

Earlsheaton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107607
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309445
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Allison Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Commercial Street Earlsheaton Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF12 8JF
Telephone number	01924 325282
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than many infant schools. The number of children in the Foundation Stage accounts for half of the number of children in the school. Although the majority of pupils come from the local community a significant proportion live in other areas. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally below average, it can vary widely between year groups. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained the Activemark. The sad death of the former headteacher has had a marked effect on morale in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Earlsheaton Infant School is a good school where pupils achieve well in response to good quality teaching. When children join the school their skills are usually well below the expectations for their age. They make good progress so that by the time they leave, at the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in mathematics and only marginally below average in reading. At the end of Year 1, the standard of boys' writing is slightly behind national expectations. By the end of Year 2 it is still so but to a lesser extent. Teachers share their good subject knowledge with pupils and support their personal development well. However, occasionally, there are times when the work set for pupils is not fully matched to their abilities, particularly for those capable of gaining higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities mostly progress at a good rate because they usually receive good support.

Many parents comment that their children like school and there is certainly a high level of enjoyment that is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour and above average attendance. Good attention is paid to personal, social and health education and this ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. The hard work and commitment of the teaching staff, combined with an active partnership with parents and external agencies, ensures that pupils receive good pastoral care and have good personal support. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good indeed. It is central to the ethos of the school that children are valued as individuals. As parents say, 'The staff treat the children with kind consideration, regardless of ability and background.' Pupils get on well together and play a considerable part in creating the welcoming atmosphere that exists in school. They are very keen to make a good contribution to the school and to help their teachers and their friends. Good academic progress and a determination to do well mean that pupils are well placed for future success.

The acting headteacher kept the school on track during a difficult period and started to secure important improvements in the Foundation Stage. The new headteacher is sensitively managing a period of significant change and has quickly gained the respect of pupils, parents and staff. She is building on the school's many strengths, not least its warm relationship with the local community, including parents. She has also accurately identified areas for development and already implemented better systems to track pupils' progress and improve the academic guidance provided for them. She is also bringing about many improvements to the satisfactory curriculum. Staff recognise that they are not sufficiently involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, including the checking of teaching and learning, and are keen to play a more active role. The very clear direction provided by senior leaders, together with evidence of their speedy, positive impact on the school's work demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There have been significant improvements to provision in the Foundation Stage because of good leadership and management. Parents are delighted with the provision, typically saying that they are amazed at, 'how much the children have learned in such a short time'. Children's skills on entry vary from year-to-year but typically they are well below expectations. Although children are now making good progress in the Foundation Stage, because of good quality teaching, they are still set to join Year 1 with skills that are below national expectations, particularly in their communication, language and literacy and social and emotional development. All staff work hard to develop children's speaking, listening and thinking skills for example by

