

Hyrstmount Junior School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 107682 |
| Local Authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 309474 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Kathryn Dodd |

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 | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 304 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Janet Robinson |
| Headteacher | Mrs A Crines |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 January 2004 |
| School address | Highcliffe Road Batley West Yorkshire WF17 7NS |
| Telephone number | 01924 326700 |
| Fax number | 01924 326701 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 7–11 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 April 2008 |
| Inspection number | 309474 |

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils at this larger than average sized school are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Only a few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Gold, Activemark and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and provides satisfactory value for money. It is a friendly and welcoming school that has improved soundly since the previous inspection. It has some good features, such as the good level of care, support and guidance for pupils. This is seen in the way that staff provide a safe and secure place for pupils to learn and forge effective partnerships, particularly with parents and in the locality. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. They talk maturely about what they have to do to keep healthy and make a very worthwhile contribution to their school and local community. This provides a positive platform upon which to improve their academic achievement and prepares them to become responsible young adults of the future. Most parents are pleased with the quality of education their children receive. They particularly appreciate the way in which the school helps to 'mould their children into caring, well rounded and independent individuals'.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English, make satisfactory progress and standards by Year 6 are broadly average. This reflects the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning and the satisfactory curriculum. Although there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, the quality across the school is variable. Pupils make the quickest gains in their learning in Years 5 and 6. This is because teachers provide very interesting and stimulating activities, set high expectations of their pupils and help them to understand how well they are getting on at every step of the way. As a result, their pupils show great enthusiasm, take pride in their achievements and behave very well. This best teaching is not seen consistently across all classes and, consequently, learning is uneven. Careful adjustments to the curriculum are helping to tackle previous weaknesses in standards. In writing, for example, by Year 6, more pupils are now reaching levels higher than expected for their ages than previously. Nevertheless, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills across other subjects, particularly in Years 3 and 4 and, as a result, their learning is held back.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. As a result of the dedicated leadership of the headteacher since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been strengthened considerably. New leaders are keen and enthusiastic. They carry out their duties with growing confidence. They, along with governors, share the headteacher's clear, realistic and sensible view of the way forward. They know, for example, where pupils' progress needs to speed up and have introduced appropriate changes to teaching practices and to the curriculum. These changes, however, are yet to take full effect because the vision of leaders and governors is yet to be shared fully among all staff. Checks on progress with initiatives are not yet always rigorous enough to guarantee application of policies with equal success across all classes. This is why, despite the efforts of the headteacher and senior staff, the capacity for the school to improve further is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning that matches that of the best in order to speed up pupils' progress.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Increase the rigour with which leaders monitor the implementation of improvement initiatives across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

When pupils transfer from infant schools, their attainment, while variable from year to year, is broadly average. Although in 2007, pupils in Year 6 reached below average standards, this represented satisfactory progress from their lower than usual starting points. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics, and in science they are above average. However, standards are higher in reading than they are in writing. This is because fewer pupils reach or exceed the level expected for their age in writing. The school has accurately identified that pupils' progress across the year groups is uneven and not always rapid enough, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Although pupils in many Year 5 and 6 classes are making good progress, they still have a lot of ground to cover if they are to reach their learning targets. To address this problem, leaders and managers are focusing on raising teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve, setting more challenging learning targets and keeping a closer eye on how much progress pupils are making in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few pupils who are at early stage of learning to speak English have the help they need to make progress in line with other pupils in their classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are friendly, respectful and polite, and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are pleased that the school celebrates their successes often. They say that this makes them enjoy school and want to try their best. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying, so that they all learn together happily. They participate enthusiastically in all that is on offer. Events, such as the 'Twinning Project', where pupils learn alongside pupils from another local school, help them to develop mutual respect and a keen awareness of the similarities and differences in people's lives. Older pupils are wonderful role models. They relish opportunities for taking on responsibilities, such as being 'play leaders' or 'befrienders'. They enjoy improving the school, so that it becomes a happier, safer and healthier place to be. The school continues to work hard to promote better attendance, particularly to minimise the impact of absence through extended holidays and religious observances. Pupils' outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles shows in everyone's eagerness to take part in the many energetic physical activities on offer. Satisfactory progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills prepares pupils soundly for their next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Although the quality of teaching and learning is variable, there are examples of good and outstanding teaching in all year groups. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where, in most classes,

