

Wellhouse Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107647
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309458
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Holland
Headteacher	Mr Brian Fawcett
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Lower Wellhouse Golcar Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD7 4ES
Telephone number	01484 222255
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wellhouse Junior and Infant School is very small. It is in a large building on two floors. It serves a mainly socio-economically advantaged area but with some rural deprivation. Currently 40% of pupils travel from outside the immediate area. Most pupils are White British with 10% from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need. Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. Year groups vary considerably in size from one to twelve pupils. The school was federated with Clough Head Primary School in January 2008, following a term of interim leadership and management by the assistant headteacher. Currently, it is run by the headteacher from Clough Head Primary who is acting headteacher for both schools until September 2008 when a new headteacher has been appointed to lead the federation. Almost all the teaching staff has changed in the last three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wellhouse Junior and Infant School gives pupils a good education. Pupils say, 'It's fun being at this school. Everyone is friends and it's like a really big family.' They behave well and their attendance is above average, a reflection of how much they enjoy school. Parents like the very small classes because their children get a lot of individual attention. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for and supported. The early morning 'movement group', designed to strengthen mobility and spatial awareness, gets pupils with physical difficulties off to a good start each day.

From broadly average starting points, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. They are well taught and make good progress in each class. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 tend to fluctuate because of the very small year groups in which the performance of one pupil can have a disproportionate impact on results as a whole. This means that standards at the end of Year 2 often vary between average and above average, depending on the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. By the end of Year 2, pupils generally read well, have a good grounding in mathematics and begin to write with some fluency. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), standards are consistently higher in English than in mathematics, with fewer pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in mathematics compared to reading and writing. This is because literacy has been high profile and rigorously developed. Also, pupils are able to practice their skills more fluently in other subjects. The new library, that pupils use at break and lunch-time as an alternative to playing outside, ensures that books are an important part of their lives. Consequently, pupils are well read. In addition, classroom displays are used effectively to enrich vocabulary and to reinforce learning about different genres and writing techniques. Ventures such as the termly newspaper, written and produced by older pupils, further enhance their literacy skills.

In September the school identified that pupils in Key Stage 2 had significant gaps in their mathematical knowledge. A new approach to teaching, aimed at filling these gaps, combined with effective setting of targets and involving pupils actively in their learning, is having an appreciable effect. However, it is too soon to gauge the full impact of these measures. Pupils also have very few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Mathematics has a very low profile in classrooms and so opportunities for pupils to solve problems and mathematical puzzles as part of their daily routine are missed. In addition, the curriculum for Key Stage 2 does not make connections between subjects and so the more able pupils in particular are not always challenged to reflect and work things out for themselves. It is different in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), where subjects are linked creatively together and so younger pupils' learning is more exciting and challenging.

Pupils' personal development is good because the school takes good care of them and gives them effective guidance and support. This helps them to lead happy, busy, active lives and prepares them well for the future. Pupils are well aware of why it is important to live healthily. They enjoy the many different clubs on offer during the day and after school. They have good attitudes to learning. Pupils have a strong sense of community, joining in the worldwide campaign to 'send my friend to school,' as well as fund-raising to pay for play equipment for their own school. Through the school council they have a voice in what goes on and take responsibility for recycling waste and running the library.

Good leadership, based on a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, has ensured that the school has continued to perform well during the period of interim leadership and management. Governors are closely involved in the school and play an active and effective part in decision-making. The school has improved well since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children achieve satisfactorily. From broadly average starting points most are working within expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Provision is satisfactorily led and managed. Some sensitive teaching ensures that children change activities frequently, sometimes working with Year 1 pupils and sometimes on their own. Adults are attentive and keep careful notes of children's progress. As a result, children are happy and settle in well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

