

St Augustine's CofE VA Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107543
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	309427
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	172
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Mansfield
Headteacher	Mrs Leona Binner
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hanson Lane Halifax West Yorkshire HX1 5PG
Telephone number	1422 360615

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Inspection number	309427

Fax number

1422 360615

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	4-5 February 2009
Inspection number	309427

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Augustine's is smaller than most primary schools. It serves an area close to the centre of Halifax. Almost all the pupils are from Pakistani backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Many are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Reception class. The school holds Investors in People and Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007 following a period when the school had two associate headteachers and an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is improving. 'Good school, greatly improved and my child loves coming', sums up the views of many parents. They are particularly pleased with the care it provides. The pupils enjoy school and enthusiastically join in the activities that are available before and after lessons. They know that they are listened to and that the school acts on their suggestions, for example, providing the play equipment and apparatus that have made break times more fun.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They make healthy choices at lunchtime, enjoy wholesome snacks and love the many opportunities they have for exercise. Behaviour is good and everyone gets on well together. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as befrienders or members of the school council.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most start in the Reception class with skills below those typical for their age, particularly in English language. They make good progress so that by Year 1, their skills are close to those expected. Until 2008, progress in Key Stage 1 was barely satisfactory. However, current assessments show that pupils are now making gains at a faster rate. Pupils continue to make sound progress throughout Key Stage 2 to reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Because their starting points were low, their progress in English is good. This reflects the effective support given to those learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall.

Teaching is satisfactory and is showing improvement. However, its effectiveness still varies too much to enable progress to be better than satisfactory overall. In the best lessons pupils make good progress because challenging work is well matched to the needs of different groups and questioning gets pupils thinking. Progress is ordinary when the pace of lessons is pedestrian and activities do not take enough account of what different groups need to work on to move their learning forward. The curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes pupils' personal development well, through for example, consistently well planned 'circle time'. Sound but improving links are being made between subjects that make learning more relevant and purposeful. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe and secure. Improved assessments systems are used appropriately to identify and provide effective additional support for those who need it. However, the use of targets and 'next step' statements is inconsistent. As a result, not all pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to take their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is successfully developing the skills and effectiveness of the new leadership team and involving staff and governors in monitoring the school's work and in helping it to improve. Successful teamwork has already led to a significant improvement in the effectiveness and quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school is satisfactorily promoting community cohesion. It does this well within school and the local area but has not yet fully developed pupils' understanding of their place in a diverse Britain and wider world. Self-evaluation is satisfactory, as are the targets set for overall school improvement that arise from the school's self-analysis. Leadership is being successfully broadened. However, the school is still too dependent on the initiative and drive of the headteacher. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Almost all children start in the Reception class with skills below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. In the past, they have made satisfactory progress to reach levels that have remained below the levels expected when they enter Year 1. The children now in the Reception are making good progress across all the areas of learning and are working much closer to the levels expected for their age, although their language skills remain below. This results from the significant improvements made to the quality of provision. The inexperienced practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage have responded very positively to the support and guidance provided by the headteacher and other staff in school with expertise in early years provision. They now provide a good balance between interesting and purposeful activities that children can choose for themselves and those that adults lead. This effective provision is found both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. Adults make very thorough and informative assessments and use these to plan what children will learn next. Induction arrangements are good. They include home visits with bi-lingual support. These ensure that parents are well informed about the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enable them to contribute to the initial assessments of their children. The welfare of the children is promoted well. The headteacher is the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching in school matches the best and enables all pupils to make progress that is consistently good.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.
- Ensure that the school's promotion of community cohesion enables pupils to understand their place in a diverse Britain and the wider world.