there is an enthusiastic drive to adopt revisions to teaching and learning practices. Typical features of the best lessons include high expectations of pupils, thorough organisation and interesting and stimulating activities that are well matched to pupils' varying learning needs. Helping pupils to be clear about what they are expected to learn and to know how well they are getting on, including through helpful marking, is also contributing to a more positive picture. As a result, pupils in these classes behave very well, enjoy learning and take a pride in their achievements. The best teaching practices, however, are not seen consistently across all classes and this limits pupils' progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. It has some good features, including the good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visitors that enrich pupils' learning and help them to enjoy school. Activities resulting from achieving the Healthy Schools Gold award and participating in a local schools sports project give pupils a thorough understanding of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. In science, more pupils reach a higher level of attainment than expected for their age because of the many opportunities they have for undertaking exciting investigations. In writing, older pupils benefit from an increasing range of opportunities to practise their skills across other subjects and this is helping to speed up their progress. Pupils have fewer opportunities in Years 3 and 4, however, where the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected levels in writing remains lower than in reading. A suitable range of additional activities helps to promote the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils well and the quality of day-to-day care of pupils is good. Pupils say they feel well cared for and that there is always someone, either an adult or 'befriender', on hand to help if they are worried. Appropriate procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils are in place. Regular communication between staff, parents and partners, such as the local mosque, helps to ensure that pupils benefit from 'seamless' support, particularly those in need of additional help. The learning mentor plays a significant role in helping to raise pupils' aspirations and in supporting parents. Since the previous inspection, there are improved procedures to ensure that peaks and troughs in pupils' learning are spotted more swiftly and that action is taken to deal with them. This is why, for example, the range of intervention and support programmes is increasing. Recent changes, such as setting more challenging targets for pupils and helping them to know how to improve, including through improved marking of their work, are all contributing well to the quickening progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved steadily and pupils' good personal development has been maintained. This has been achieved, despite changes of key staff and governors, as a result of the headteacher's insightful appointments of new staff who have strengthened the senior leadership

team. The deputy headteacher, for example, has improved procedures for tracking pupils' progress so that leaders are increasingly well informed about the school's performance and know which pupils could do better. Although the headteacher, senior staff and governors have only worked together for a short time, they share a clear vision for improving the quality of pupils' education. Consequently, appropriate adjustments to teaching and learning and to the curriculum are being introduced. The impact of these changes, however, is limited because their sense of common purpose has not yet filtered through the whole school. Checks on progress with initiatives are also not yet always robust enough to guarantee application with equal success across all classes. This is why the pace of improvement is steady rather than good. Nevertheless, satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, along with the new impetus injected by the senior leadership team, demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

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? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 the 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? | 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? | 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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 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**

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were polite, keen to talk to us and answered our questions thoughtfully. Your behaviour was good and it was pleasing to hear that you feel safe in school because there is always someone on hand if you need help.

I particularly enjoyed joining in your assembly and seeing how respectfully you listened to your visitor and to one another. It was pleasing to hear just how much you know about how you can keep your bodies healthy and how proud you are when you earn your place at the top table at lunchtime because you have made healthy choices for lunch. You showed me just how grown up you can be when doing your special jobs around the school, such as taking the roles of 'play leaders' and 'befrienders'. You clearly all enjoy making your school a happier, healthier and safer place to be. You get lots of chances to take part in fun and exciting activities, go on trips and to have visitors, such as pupils from nearby schools. It is little wonder that you enjoy coming and that most of your parents are pleased with your school.

Your school is a satisfactory school. You do as well as pupils in most other schools by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. There are some things that could be better. To help you further, I have asked your school to make sure that:

- all teaching matches the quality of the best so that you all make the progress you are capable of
- you have more chances to practise your writing in all your subjects so that you reach higher standards
- ideas for improvement are fully put in place in all classes.

You can help your school by making sure that you ask your teachers how well you are getting on and what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should continue to try your best in everything that you do.