

# Ashbrow Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107628
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	309451
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Halifax

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	159
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	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Daniel James
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Dora Plant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Ash Meadow Close Sheepridge Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD2 1DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 223962
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 223488

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of high deprivation. This is reflected in the very high take up of free school meals. At 40%, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high, as is the ratio of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Up to 12 pupils with a statement of special educational need are educated in the specially resourced provision for pupils with speech and language needs. The school has a diverse population with almost two-thirds of pupils from ethnic minority groups and speaking English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority, or are refugees or asylum seekers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) caters for 52 children who attend the Nursery either morning or afternoon, and up to 45 children who receive full time education in the Reception class. In addition, the ICAN Nursery class caters for up to 18 children with speech and language impairment.

The school has gained the Activemark, ICAN Nursery accreditation, Investors in People, Healthy Schools Gold Award and an Eco Green Flag Award. It is part of the International Forest Schools Programme.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives exceptional value for money not just to the children on roll. Pupils in other primary schools who have speech and language needs also benefit from this school's expertise in terms of the professional advice it gives to their staff. In addition to ensuring children have a solid academic grounding, the school very successfully gives them a magical childhood. For example, children squealed with delight as they jumped in puddles and created 'puddle paintings' in the rain. Comments such as 'Nothing is too much trouble' are representative of parents' high opinion of the school where every child and adult is valued and really does matter.

It is inspirational, visionary leadership that is at the heart of this flourishing school. Leaders have very successfully created a school that embraces all learners. As a result, pupils respect and value their friendships with their classmates from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and with pupils from schools in different areas of the town. Pupils and their families thrive in the warm atmosphere, including those pupils who have failed in other settings. While standards have fluctuated since the last inspection, because of the complex composition of each year group, pupils' achievement is excellent. The overall attainment of children entering the EYFS is exceptionally low. Through the outstanding provision, children of all capabilities make remarkable progress so that by the end of the Reception class they are working comfortably towards the early learning goals. The notable progress continues in Key Stage 1 because of first-rate teaching and an inspired curriculum, so by the end of Year 2, results in national tests are usually broadly average with some pupils attaining above average standards. Adults are especially skilled at promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills. Their use of signs and symbols to support those with communication needs is good, but in the excitement of outdoor activities, this sometimes gets overlooked.

Pupils make excellent gains in their personal growth because of the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils receive tremendous care, guidance and support. The support for the most vulnerable is exemplary, enabling pupils to cope with significant and often traumatic changes in their young lives. In this nurturing community, pupils discover their strengths and the aspirations of families are changed. Through unrelenting work with families who are hard to reach, attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. However, despite leaders refusing to condone holidays in term-time, some families continue to take their child out of school thus missing valuable learning.

In addition to guiding other schools in working with pupils with communication needs, the school has taken the lead in a group focusing on environmental matters. With pupils' progress and well-being at the forefront of the school's work, alongside a determination not to stand still, the school has excellent capacity to continue to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Through very well planned activities, children make especially good progress in the EYFS, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave the Reception class, they are working happily towards the early learning goals. Exceptionally close teamwork between teachers and support assistants enables all children to make rapid gains and those who are part of the ICAN nursery to take a full part in all activities. Children's personal

development and well-being are at the centre of all that goes on in the EYFS. As a result, from very low social skills on entry, children quickly build up trusting relationships with adults and their classmates. From the moment children enter their classroom in the morning, they are full of confidence and eager to learn. After registering by moving their face on the interactive whiteboard and vigorously 'waking up and shaking up', children launch themselves into the myriad of indoor and outdoor activities. Adults work very hard to ensure that children's experiences are exciting and of the highest quality. This was evident as children hugged themselves with glee and anticipation as they set out on a 'treasure hunt'. Despite several staffing changes, the leadership team have worked hard to ensure the continuing excellent provision. The management of the EYFS is of high quality. Leaders strive to ensure the welfare of adults and children alike and all the legal requirements are met.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure signs and symbols are used more consistently, especially in outdoor activities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

While national test results show a declining picture in standards, taking account of prior attainment, pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds make remarkable gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire. Progress over the past two years, for the majority of pupils, has been twice that expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Though the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in smaller steps, their achievement is no less impressive. Similarly, pupils from different minority ethnic groups have succeeded equally well. While pupils of Pakistani background appear not to do as well as their peers, the figures are skewed by those with severe and complex needs and the majority of pupils exceed the national average. All pupils in the specially resourced speech and language unit make very good gains in communication and in their self-confidence, returning successfully to their neighbourhood schools where appropriate. The achievement of pupils without learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly higher than that of pupils from similar backgrounds in other schools in all subjects. Having identified some pupils were not achieving as well in mathematics as in other subjects, a new planning and recording system has recently been introduced to speed up learning. Recognising that boys in this age group do not achieve as well as girls, some excellent work in the Forest Garden has motivated them and accelerated their learning especially in reading, writing, mathematics, science and art as well as their personal development.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

