

Flockton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107714
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309486
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Christine Bullimore
Headteacher	Mrs Frances Swallow
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Barnsley Road Flockton Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 4DH
Telephone number	01924 326800
Fax number	01924 326800

Age group	5–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This much smaller than average faith school serves the community of Flockton, in West Yorkshire, a former mining area with some socio-economic disadvantage associated with the closure of the local pits. Attainment on entry is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Recently, there has been a high proportion of pupils who have entered the school at Key Stage 2. Pupils are almost exclusively of White British heritage. The school operates mixed year classes and all pupils leave school at the end of Year 5.

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 make good progress both academically and socially. Everyone associated with the school values highly its strong sense of community, where adults and pupils care for each other, and pupils feel very secure and happy. Very good links with other partners, agencies and schools greatly enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school, appreciative of its outstandingly warm and caring atmosphere. Pupils enjoy good relationships with the staff and say they like their teachers and the way they help them to learn. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

The good start in the Foundation Stage is built upon well, and by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' good progress results in above average standards, although writing is the weakest area of pupils' development. When they leave school at the end of Year 5, pupils' standards are broadly what would be expected of them. However, pupils' writing, both handwriting and the way they write exciting and imaginative stories, still remains the weakest aspect.

Pupils' personal development is good and this helps them to achieve well. They become more mature, work together well and develop good social skills. They enthusiastically carry out an extensive range of responsibilities, and have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and take frequent exercise. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education and their future lives.

Teaching quality is good on balance but is better in some classes than in others. This is because the best features of teaching, particularly the pace of lessons, and the use of assessment and data, are not consistent across the school. In the small number of cases where this happens, teachers do not plan their lessons to give pupils a better understanding of their next steps in learning and how to improve. As a result, the rate of pupils' learning slows, and this results in uneven progress.

The curriculum is good. It fulfils all statutory requirements. The wide extra-curricular and enrichment activities, particularly in sport and in music, but also events to celebrate other religions and cultures other than those represented at the school, enable pupils to gain a broad understanding of the world around them.

Pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils rightly feel exceptionally safe and well cared for by the whole staff who personify the caring ethos of the school. Academic guidance and support are good, but the school's considerable data are not yet sufficiently applied in classroom planning and activities to impact fully on all pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher presents an excellent role model and has successfully created a very effective staff team. Her accurate view of the school's strengths and her clear determination to address the areas for development give a powerful lead to her staff. All share a strong commitment to raising standards, and the targets they have set reflect this. Governors provide good support and challenge. Finances are well managed and the school gives good value for money. The effective steps taken to promote improvement since the previous inspection have been successful.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception/Year 1 class with lower than average abilities. They settle quickly into the school because teachers reinforce routines and expectations, and the school actively encourages parents to support their children's learning. Children make good progress in all areas of development. Their standards of attainment rise to meet national expectations over the year. This is due to the high emphasis given to developing effective learning habits through independent and teacher-led activities which results in most children reaching the standards expected by the time they start Key Stage 1. While many children exceed the goals expected in their knowledge and understanding of the world, their personal, social and emotional development, and their speaking skills lag a little behind. Children enjoy the activities and learn to work and play in groups. They are particularly well looked after, so they feel safe and secure in their area and in the wider school. Learning is exciting because the curriculum is good and provides a wide range of interesting and varied features. The outdoor play area helps children develop physically and socially but its physical position only allows for limited opportunity.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.
- Use the school's good academic data more robustly to help teachers plan their lessons so that pupils gain a better understanding of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good start in the Foundation Stage is built upon well and good progress results in above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1, although writing is relatively the weakest area of pupils' development. By the end of Year 5, internal school tests in 2006 showed that standards were above expectations. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 5 were in line with expectations. Science continued to be above expectations, but writing, because of the pupils' lack of a rich and extensive vocabulary, was comparatively weaker. Nevertheless, given that increased mobility into the area means that nearly 40% of the relatively small cohort joined the school at different times in Key Stage 2, who did not benefit from the high level of provision in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Their standards represent good achievement from a well below average starting point. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen to come to school and they behave well. Attendance is slightly above average. Pupils willingly take responsibility for different aspects of school life; for instance, through being playtime buddies and by influencing decisions that affect them through being school councillors. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Their spiritual and moral development is excellent; their social and cultural development is good. They develop into sensible, mature young people, capable of using their initiative in a wide range of activities both within and outside of school. Pupils work well together and grow in confidence during their time in school and they leave it well prepared for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well managed and organised and good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to bring learning alive. The views of pupils are valued and teachers are skilled in the use of questions to develop ideas and opinions. Teachers have established excellent relationships with the pupils and blend their high expectations for them with sensitivity to their needs. However, in a few lessons, the pace is sluggish and pupils lose interest and make slower progress. There are inconsistencies, too, in the way that marking informs pupils about how they can improve. This reduces the positive impact on learning and of pupils' involvement in their own assessment. The use of assessment data to plan appropriate activities is not yet used to the full. This means that some pupils' learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the range of pupils' learning needs. The provision for extra-curricular activities is impressive and pupils have many opportunities to develop their understanding and enjoyment of their work. A variety of outings make learning fun and relevant. Visitors are welcomed into school to give the pupils an insight into the world beyond their local community. Efforts to increase the pupils' understanding that they live in a multicultural society are successful. There are strong links with the pre-school to ensure children build on what they have learnt so far, and with the middle schools to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. The school is currently looking at ways of developing the teaching of key skills from one year to the next but this is at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good on balance. The pastoral care the school gives to its pupils is excellent. Christian values are at the heart of this close knit and harmonious community and pupils feel valued. Every adult working in the school is committed to pupils' welfare and to helping them to develop into confident and responsible young people. Child protection procedures are well established and understood and used appropriately by all staff. Rigorous risk assessments, particularly when out-of-school visits are planned, demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils' safety. The small number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are vulnerable or who require help with a particular problem are well supported. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress but it is not yet being used fully to impact on supporting pupils in their lessons in class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with outstanding leadership by the headteacher, who has high expectations of staff and pupils. In a calm but effective manner, she has nurtured a strong team spirit amongst all staff and has ensured that staff have a very clear vision of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is helping to raise standards. Equal value

is given to every child and the importance of good personal development and academic achievement is integral to everything that the school does. Good governance has a positive impact on the school's effectiveness. Under the skilled leadership of the chair, the governors keep a close eye on getting the best value. There is a sharp focus on improving pupils' learning, standards and progress alongside a firm commitment to ensuring the highest levels of care and personal development. Monitoring and evaluation systems are thorough and rigorous. Their consistent application to classroom planning is a priority which the headteacher recognises. Given the current quality of management and teaching, the pupils' improving progress, and the successes in dealing with the issues raised in the last inspection, the school clearly has good capacity to improve further.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3
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?	2
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	1
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

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

Inspection of Flockton Church of England (VC) First School, Flockton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF4 4DH.

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during the inspection this week. I agree with you that Flockton is a good school. It is very caring and makes sure that you feel safe and secure. You enjoy learning because you have good teaching. As a result, you are doing well in most subjects and you are also learning how to work with other children. I really liked being in your classrooms, and I particularly enjoyed your singing during prayers. Your good behaviour, politeness and willingness to take responsibility prepare you well for the next stage of your education in middle school.

Although the standard of your work is good, I feel that, at times, you could do better, particularly with your writing, both in your handwriting and in the way you write exciting and imaginative stories. I have asked the school to help you to do this.

The school has gathered lots of information about how well each of you is doing in all your classes. This is a good thing because it helps your teachers to give you the help that you need. I have asked the school to make sure that the information is used even more to support your teachers plan their lessons to be even more helpful so that it gives you better understanding of your next steps in learning and how to improve.

Your teachers know you all very well and have a very clear idea of how you can all do even better in school. If you listen to them and try to do as they ask, there is no doubt that you will have even more success and enjoyment at school.

I wish you all lots of luck and hope that you continue to work hard and do your best.