

Netherleigh and Rossefield School

Independent School

Inspection report

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| DfES Registration Number | 3806000 |
| Unique Reference Number | 107445 |
| Inspection number | 301571 |
| Inspection dates | 27-28 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Blake HMI |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Netherleigh and Rossefield is a co-educational primary school that was formed from the amalgamation of the separate schools, Netherleigh and Rossefield, in September 2002. The majority of pupils come from within a five mile radius of the school, although a few travel from much further away. The numbers on roll have increased since 2002 and now stand at 171 full- and part-time pupils. Although the pupils reflect a range of different ethnic backgrounds, the majority are of Asian heritage. The school prepares pupils for local entrance examinations to other independent schools. A number of pupils also attend local state secondary schools after leaving Netherleigh and Rossefield School at the end of Year 6. The school aims to provide for every pupil to do their very best, academically, physically and emotionally in order to fulfil their potential.

Evaluation of the school

Netherleigh and Rossefield School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school meets many of the regulations for independent schools, but there are a number of areas of weakness, in particular, planning for curriculum continuity and challenge across the school, gathering and using assessment information about pupils' progress, and providing better access to important information for parents. The vast majority of staff are caring and work hard to ensure that the pupils do the very best that they can in all aspects of their work. However, too much of the teachers' work is done in isolation, which means that there are a number of inconsistencies across the school that prevent pupils doing even better in their work. The school's leaders at an early stage of developing a more focused and robust approach to assuring the quality of all that goes on in the school. The roles and responsibilities of senior managers are unclear, as are the evaluation and monitoring strategies used to ensure that the school is helping all pupils to make the best possible progress.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Although the curriculum gives pupils experience in all aspects to which they are entitled some are limited in scope. An emphasis on numeracy and literacy is seen in all year groups, including the Foundation Stage. Teachers use a variety of commercial schemes to support their work in these areas and this ensures adequate coverage of the key skills needed.

However, as with other subjects, including the six areas within the Foundation Stage, there is insufficient curriculum planning to ensure continuity in learning across the year groups. Schemes of work are underdeveloped; too little attention is given to planning a curriculum based accurately on pupils' prior learning and some of the content does not take in to account the full range of abilities. In the planning for the Foundation Stage, there is too much emphasis on teaching activities and too little on the expected outcomes of learning for the children. Across the whole school, there is insufficient use of assessment information about pupils' progress, which further limits the potential for providing a broad and challenging curriculum for all abilities. The school is aware of this, and for the first time this year has used end-of-year national tests to assess the standards reached by the pupils. Further work is also being targeted to encourage more coherent lesson planning by using National Curriculum levels, and although this is only at a very early stage of implementation, indications are that this is beginning to work; be understood and accepted by teachers in most classes.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is occasionally good but sometimes inadequate. Teaching is most effective when the pace of lessons matches well with the range of pupils' abilities and interests. At these times, pupils sustain very good levels of interest and concentration, and the quality of their work shows a good level of understanding. However, in a few lessons there is insufficient attention given to the outcomes to be achieved by the pupils, with activities that are slow in pace and inadequate in moving pupils forward in their learning. Although the vast majority of teachers have good working relationships with pupils, on rare occasions, the teaching style is aloof, distant and fairly dismissive of what the pupils have done, or what they have achieved. This attitude does little to develop pupils' sense of personal achievement and well-being in relation to the work they do or the effort that they make in lessons. Resources are satisfactory, but are insufficient in the practical areas of science, design and technology, and some aspects of art and craft.

The pupils generally make satisfactory progress overall, achieving standards in line with the levels expected for similar aged children. However, some pupils are clearly capable of achieving very high standards but have yet to show this consistently in all their work. Pupils have good oral skills, they are confident and use expressive language in their discussions with teachers in lessons. As a result, they are keen to share their views and opinions about a range of different subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with some good features. The school provides a safe and purposeful learning environment. Almost all adults show high levels of respect for those in their care, to which the pupils respond very positively. In all lessons, behaviour is good and often it is outstanding. Pupils concentrate well and listen carefully to teachers, even when the pace of the lesson fails to match their abilities. The pupils are polite, courteous and confident to talk with teachers and other adults. These good social and moral

skills are seen out of lessons at breaks and lunch times. Pupils play well together, irrespective of age or gender. Incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour are rare, with only one recorded incident over the past year. The vast majority of pupils who met with inspectors spoke about their enjoyment of school and the interesting activities that they do in and out of lessons.

Spiritual development is satisfactory. Although the majority of pupils have developed a strong sense of personal well-being, knowing what they do well and not so well, too little reinforcement by teachers of their successes and direction for future learning in work books, means that the pupils are not always as clear about what they need to do in order to improve their work further. As a result, the pupils do not always appreciate fully their own efforts and achievements.

The pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. The mixed ethnic heritage of the pupils provides many opportunities to appreciate the culture of others, although the extent to which this diversity is celebrated across the school is currently limited.