While adults make sure children are busy, their tasks tend to be very specific. This means that children have limited opportunities to make choices and to take the lead in their own learning. For example, a child wanted to ride a bike rather than listen to sounds outside and compromised by running up and down and shouting out what he could hear, thus demonstrating that he needed physical activity and also that he could perfectly easily do two things at once. Learning resources both indoors and outside are limited. This, too, restricts the opportunities for children to be curious learners and to discover things for themselves. They miss out on the learning through imaginative and exciting activities using role play or building large scale structures such as dens or roadways to help them develop many different skills simultaneously.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum for Key Stage 2, so pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and to ensure that the more able pupils are challenged to think and work things out for themselves.
- Provide a greater variety of independent and thought-provoking activities, including role play, so that children in the Foundation Stage become curious learners and discover through finding out for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards vary between average and above average at the end of Year 2, depending on the mix of pupils in any one year. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do better in English and science than in mathematics, especially at the higher levels, as confirmed in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007. This is because pupils have some gaps in their mathematical knowledge and the more able pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. Pupils do well in science because they learn through investigation and use scientific vocabulary accurately. They develop into competent readers and writers because they have lots of opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils achieve well and the trend in the school's results, despite considerable fluctuation in some years, is generally upwards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with strengths in their social and moral awareness, but with a comparative weakness in their multicultural awareness. Pupils learn to understand their feelings and to respect the needs of others. Older pupils act as 'Befrienders', making sure that everyone has someone to play with. Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated by their above average attendance, considerate behaviour and lively attitudes to learning. They feel safe and take care on the steep stairs down to the lower hall and library. They feel they have a stake in their school and are proud of their contributions, especially the school newspaper, grinning as they say 'The kids do it, we're a news team! We organise ourselves.' They develop into confident, articulate and sociable young people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well, responding to their teachers' carefully planned lessons that take into account pupils' preferred learning styles. Pupils use literacy targets effectively to help them to improve their writing: numeracy targets are relatively recent and their full impact has yet to be seen. Particular strengths in teaching are good quality marking, the close involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning and lots of opportunities to work with a partner. This helps pupils to share ideas and understand how to improve their work. Sometimes teachers have too many short discussions in quick succession. While this ensures a snappy pace, it can fragment pupils' learning unnecessarily and limits the time available for them to work things out for themselves. Touches of humour enliven learning. The practice of only allowing pupils whose handwriting is extremely good to write in ink disadvantages those who do not become 'inkers' before starting secondary school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is organised differently in each Key Stage. Both make good provision for literacy and for information and communication technology. In Key Stage 1, subjects are linked creatively together to ensure that pupils use and practise new skills in many different contexts. Provision is more fragmented in Key Stage 2, where opportunities are missed to make connections between subjects to enliven learning and to challenge the more able pupils to think for themselves, especially in mathematics. This means their educational experience narrows as they get older and restricts the opportunities to, for example, learn about different cultures. Provision for modern foreign languages in Key Stage 2 is developing well. Education for safety and health is good, as are the out of class activities, which are varied, have a high take up and are much enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care is evident in the commitment of staff to ensure pupils' safety, well-being and good academic progress. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current guidelines. The school has undertaken a recent health and safety audit with a suitable action plan with regard

to the restricted access for disabled users. Systems to track pupils' progress are efficient and used well to target those who need extra support. Good, practical assistance is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants conscientiously ensure that pupils meet the manageable targets in their individual education plans. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good interim leadership and management have ensured that the school has continued to develop well over the past year, with a strong focus on raising standards, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and to improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of rigorous self-evaluation. This is largely accurate except with regard to the curriculum which it judged to be good despite the disparities in provision between key stages. The roles and responsibilities of several part time staff in Key Stage 2 are managed well but the school acknowledges that simpler systems would make for a more evenly balanced workload for all staff. This is part of the action plan of the new federation of the two schools. Parents and governors are strongly supportive of the school. The impact of their support is evident in pupils' good progress and the school's positive reputation locally.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Wellhouse Junior and Infant School, Huddersfield, HD7 4ES

I really enjoyed talking with you when I visited your school. Thank you for making me so welcome and for inviting me to see your 'baseball' dance which was great fun and extremely energetic! I especially enjoyed looking at your work with you and hearing about the books you like reading. I was impressed by your newspaper and was pleased to see how much you enjoy school.

You go to a good school. You behave well, come to school regularly and older pupils have a lot of responsibility. You clearly enjoy the different clubs at break, lunch-time and after school, as do those of you who attend the 'morning movement' group. All the adults in school take good care of you. You are taught well. Your teachers take care to plan interesting lessons for you and they give you time to talk together, look at each other's work and check your work against your targets. Your school is well led and managed and this is why you do well.

It is part of my job to help schools to improve. This is what I have asked your school to do next and these are the reasons why.

You do better in English than in mathematics. This is because you have lots of opportunities to practise reading and writing in different subjects. I have asked your teachers in Key Stage 2 to make sure that they give you as many chances to use your mathematics skills in other subjects as well. I have also asked your teachers to give those of you who find learning easier than most to have more chances to think and work things out for yourselves.

I looked very carefully at what the youngest children are doing. At the moment most of their time is very organised. They need more time to work and play on their own and to choose what they want to do from lots of interesting activities, including role play, both inside and outside. This will help them to become more curious and to enjoy finding things out for themselves.