

Norristhorpe Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107685
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309475
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neal Russell
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Armitage
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	School Street Norristhorpe Liversedge West Yorkshire WF15 7AW
Telephone number	01924 325720
Fax number	01924 401791

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school set in a village location. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average and the numbers of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. There have been significant changes in staffing in recent years and the headteacher was appointed last September. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, which has united staff to implement a systematic programme to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress. The vast majority of parents confirm that pupils are happy and well behaved because their care is central to the schools' provision.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their attendance is above average and they enjoy coming to school. The school's emphasis on the adoption of healthy lifestyles means that pupils choose to eat a nutritious diet. They also enjoy physical education lessons and take advantage of the many additional sporting opportunities available to them. Pupils enjoy learning, especially when they are actively involved and there is plenty of variety and challenge. This is not as apparent in lessons where expectations are too low and more able pupils, in particular, are not challenged as effectively as elsewhere in the school. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory.

The curriculum overall is satisfactory, although weakness in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) means that pupils' skills are lower than in other subjects. Opportunities for pupils to use computers in order to develop their writing are too limited.

Pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. However, standards in writing and those of the more able pupils, by the end of Year 6, fall short of the school's expectations. This weakness in achievement is accurately identified as a priority and the school has recently introduced rigorous systems to check how well pupils are doing in their work. Consequently, teachers are beginning to be more knowledgeable and informed about individual pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have a clear strategy for improvement. They have identified and inspectors agree that more rigorous checks on teaching and learning need to be carried out in order to improve lesson quality and, consequently, raise standards. To this end, the school has begun to involve all staff in evaluating the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.

Overall, the care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Links with outside services, such as educational psychologists and attendance officers, make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' well-being and achievement.

Since the last inspection, satisfactory steps for improvement have been taken. A satisfactory capacity for improvement exists as seen from the leadership's self-evaluation of the school's performance and the resulting realistic focus on improvement. Consequently, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly because of good provision for their personal development and care. Parents have many opportunities to come into the Nursery and Reception classes before their child joins the school so that they can help them prepare for school life. Having joined the school with skills expected of their age group, the children go on to make

good progress because of the good teaching they receive. Consequently, by the time children leave Reception, many have exceeded the early learning goals for their age. However, some children start in Nursery with lower skills in communication. Although they become better in this, their improvement is not as rapid as in other areas of their learning. This is because the opportunities for children to develop their interests have been limited and have only recently been improved to excite children and to involve them in their learning. Improved planning incorporates the teaching of letter sounds and of number recognition into children's everyday activities. This has accelerated children's progress in writing and their knowledge of numbers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate teaching more rigorously throughout the school to help to improve its overall quality and its impact on standards.
- Set work that is more challenging and appropriate for pupils needs in order to raise expectations of what pupils, especially the more able, can achieve.
- Improve the provision for ICT.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall, standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are broadly average. However, pupils' writing skills are lower than those in reading. Progress is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6, with examples of good progress in some classes. Despite the above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, not enough pupils reach the highest levels. The development of more challenging work and more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress are beginning to address this. Assessment by teachers is not used consistently or well enough so that pupils know what to do to make their work better. Pupils who have difficulties in their learning make satisfactory progress. Their needs are speedily identified and then supported through specialist teaching. Regular reviews, involving pupils and their parents, teachers and support staff enhance these pupils' achievement and promote their personal development well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The headteacher and governors make a positive difference to pupils' lives both personally and academically. School council members take their responsibilities seriously and are respected by their classmates. Year 6 pupils are proud of the help they give to children in the Foundation Stage and in providing support for younger pupils when supervising in the playground. Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect and celebrate their achievements. Pupils are treated with respect and they, in turn, respect and value others. Their understanding of Britain as a diverse society, although somewhat limited, is improving. Pupils are keen fund-raisers for a variety of local and national charities. They are also eager environmentalists, gardening and recycling in school and improving the quality of the local area. Pupils are well behaved and courteous to each other and to adults. Their preparation for their future is satisfactory; though their progress in writing and in ICT is not as strong as in mathematics. Pupils know well how to keep safe and healthy and their spiritual,

