Similarly, all pupils, including Year 6 pupils, are helped to make the transfer to the next stage of their education as smooth as possible. The success of the amalgamation is in part due to the good induction arrangements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher works closely with the governors, who are supportive of the school and developing in their new role. They have made a valuable contribution to the plans for the new school. However, they are aware of the need to acquire a better first hand knowledge of the school's provision.

Self-evaluation is not robust enough for the school to identify exactly where it needs to

focus for improvement. This is why some of the school's judgements of its performance are not accurate. Data are not used effectively to analyse performance, and evaluations of teaching and learning are not sharp. The school is able to respond promptly when concerns are identified, for example, to resolve the difficulties caused by the challenging behaviour of an influx of pupils from a neighbouring school.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Staff are working well together and share a common commitment to the success of the new school. The school is establishing new policies in a number of areas, for example, for subject provision and for

assessment, to ensure that there is coherence in its work. This is helping to tackle the inconsistency and variation in practice seen in 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	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	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?	3

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 the welcome that you gave to the inspection team during our recent visit. Your views helped us a lot to understand your school. These are the main things we found out during our visit.

- You work steadily and mostly reach the targets your teachers set for you.
- Your school is helping you learn the skills to grow up into mature young people.
- Most pupils behave well, but we agree with you that some boys are too noisy and do not work as well as they should.
- You know how to choose healthy foods and that exercise is good for you. We saw you were careful to follow school rules about the building site.
- You are right to say that lessons are usually interesting and that teachers are helpful.
- The school is trying hard to give you a range of interesting things to learn.
- The staff take good care of you.
- The headteacher and governors are working hard to create the new school and to make it a place to be proud of.

Your teachers will be trying to help you even more by:

- making all of the teaching as good as the best in the school
- making sure you understand your targets better, but you will have to concentrate hard on this to help them
- looking more closely at how everything is working in the school so things are as good as they can be.

I enjoyed meeting and talking to you and I wish you every success in the future.