

Skelmanthorpe First and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107652
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309461
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	188
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 Louise Sheehan
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Boothroyd
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	Elm Street Skelmanthorpe Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 9DZ

Age group	3–10
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are more favourable than average. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Fewer than the average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Elm Street Kidz Club and Skelmanthorpe Playgroup operate from the school premises but do not form part of this inspection. The headteacher commenced her appointment in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Skelmanthorpe First and Nursery School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils reach above expected standards by the end of Year 5. Their achievement is satisfactory as are the quality of teaching, care, guidance and support for pupils and the leadership and management of the school. The recently appointed headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. The pace of change is now accelerating following the restructuring of the senior management team.

Pupils join Year 1 with skills and understanding above those typical of children of this age following a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They make satisfactory progress overall from Year 1 to the end of Year 5 but the rate of progress is uneven from year to year. Older pupils make faster progress and this enables pupils to reach above expected standards by the time they are ready to move to middle school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. The reason for pupils' variable progress is the lack of consistency in some aspects of teaching and learning through the school. The challenge set for pupils is sometimes not great enough so the pace of learning slows. In contrast, the teaching of the oldest pupils captures their interest and learning moves on at a rapid pace. Teaching assistants provide effective help in small-group work, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships and the management of pupils are positive features of all lessons. As a result, pupils behave well and time is not lost dealing with incidents of misbehaviour. The marking of pupils' work, particularly in English, clearly shows older pupils how well they have done and what they must do to improve but this effective help for pupils is less apparent for other age groups.

Pupils enjoy learning, especially the opportunities to take part in sporting activities. They appreciate the caring atmosphere in the school. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They conduct themselves safely around the school and in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered satisfactorily overall. On balance, they are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives. The curriculum is satisfactory but it does not extend sufficiently pupils' understanding of communities further afield than their local village.

Parents express satisfaction with the education provided for their children and are supportive of the school. 'My children are in a safe, happy environment,' is a typical parental comment.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to schooling in the EYFS because the provision and the leadership are good. They quickly settle and gain confidence and understanding of school routines. Good links are established with parents and pre-school providers to ensure that induction procedures are effective. From a starting point typical of children of their age they achieve well and reach above expected standards by the end of Reception. A warm, caring, bright and stimulating learning environment in both the Nursery and Reception along with good teaching contributes to children's speedy progress. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and make effective use of regular assessment to guide the planning of children's next steps in their learning. Children behave well and are enthusiastic about their learning because of the appropriate balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated learning. This aids their good

progress as well as their good personal development. The school has plans in place to improve the outdoor area adjacent to the Reception to provide greater levels of challenge and learning opportunities. Children's welfare needs are promoted well. Very effective use of additional adult support both in the Nursery and the Reception provides the children with lots of educational experiences where their vocabulary and understanding are promoted well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the pace of teaching and learning so pupils make good or better progress in their work.
- Ensure that the marking of work clearly shows pupils how well they have done and what they must do to improve.
- Review the curriculum to ensure that pupils gain a better understanding of local, national and international communities.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 5 are above those typical of pupils of this age. Results of the tests at the end of Year 2 have declined from well above average to above average over time. Pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is generally satisfactory but improves to be good in Year 5. Targets set have recently been revised and provide a satisfactory level of challenge. These are now being met in most age groups and exceeded in Year 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good elements. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles, including the importance of taking regular exercise and eating healthily. They report that they feel safe and secure at school. Bullying is rare and pupils know that the school would deal with it quickly if it should arise. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They enjoy school life and relate well to one another. They take on some responsibilities, such as helping others and being school councillors. In some lessons they are not challenged to work independently and this results in them being too over dependent on teachers rather than finding things out for themselves, such as queuing to ask teachers for spelling rather than using a dictionary. Pupils' cultural awareness is limited. They do not have a good enough understanding of major world faiths or dissimilar communities to their own, including contacts with pupils in other schools both nationally or internationally.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory on balance, which matches pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is variable resulting in uneven progress. The best teaching is for older pupils where

pupils' learning accelerates. In most lessons teachers plan work for different groups though in some classes information about what is to be learned is not specific enough. Relationships between staff and pupils are cordial in all age groups. The skills and expertise of the teaching assistants are not used sufficiently well on occasions when lesson introductions are too lengthy and dominated by the teacher. Behaviour management is a positive feature throughout the school. The pace of learning differs across the school. In the best lessons, learning moves at a fast pace, questioning is very effective and pupils' ideas are sought and exploited. In some lessons, teachers spend too much time instructing rather than letting pupils engage in challenging, purposeful, practical tasks and investigations to consolidate and extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad with an emphasis on developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Subjects are increasingly being linked together to add greater interest and purpose in learning. Visits and use of visitors are increasingly being planned to enhance learning. The curriculum does not fully embrace the development of pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in the local authority, national or international communities. However, arrangements are well advanced to extend pupils' experiences in religious education through visits to different places of worship in local cities. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Parents applaud the recently improved music tuition for all pupils and this is a step towards expanding pupils' cultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents appreciate the good level of pastoral care provided for their children. All health and safety, risk assessments and child protection procedures meet government requirements. Good links are maintained with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective systems are in place to promote good attendance. Teachers assess pupils' academic work regularly. However, this information is not always used well enough to ensure that pupils make sufficiently good progress. Pupils are keen to learn but they are often unclear of what they need to do next in order to extend their learning. The marking of work offers praise and encouragement but seldom, except for the oldest pupils in English, provides sufficient detail of how pupils can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher together with senior staff has put in place well thought out and necessary initiatives to enhance further pupils' education. It is too early to assess the success of these developments and so the school's capacity to improve remains satisfactory.

Recently introduced management systems record individual pupils' progress using a computer program. This enables management and teachers to check efficiently and accurately the rate of progress of pupils as they move through the school. Analysis of the data to calculate overall attainment of different groups of pupils is the next planned stage of development to assist the monitoring of learning and to support equality of opportunities for all pupils.

The restructured senior management team represents all age groups of pupils and includes teachers and now senior teaching assistants. This has engendered a greater awareness throughout the school of its strengths and areas for development. Planned observations of teaching and examination of pupils' work by senior leaders and subject leaders have been identified to enable the sharing of good practice as well as to check that agreed procedures are consistently being followed.

Governors are increasingly becoming aware of their roles and responsibilities. Most are new to the governing body. Governors are well informed by the headteacher of standards achieved by pupils, staffing issues and school events. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily and promote links with other local organisations and the village community. They have embraced most aspects of community cohesion satisfactorily, especially within the village but have not ensured that wider national and global issues are taught in the curriculum.

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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?	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	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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 Skelmanthorpe First and Nursery School, Huddersfield, HD8 9DZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve your school.

Your achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception. These children achieve well and reach standards above those normally seen. In Years 1 to 5 you make satisfactory progress overall though your progress accelerates in Year 5. Standards in Year 5 are above average.

The teaching and your learning are satisfactory overall. The pace of your learning in lessons differs across the school. It is best for older pupils. I have asked the school to improve the pace of your learning so you make good or better progress throughout the school. I also want teachers to ensure that the marking of work clearly shows you how well you have done and what you must do to improve.

I was impressed by your good behaviour and interest in lessons. You enjoy learning and appreciate all the school provides. Your understanding of different cultures and communities, outside your village, is less strong. I have asked the school to review what you are taught to make certain you gain a better awareness of local, national and international communities.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will keep doing your best and working with the headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.