asking open and challenging questions. As a result children develop the ability to express their thoughts. Their contributions are highly valued, ensuring they develop great confidence. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides for all areas of learning. However, some activities are not particularly exciting and do not always thoroughly engage children. Parents report that their children settle in very quickly because of good induction procedures and the supportive relationships between staff and children. A careful approach to assessment and monitoring children's progress ensures that teachers' expectations are appropriate for each child and children with additional needs are quickly identified and supported.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop strategies to boost boys' achievement in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure that work in Years 1 and 2 is matched even more precisely to those pupils capable of gaining high levels.
- Involve more staff in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 1 and achieve well, particularly in mathematics. Standards had declined at the end of Year 2 in the past two years because children were getting off to a slow start in Reception and entering Year 1 with much lower standards than in the past. Close work with the local authority has helped raise achievement in the Foundation Stage and ensured that children are now much better prepared for entering Year 1. The school recognised that standards in reading were in danger of slipping and has worked hard with a team of enthusiastic volunteers to ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their reading skills. There is also a successful focus on developing pupils' understanding of the links between sounds and letters. As a result of these strategies progress in reading is good and standards are only slightly below the national average. Standards of writing are currently below average, particularly for some of the boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to their school work. They want to do well. Their behaviour is good both around school and in the classroom. Although they are keen, enthusiastic learners they can become restless when they are expected to listen to the teacher for an inappropriately long time. Pupils' good social development is demonstrated in their increasing levels of confidence. Pupils get on well together and value their friendships. Very few fallings out are reported but when they do happen, pupils are confident that staff will take notice of their concerns. As a result they feel happy and safe in school. The school recognises that pupils' cultural development is not as strong as their social and moral development. Although pupils are aware of their local culture they are less aware of the ethnically diverse nature of modern Britain. The school is developing links with other schools in order to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to meet children from other backgrounds. Pupils try hard to lead healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices about food. For example, vegetables are a popular choice at lunchtimes. They are enthusiastic about sport and many take part in physical activities outside school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching underpins pupils' good achievement. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage but slightly more variable in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to good effect. Relationships between teachers and pupils are supportive and encouraging and contribute to pupils' good personal development. Behaviour is very effectively managed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are set different work but this work is not always finely matched to their abilities, particularly those capable of gaining high levels. The support provided by teaching assistants varies in quality. It is consistently of a very good quality in the Foundation Stage and is usually good in Years 1 and 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It currently lacks sufficient creativity and excitement and is not yet leading to raised standards in boys' writing. Provision for numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology is satisfactory. A strong focus on linking sounds and letters is boosting pupils' achievement, particularly in Year 1, and helping to improve standards in reading and spelling. There are good opportunities for research and investigation in science that are enhanced by the interesting activities in the science club and are creating a real enthusiasm for science. Links between subjects are improving, for example, research tasks that connect science and literacy inspire pupils to write because they are very interested in the subject matter. At the same time they are acquiring a good knowledge of life cycles. There is a good range of clubs but, at present, enrichment of the curriculum is only satisfactory. Extra activities are being planned in order to develop pupils' cultural knowledge and strengthen further the good links with the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care has been sustained and underpins pupils' good personal development. Appropriate child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Parents report that staff are friendly and helpful and say the school provides especially good care for vulnerable pupils. Good links with outside agencies further enhance this high quality support.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and is starting to have an impact on pupils' achievement. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are very new. The process of setting targets is embryonic and until recently marking provided pupils with limited guidance about how to improve their work. The new system that combines praise with a clear indication of how work can be improved is more effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership has ensured that the school has managed to continue to develop during challenging times. Good achievement alongside a strong focus on personal development and pastoral care has been sustained and the provision in the Foundation Stage has been significantly improved. The new headteacher has quickly got to grips with what still needs to be done and has accurately focused on areas for improvement. For example, she has ensured that pupils' work is regularly assessed. She has also implemented a tracking system that will allow the school to pinpoint more precisely pupils in danger of underachieving. The school missed its targets in 2007 but the headteacher is aware that these were unrealistically high and had not taken into consideration pupils' low starting points. Currently, not enough staff are involved in the checking of the school's work, including the monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has carried forward a relatively high proportion of its budget and support staff are not always effectively deployed and, as a result, the value for money it provides is satisfactory rather than good. Many governors are new to their roles and, although the experienced governors do provide effective challenge, many have not yet had time to fully develop their skills.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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.

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	2
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	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

Inspection of Earlsheaton Infant School, Dewsbury, WF12 8JF

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. You were wonderful company during the inspection. I really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school where you achieve well because of good teaching. You are making good progress and by the end of Year 2 many of you reach similar standards to most other children of your age. You work very hard indeed in lessons. I have asked your teachers to make sure the work you are set is even more challenging for those of you who find learning straightforward. Although most of you are doing well in mathematics and reading there are some boys who are not making enough progress with their writing and I have asked the school to help them to improve this.

Your behaviour is good and I was very impressed by your good manners. It was nice to know that you all have lots of friends and it is clear that you like to help each other and your teachers. You told me that you really enjoy coming to school. I thought you were very well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. It was good to hear about how you like sport and I was pleased by all the activities you do out of school. Well done to all those children who got certificates in assembly. The visit by the Reception classes to the butterfly house and the farm sounded like a lot of fun, especially the piglet that had escaped!

The leaders and managers in your school are doing a good job and are making sure that your school gets better all the time. I have asked some of your teachers to help the headteacher more to check what is going on in school in order to help it improve even further.

Thank you again for being such terrific company. I wish you well for the future.