The majority of pupils appreciate the importance of maintaining, and occasionally improving, their health and physical well-being. Attendance at school is very good and, overwhelmingly, pupils enjoy school. The opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to the life of the school are developing, with many opportunities to get involved in fund raising and other charitable events. There is currently no school council, but the recent training for some pupils to act as members of a school council is a move in this direction. Opportunities for pupils to experience work-related activities are limited to specific aspects of the curriculum, primarily around developing the pupils' confidence and understanding of money, as part of the school's approach to numeracy.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is satisfactory. The school takes its responsibilities for the welfare of its pupils very seriously, and has used an external specialist company to advise on matters of health and safety policy. The resultant guidelines are very clear and are helping to ensure appropriate safe working practices. A recent visit by the West Yorkshire Fire and Safety Service reported that all fire safety procedures were appropriate and that all exits from the two buildings met requirements.

Although learning activities, including those out of school, are planned in accordance with the school's health and safety policy, the level of detail relating to risk assessment shows lack of rigour. Some lessons, for example, where there are obvious risks do not have any risk assessments, either written separately or as part of the teacher's planning.

There are satisfactory policies for first aid, behaviour, discipline and sanctions, but almost all are not dated and have no review date. There is no clear indication that

these policies are available, on request, to the parents of pupils and prospective parents.

There is currently no three-year plan to improve access to the premises and the curriculum, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets most of the requirements for ensuring that all staff are appropriately checked for their suitability to work with the pupils. However, while there is a single record that contains most of the personal information required, including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, the school has yet to detail all relevant information about the qualifications of the staff at the school. Although some staff have been at the school for a long time, pre-dating the amalgamation in 2002, the school should add this information to its register in order to comply fully with all requirements relating to the safeguarding of children at the school. Procedures for checking new staff comply fully with requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient and inappropriate washrooms and toilets for the Nursery and Reception children. The school is alert to this issue and plans to resolve the problem during the forthcoming summer vacation.

The school is situated in two buildings. The main building houses the Foundation Stage children in three classes, comprising one part-time Nursery, one Kindergarten with full-time nursery children and one Reception class. The classrooms are suitable for the number using them, although the Reception class is smaller and has some difficulty in accommodating a broad range of activities across all the six areas of learning.

The second building, known as the 'Ridge', houses Key Stage 1 and 2 classes, with separate toilets, computer room and small library. A staffroom/medical room is located on the top floor of the building. The classrooms are small for some year groups, but generally they are satisfactory. There is limited space for practical work, particularly in science, design and technology, and art and craft work.

The outdoor area is clean and safe for the pupils to use at breaks and lunch times.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents and carers is unsatisfactory. The prospectus is very general in nature and does not make it sufficiently clear what type of curriculum the children will experience during the different key stages, including the

Foundation Stage, and how parents can obtain a copy of school policies, including the complaints procedure and other required information.

Termly and annual reports vary in quality and design across the school. Too often teachers report on pupil's efforts and attitudes in lessons, with too little information about the progress they have made. The variation extends to the range of subjects reported upon. Although all reports contain information about literacy and numeracy, the reporting on other subjects taught varies considerably. In some reports, a general paragraph is used to summarise progress in all but the two core areas of literacy and numeracy, while in other year groups separate comments are provided for topic work. Overall, the differences are confusing, and do not provide sufficient information about a pupil's progress in the majority of subjects covered during the year. A number of parents indicated their dissatisfaction about this area in the pre-inspection questionnaire, where they agreed that 'they were not kept well informed about their children's progress.'

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints are made very clear in the school's policy. However, because the school has not informed parents that they can obtain a copy of this policy, the parents are not in a position to know how to raise any informal or formal concerns with the school. This was confirmed in the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire, when a significant number indicated that they did not understand the school's procedures for handling complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide a curriculum policy which is supported by up-to-date schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2))
- plan subject matter that better suits the ages and aptitudes of all pupils (paragraph 1(2)(b))
- plan all lessons to take account of different teaching methods so as to suit the identified learning needs of the pupils (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure that all teachers show a good understanding of the different aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide a better range of resources for the practical aspects of science, design and technology and art and craft activities (paragraph 1(3)(f))

- implement a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use the information to aid teachers' planning (paragraph 1(3)(g))
- ensure that the school has in place a framework by which pupils' performance can be measured against its own aims or national norms (paragraph 1(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- compile a single central record with all relevant details about the suitability of adults to work with the children, which complies fully with the guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills (paragraph 4(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for the Nursery and Reception children (paragraph 5(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must ensure that the following information is available on request:

- particulars of the curriculum (paragraph 6(2)(g))
- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- details of the complaints procedure (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- relevant details about the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure is available on request to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

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| Name of school | Netherleigh and Rossefield School | | |
| DfES number | 3806000 | | |
| Unique reference number | 107445 | | |
| Type of school | Primary co-educational | | |
| Status | Independent | | |
| Date school opened | September 2002 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 years | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 95 | Girls: 57 | Total: 152 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | Boys: 13 | Girls: 6 | Total: 19 |
| Number of children receiving funded nursery education | Boys: 29 | Girls: 16 | Total: 45 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £4,680 | | |
| Address of school | Parsons Road Heaton Bradford West Yorkshire BD9 4AY | | |
| Telephone number | 01274543162 | | |
| Fax number | 01274493011 | | |
| Email address | Headteacher@NetherleighandRossefieldSchool.co.uk | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Mary Midgley | | |
| Proprietor | Mrs Mary Midgley and Mr Graham Midgley | | |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Blake HMI | | |
| Dates of inspection | 26-27 June 2007 | | |