

# Holmfirth Junior Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107655
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	309462
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D McCormick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Murgett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cartworth Road Holmfirth West Yorkshire HD9 2RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222480
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 222480

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is average sized. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, although it varies widely between year groups. The population of the school is fairly stable overall but in some year groups a significant number of pupils have joined after the Reception year. The school has Activemark and Healthy School Awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils really enjoy learning because of an outstanding curriculum and very high standards of care. Parents typically say that the school provides a, 'happy safe environment where children thrive'. The school works exceptionally well in partnership with a wide range of external providers to ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being are very well supported and that the curriculum is exciting. Pupils' personal development is exceptional. They have a genuine sense of belonging to the school community and they make an outstanding contribution to school life. Their work as befrienders, peer mentors, school council and peer educators helps to ensure that pupils of all ages mix well together, have lots of friends and get the very best out of school. Pupils say that they 'just love' school. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils say that bullying and racism are very rare. The very good attention paid to personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are exceptionally well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. They enjoy keeping fit and enthusiastically join in sports activities.

Achievement is good. Over time, test results at the end of Year 6 have mostly been above average. Although results dipped in 2007, standards were still slightly above average and pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of good teaching. Improvements to teaching, the curriculum and the strengthening of the management of Key Stage 1 have resulted in significant increases in pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Progress is slower in writing where pupils make simple mistakes and produce writing that lacks imagination in the choice of vocabulary, even in Year 6. Teaching is of good quality overall and some is outstanding. Whilst weaknesses are relatively minor, some, such as not ensuring pupils address points to improve their writing, hinder progress. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and they know their targets well.

Although the whole staff team make an important contribution, the headteacher's leadership has been instrumental in ensuring that the school provides an extremely supportive environment where pupils can flourish. He has created a common sense of purpose. Staff are hard working and committed, and work well together. Good leadership and management have led to good improvements to standards in Key Stage 1, especially in writing. Whilst the end of Key Stage 2 English results have improved year-on-year since 2004, the school has found it more difficult to achieve a similarly marked improvement in pupils' writing at this key stage. Part of the problem is that there are not enough, regular, focused lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, and this results in the school missing some of the relatively minor weaknesses that together can hold back progress. Nevertheless, the school clearly demonstrates a good capacity to improve exemplified by sustained improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start Nursery with skills that are broadly in line with national expectations but their personal, social and emotional development and mathematical skills are often stronger than this. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and in 2007, children

entered Year 1 with skills that were above expectations. Good teaching combined with a wide range of activities ensures that children enjoy their time in school and learn effectively. There is a supportive atmosphere and as a result, children are happy, settled and well cared for. They play well together. Staff skilfully develop children's vocabulary and use of language, but during the inspection there were not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing. Children really enjoy the good quality multi-skills provision that encourages their physical development. The progress of individual pupils is carefully checked.

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing in Key Stage 2.
- Develop a more formal programme for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and act on the information it provides.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement in Key Stage 1 has significantly improved and pupils now make good progress through Years 1 and 2, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are usually above average, but dipped in 2007 when there was a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group. However, all pupils made good progress given their earlier attainment. In the 2007 tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels remained above average but in English the proportion at the expected level was only average. Standards have recovered and pupils currently in school are generally working at levels above age-related expectations. Pupils generally make good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics, but progress is slower in writing, especially for boys. Improvements to the quality of teaching, including the delivery of basic skills, have raised the standards of writing in Key Stage 1 and this is beginning to impact on standards of writing in Years 3 and 4. However, many pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to make basic mistakes in the use of punctuation and grammar. The quality of pupils' writing often does not fully reflect their excellent verbal skills.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Parents say their children really enjoy coming to school and their children agree enthusiastically. This is reflected in outstanding attendance. Pupils' strong commitment to their schoolwork including their ability to work very well independently is an important factor in their good achievement. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They learn to appreciate the wonder of the world around them, especially through music and art. Pupils develop great confidence whilst retaining sensitivity to others. They know how to keep safe. Empathy and understanding are developed well. Pupils are very committed to keeping healthy. This is demonstrated by the good work of the school council to improve the take up of school lunches by ensuring that the food available reflects the relatively sophisticated tastes of pupils as well as being healthy. Pupils are aware that the skills they learn at school can be applied to real life situations. They take responsibility for their own learning, have high aspirations and are keen to do well. This ensures that they are very well prepared for their futures. A typical and accurate comment made by a delighted parent that, 'The school has given the children a wonderful platform to build their future lives upon,' reflects this.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Outstanding teaching in some classes builds on the school's overall good quality teaching and learning to promote rapid progress in these year groups. A good deal of attention is paid to promoting pupils' personal development. Behaviour is managed very subtly but also very successfully, and outstanding relationships ensure that pupils acquire confidence, mature attitudes and develop accountability for their own learning. Teachers make it very clear to pupils what they need to study and why, and this encourages good learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively to make lessons more interesting and to aid teachers' explanations of concepts. Although teaching is good overall, there are some relatively minor weaknesses that vary from class to class. These include too much time spent sitting on the carpet, learning support assistants not always being efficiently deployed and work not always being precisely matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly but occasionally their marking can lack impact.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