A most striking aspect of the school is the harmony between pupils and adults from a multitude of ethnic groups and pupils with considerable and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils say that in their school everyone is special, but this does not prevent them from working for others. They are generous fundraisers, making contributions to local and national charities. Though very young, they have a surprisingly mature understanding of their place in the world and a keen awareness of being members of the global community. They talk earnestly about the artwork of pupils from a link school in Beijing, thrilled at the prospect of their paintings being exhibited in China. National awards such as the Healthy Schools Gold Standard, the Activemark and Eco award demonstrate pupils' very good understanding of keeping safe and healthy, as well as being good citizens. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and

their enthusiasm for school infectious. They skip happily around the site, heads held high, bursting to show visitors all the treasures their school has to offer. They are especially proud that their Forest Garden is used by numerous other schools. Pupils feel valued and know they are important and respond exceptional well to the high quality displays, furniture and environment. They report that not many schools are lucky enough to have fresh flowers everywhere, as well as 'posh special tables and chairs in every, every, every class'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The watchful supervision of teaching and learning by senior leaders, alongside focused professional training has led to a considerable increase in pupils' progress. Teachers plan their work meticulously, skilfully matching tasks to pupils' abilities, interests and style of learning. Lessons are lively, often of a practical nature and appeal especially well to boys. Training in the use of signs and symbols to aid communication has proved effective, not only for pupils with speech and language difficulties, but also for the many pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially those from Eastern Europe. The introduction to lessons, displays, assemblies and school council meetings are accompanied by signing and symbols, but the good practice is not always evident in the outdoor provision, including the Forest Garden. Talented support assistants play a sizeable role in pupils' learning, especially in helping pupils from the specialist language unit join in the main part of the school. Major changes to the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) have enabled pupils to make very good progress in their skills and use of computers to support learning in all subjects.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The imaginative, stimulating curriculum motivates and excites all pupils and engages them very well with learning. Work with artists and musicians, drama, and a wide range of clubs contribute tremendously to pupils' enjoyment, with a visit to a working farm to celebrate 'food and the farming year' being a particular favourite. Pupils make excellent academic progress because of the focus on developing their basic skills through teachers' creative planning and delivery of lessons. A range of programmes to boost the performance of pupils who learn more slowly is very effective in increasing their rate of learning. Equally, very good provision is made for pupils who have a gift or talent. The Forest Garden is the jewel in the school's crown. This outdoor wonderland captures the imagination of pupils and adults alike and is enormously successful in encouraging first-hand learning. In addition, it contributes impressively to pupils' physical and emotional well-being, helping them to solve problems and face the many challenges to life outside school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The pastoral care pupils receive is a particular strength of the school. Procedures to safeguard all pupils, including those most at risk, are known to all staff. Links with other agencies and health professionals are exceptionally efficient and effective. This is especially important as more than half of the pupils are known to two or more agencies, with the most vulnerable having dealings with as many as twelve to nineteen. The learning mentor plays a crucial role

in ensuring the welfare of all pupils, continuously working alongside parents to improve attendance and pupils' home circumstances. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given very good additional support where appropriate, enabling them to make considerable progress. Equally, very good assistance is in place for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils receive very good academic guidance. Teachers' marking is now of a high quality and has improved considerably in writing so that pupils are clear about what to do next to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are strong at all levels enabling the school to meet its aim of helping pupils to 'climb their own mountain as high as possible', while having a quality childhood experience. Pupils and staff thrive under the charismatic leadership of the headteacher, who together with the deputy headteacher provides an impressive team. In addition, a very good management structure and excellent systems have enabled the school to continue to improve despite considerable changes in staffing, including key posts. The scrupulous tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is used very effectively to identify and bridge gaps in pupils' learning, as well as for setting aspirational targets for individual pupils of all capabilities. Management by the governing body is good. Governors have a perceptive overview of what is happening in school. They are very supportive of the school and ask pertinent questions, but recognise they need to delve more deeply into the annual test results. Nevertheless, alongside the senior leadership team, they are influential in promoting equality of opportunity and in celebrating diversity both in and out of school. All possible sources of additional funding are investigated and used imaginatively to help break down the barriers to learning, for example, through the provision of additional staffing and resources.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

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

As you are aware, a little while ago a colleague and I spent a short time looking at your school. We had a delightful time and really enjoyed your company. We especially liked the Forest Garden and were thrilled to meet the hens, and be part of your special circle around the pyramid. Thank you for taking time to talk to us about your work, the colourful displays and for giving us your views of school. It was very clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we received from your parents that you enjoy school and think that you are safe and very well cared for.

Your school is providing you with an outstanding education. As well as working hard, you have huge fun in lessons, in sport, in clubs and on the many visits out of school. You are very well behaved and work very hard. This means all of you make very good progress, including those who learn more slowly and those of you who grasp new ideas quickly. All this happens because you have first-rate leaders and teachers and an amazing curriculum. As well as helping you to make progress, your school provides excellent support for other primary schools by helping pupils who need assistance with their speech and language.

There is just one area that would make it even more spectacular.

- Your teachers generally use signs and symbols well, but they sometimes forget when they are outside, because they are so excited by the thrilling activities they have planned for you. So we have asked that they use signs and symbols more consistently.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.