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

In the past, pupils in Key Stage 1 made slow progress from starting points in Year 1 that were below the levels expected for their ages. They went on to reach standards below and sometimes well below average by the end of Year 2. However, teaching has improved in response to effective coaching, and pupils across the age range are now making progress that is clearly satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, standards have improved from below the national average to broadly in line with it. In 2008, pupils met their challenging targets. Current assessments and pupils' work show that satisfactory progress is being made across the key stages. There is good support for pupils at an early stage of learning English and a strong focus is placed on developing English skills across the school. This enables pupils with English as an additional language to reach standards in English that are similar to those they attain in mathematics and science. Pakistani pupils attain as well as their peers nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make good progress towards their precise individual targets and satisfactory progress in their general work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Given the school's strong emphasis on caring, ensuring the safety and security of pupils and promoting good behaviour, it is no surprise that pupils feel safe, secure and free from harassment. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life and their attendance is satisfactory, despite extended visits to families abroad. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their understanding of different cultures and ways of life is a little limited. They do, however, appreciate and get on well with pupils from linked local schools who come from very different ethnic and social backgrounds. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep themselves safe and out of harm's way. They adopt health lifestyles, choosing to eat healthily and enjoying the many opportunities they have to exercise. Pupils respond well to the satisfactory range of opportunities they have to contribute to the life of the school. Older pupils are very responsible when managing the healthy tuck shop or helping their peers as befrienders. Their sound basic skills and their good personal development ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of education and future economic independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school is continuing to work hard to improve consistency in the effectiveness of teaching. This is leading to teaching that is more effective overall but inconsistencies still remain. Teachers across the school ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the objectives for each lesson and this ensures that pupils work purposefully to achieving what has been planned. Teachers also manage pupils' behaviour well so little time is wasted. However, some other agreed approaches are implemented less effectively. These include matching work to the needs of different groups in each class, the regularity and helpfulness of comments made on pupils' completed work and ensuring that pupils respond to this guidance. Some teachers do these things well and as a result, pupils make good progress. In other classes these are done less effectively and progress is satisfactory. The most effective teaching also benefits from sharp questioning and a lively pace that keep pupils on their toes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving as more effective links are made between subjects that improve its coherence and make learning more interesting and purposeful for pupils. The school makes appropriate use of visits and visitors to initiate learning and provides a good range of well-attended clubs, particularly those run by the school's sports coach. These add to pupils' enjoyment. The programmes to support pupils' personal development and well-being are effective and successfully underpin the strengths in this area of their learning. The effective use of bi-lingual teaching assistants ensures that those at an early stage of learning English quickly develop the basic skills they need to benefit from lessons. The intervention programmes provided for pupils who find learning more difficult are satisfactory and enable them to make steady progress. The one-to-one support for those with more specific problems is effective in helping these pupils to make good progress in achieving their individual targets.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges care, guidance and support to be good. The pastoral care of pupils is good. All staff are very caring and supportive of pupils and pupils are confident that any problems they have will be sorted out. The learning mentor and home school liaison officer work effectively with vulnerable pupils and the school works appropriately with outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. The school takes pupils' safety and well-being very seriously and rigorous safeguarding arrangements are in place that meet current government requirements. The academic guidance provided to pupils is, however, just satisfactory and this leads to care, guidance and support being satisfactory overall. There is an effective system to track pupils' progress and this is used well to identify those who need extra help. As a result, pupils in Year 5 are being given additional support each day in English and mathematics which is accelerating their progress. Appropriate procedures have been put in place to help pupils take the next steps in their learning. These include targets for pupils to aim for and 'next step' comments being made on pupils' work. However, the implementation of these procedures is not yet consistently effective. For example, in some classes there is little difference in the targets being given to pupils working at different levels and 'next step' comments are not provided regularly enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked hard and successfully to restore staff morale after the period of uncertainty and turbulence. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork, on developing staff skills and encouraging them to contribute to the school's development. This is reflected in the school achievement of Investors in People status and is leading to improvements being made in quality of the school's work and the progress made by pupils. The leadership is soundly effective in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination and this is reflected in the achievement of different groups in school. It successfully promotes community cohesion within school and the local area through the active links it has established with schools that have very different religious, ethnic and social profiles. However, while there is satisfactory provision, the school has not yet put in place a structured programme to promote community cohesion at the national and wider world level. Inspectors judged governance as poor in the last inspection. Governance is now satisfactory. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on first-hand evidence and they discharge their duties satisfactorily. The school makes sound use of its resources. It gives satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Inspection of St Augustine's CofE VA Junior and Infant School, Halifax, HX1 5PG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We judged it to be satisfactory. We enjoyed talking to you about your views of school. You told us how much you enjoyed the clubs and appreciate the improvements that have been made to the playgrounds at your request. You also told us that you think everyone in school looks after you very well. We can see why you enjoy the clubs, particularly the sports activities and we agree that you are well looked after.

We found that children in the Reception class are now making good progress because they are well taught. Pupils in the rest of the school make satisfactory progress overall. In some lessons pupils made good progress because teaching is good. I have asked the school to make sure that all your lessons are good so that you can all make good progress in the future. The support and guidance you are given is satisfactory. We found that in some classes teachers are very good at explaining to you what you need to do to take the next steps in your learning. In other classes this type of help was not as effective. I have therefore also asked your teachers to make sure you all benefit from regular clear guidance that will help you to move forward in your learning. You can of course then help yourselves by doing what your teachers suggest.

You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep fit, healthy and out of harm's way. We were impressed with what you choose to eat and how much you enjoy exercise. You behave well and get on well together. We know you meet and play with pupils from different backgrounds to you when they come to your school or you go to theirs. This is helping you to understand their different ways of life. We think that the school now needs to make sure you also understand about the many different cultures and ways of life there are in Britain and the wider world. I have asked the staff and governors to make sure this happens.

Your headteacher, the teachers, their assistants and the governors are working hard to make your school better. Your parents can see the improvements that have already been made and are glad you come to this school.