A much improved curriculum in Key Stage 1, with a greater emphasis on matching letters to sounds and developing basic skills, has underpinned improvements to pupils' standards in reading and writing. There is also a greater emphasis in Key Stage 2 on improving the technical aspects of pupils' writing, which has resulted in some improvements but this has not yet led to enough writing of the highest quality. The provision for teaching mathematics and ICT is excellent and promotes high standards. There is a very strong creative element in the curriculum and pupils really enjoy their music and art lessons. Enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding. An exceptional range of visits, visitors, after-school clubs and theme weeks greatly adds to the pupils' enjoyment of learning and broadens their experiences. The excellent attention paid to personal, social, health and citizenship education results in pupils being remarkably keen to keep healthy and safe and being very well equipped for their futures.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Outstanding pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. The school is a very caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good indeed. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure and say that their teachers listen to them. Effective child protection and health and safety arrangements are in place. Parents say that the staff are 'very kind and caring'. Those whose children have joined the school recently comment about the warm welcome they have received and of how their children have flourished. Many parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel that their children are very well supported and their viewpoints are confirmed by observations made during the inspection. Good systems are in place that keep a careful check on individual pupils' progress and are important in ensuring that progress continues to be good.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership team work well together and are particularly successful at promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. Excellent links with outside agencies, parents and the local community create a common sense of purpose and ensure that all pupils are very well supported. Self-evaluation is good. Staff and governors make an extensive contribution in helping the school recognise its strengths and weaknesses. The school has been successful in improving standards at the end of Key Stage 1 but, despite sterling efforts, has found it more difficult to raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2. This is because leaders' monitoring of provision misses some of the small weaknesses that impact negatively on progress. The school has extensive information about pupils' progress and overall uses this well to set challenging targets to raise standards. The information is not yet used to full effect to set targets for groups, particularly boys.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

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

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school that has some outstanding features. It's clear that you have a brilliant time at school because of all the exciting things you have to do. The team was very impressed by your outstanding behaviour. You have very good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. You go out of your way to look after each other and make an excellent contribution to your school. The befrienders, peer mentors and the school council help your teachers to make sure everyone is happy and the school runs smoothly. It was good to hear that you know lots about keeping healthy and safe. The school council has done a good job in helping to make school lunches more appealing.

You told us that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. Your lessons are interesting and lots of fun but your teachers also make sure you work hard too, and that is why the quality of teaching is good. You achieve well and the standards you reach are higher than pupils in other schools. You make good progress in English and mathematics but we have asked your teachers to help you to improve your writing, especially in Key Stage 2. You can help by checking your punctuation, spelling and grammar and by trying to use interesting words in your writing. You told us that you really enjoy your art lessons and we were very impressed with your lovely drawing and paintings and the beautiful use of colour in your collage work.

Managers at your school are doing a good job. They have worked very hard to make sure that your school continues to improve. We have asked your teachers to make more formal checks on the quality of their work to make sure that you are all progressing well.

I wish you well for the future.