moral and cultural development is good. Their good social development was clear as they enjoyed eating and mixing socially in pleasant surroundings at lunchtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from inadequate to outstanding. This is reflected in the pupils' uneven achievement across the school. The proportion of inadequate teaching has been successfully reduced and now represents a very small percentage of lessons. In some lessons, expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low and pupils, especially the more able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. By way of contrast, many lessons are very well prepared so that all pupils are thoroughly engaged, their concentration is sustained and they learn quickly. An outstanding lesson on 'Under the Sea,' for instance, captivated pupils' interest because the teacher used exciting resources, provided a variety of activities and had very high expectations. Day-to-day marking is generally helpful and celebrates pupils' work. However, in some cases it is not sufficiently clear to pupils what it is they need to do in order to improve their work. The school has recognised this and class teachers now have progress records and targets for their pupils, which have helped to improve lesson planning and begun to raise expectations. Targets are individually tailored to match pupils' needs and are, therefore, more achievable. This is particularly noticeable in some classes where some pupils do not strive to do their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily and many after-school activities are well attended. Activities to promote healthy living and personal development are embedded in curricular programmes and daily school life. The curriculum is planned sensitively and adequately to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Curricular developments have been rightly focused on ensuring continuity in learning and placing greater emphasis on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Initiatives to improve pupils' skills in ICT have met with mixed success because weaknesses remain in the provision for developing pupils' skills and meeting their needs. A newly introduced plan for the curriculum is beginning to be successful in helping pupils to apply key skills across a range of subjects, in order to improve standards, particularly in writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Safeguards for the care and welfare of pupils are adequate and regularly updated. Staff and governors are trained appropriately in child protection matters. Systems for checking and promoting attendance are good. The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory. School assessment procedures are beginning to provide teachers with more useful indications of what pupils ought to achieve, but their feedback to pupils is not always clear enough. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs quickly identified and appropriate support is provided. Their progress is regularly tracked and evaluated and they make satisfactory progress.

A small number of parents expressed the view that they wanted to be better informed about their child's learning and activities. The headteacher and governors recognise this and are determined to provide more detailed and regular communication in response to these concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

After a period of many staff changes, including at senior leadership level, the relatively new headteacher is providing clear guidance for school improvement. Leaders know the school well and have correctly identified areas for improvement. However, action plans are not precise enough nor are they currently implemented quickly enough to raise pupils' standards further or to accelerate their progress. In contrast, senior leaders have acted decisively to effectively deploy teachers in order to better utilise their expertise and experience. The satisfactory self-evaluation of the school's performance is shared with governors and has resulted in a precise and realistic improvement plan. For example, managers realise that their checks on the quality of teaching need to be more rigorous to overcome some shortcomings and raise some teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities in order to raise standards.

Governance is satisfactory. It is supportive and committed to improving the school. Governors welcome training to improve their roles and visit the school regularly to review its performance. They are keenly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have become much more challenging and questioning over the last year.

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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 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	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	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 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?	3

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**

Inspection of Norristhorpe Junior and Infant School, Liversedge, WF15 7AW

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we inspected your school. You were very polite and keen to tell us about your school. I would especially like to thank the members of the school council and all the individual pupils who took the time to talk with us.

We found your school is currently giving you a satisfactory education. Your standards are above average, especially in mathematics and reading. You behave sensibly and look after each other well. The older pupils look after the younger ones really nicely and you enjoy taking on responsibility. You enjoy school and well done on your good attendance! Children in the Nursery and Reception class settle down quickly and enjoy school.

You have had some changes of teachers in recent years and this has been difficult for you. Your school has made sure you do as well as you should, despite these changes and your headteacher is determined that you will do even better.

I have asked the school to check more carefully on the quality of your lessons so that, where necessary, they can be improved to help you do better.

Some of you who find your work too easy are not doing as well as you should and I want you to be given harder work to make you really think and to reach higher standards. I have also asked your school to give you more chances to use your skills in ICT to further improve your work.

I am sure that you will help your school by working hard to achieve your targets and by checking what you could do to improve it.