

Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107716
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309487
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Clarice Nelson-Rowe

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachel Daffern
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Station Road Lepton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 0DE
Telephone number	01484 222742
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is located in a mixed socio-economic area on the outskirts of Huddersfield. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, none are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has attained the Activemark 2007 and Investors in People in 2007.

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 with some outstanding features. 'The individual needs of the children are very well catered for, staff are dedicated, there is a caring culture and a real sense of community,' is typical of parents' views. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They greatly enjoy all the school has to offer and contribute exceptionally well to the school and to the wider community. Behaviour is excellent, pupils respect each other and because they are very well cared for they feel very safe at school.

The pupils achieve well and make good progress and so by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. The school prepares pupils well for their future. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities in lessons for the pupils to develop their investigative skills in science; the school recognises this as an area for development. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and ensure that they enjoy learning greatly; consequently, they make good progress. These factors contribute significantly to pupils' interest and motivation in lessons. Teachers' marking is good and the process of setting targets is exceptionally well developed. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. When teaching is less effective, progress slows and expectations and challenge are not as sharp.

A very strong feature of the outstanding curriculum is the way imaginative and exciting projects are used successfully to widen pupils' experiences. Thinking skills, self-esteem, problem solving and teamwork are promoted very well through themed weeks, 'philosophy for children' lessons, school productions and talent shows. The school makes excellent use of local resources to enrich pupils' learning in the classroom. The many clubs and activities outside the classroom are also excellent and encourage and develop the pupils' self-confidence and interests. Pupils apply their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well across all subjects. Personal, social and health education helps to promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and awareness of personal safety exceptionally well.

The outstanding quality of care, support and guidance is another factor underpinning the pupils' growth in self-confidence and their developing personal qualities. The whole staff are involved in creating the very high level of care and support which results in such a warm, friendly atmosphere in school. A very close check is kept on the welfare of vulnerable pupils and there are excellent links with outside agencies. All staff track pupils' academic progress very well. Strategies to support pupils are very well planned and implemented successfully to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well.

At the heart of the school's success is good leadership that ensures consistency in implementing policies and procedures, especially those relating to the checks on pupils' performance and progress. The headteacher provides highly effective and clear educational direction. She is respected and well supported by her staff and there is a strong commitment to provide each pupil with the best possible education. Governance is effective and helps to ensure that the school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but there are good features. Most children enter Nursery with skills typical for their age. During their time in the Nursery, children make satisfactory progress overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the Nursery children are provided with a good selection of well structured activities both inside and outside the classroom. However, sometimes they are left too long working on their own, whilst adults concentrate on teaching small groups. As a consequence, their language and understanding are not extended sufficiently. The quality of teaching and learning in Reception is good and children achieve well. Teaching is exciting and challenging. Adults purposefully intervene in children's work and play to help them to develop well. The staff assess children's progress accurately, which enables them to match activities especially well to meet the children's needs. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children have achieved satisfactorily overall developing their skills in line with national expectations. This is particularly so in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. The children make better progress in their mathematical development and, here, their skills are better than those expected nationally. The school has been particularly effective in increasing the numbers of children reaching levels above those expected for their age in all areas of their learning. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good overall. The leader has a clear view of provision in the Foundation Stage and is clear about the next steps of development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils' to develop their investigative skills in science to raise achievement.
- Ensure that adults in the Nursery spend more time promoting children's language and understanding whilst they are at play.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall and standards by the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Current school data and inspection evidence confirm that pupils make good progress overall. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are typical for their age and make satisfactory progress over the next two years. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' overall progress in Years 3 to 6 is good. Progress accelerates in the upper juniors as a result of very strong teaching for the oldest pupils. In recent years, by the end of Year 6, pupils have achieved broadly average standards. However, as a result of the school's strategies to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics, standards rose to above average in 2007; this was the result of an excellent focus on problem solving. Although overall standards are currently above average, pupils could do better in science. This is because their investigative skills are not as good as they could be. Children, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well. Furthermore, in response to the additional help they receive, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a highly developed awareness of spiritual, moral and cultural issues, and excellent social skills. Their behaviour is exemplary and they strongly disapprove of any form of bullying or racism. This is why the atmosphere in school is harmonious and calm. Pupils have an exceptional enjoyment of their learning. They say that 'Lessons are very interesting and learning is really fun.' Attendance, although average, due to holidays taken in term time, is improving noticeably in response to the school's effective systems to encourage good attendance. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. This is partly because the school values their ideas and encourages initiative. Pupils relish opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as school councillors, playground leaders and 'befrienders'. The programme for health education is very effective and pupils acquire a meaningful understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. They are exceptionally well aware of life's dangers, such as smoking and the misuse of alcohol and drugs. Pupils develop good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, which help to secure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, with the most effective teaching for the oldest pupils. Pupils' behaviour is extremely well managed in lessons. Lessons are calm and purposeful and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and most work successfully to make lessons interesting. Pupils respond well and work conscientiously, they are eager to succeed. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively to explain difficult ideas to pupils, particularly in mathematics. In English and mathematics lessons, assessment procedures effectively ensure tasks closely match pupils' different learning needs. This ensures that all pupils, especially the more able achieve well. However, in science, teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their investigative skills and as a consequence, the pupils could make better progress. In outstanding lessons, teachers very skilfully assess all pupils' progress against learning objectives, intervening appropriately to ensure pupils' full understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is a very strong focus on promoting pupils' creativity and enjoyment. The curriculum is planned very well to establish meaningful links between subjects. It is enriched by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. There are many opportunities available to the pupils, including visits to places of interest, visitors to the school, after-school sports clubs, art clubs and school productions alongside talent competitions. These opportunities are enhanced by excellent links with the local community, other schools and arts organisations. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' basic skills, including creative thinking, for example, in the 'philosophy for children' lessons. Personal, social, and health education lessons help pupils to develop an excellent awareness of health and safety and to encourage good communication and relationships between themselves and between them and staff. Furthermore, pupils in Years 2 to 6 have the opportunity to learn the basics of French, German or Spanish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Robust and effective procedures which meet statutory requirements are in place to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in and around school. Systems to help young children to settle into Nursery and for Year 6 pupils to move on to secondary school are well established. The school has forged excellent links with parents and health professionals. Consequently, all pupils are safeguarded and barriers to learning and personal development are successfully overcome. The most vulnerable pupils grow in confidence and learn effectively. Particularly good support for those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and emotional needs helps them to be confident in their learning and to achieve well. Pastoral guidance is excellent and is a major factor in the pupils' outstanding personal development. Academic guidance is good and continues to improve as teachers find more imaginative ways to enable pupils to assess their own learning. Targets in English and mathematics are clear and pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is impressive and is highly effective. She has established a very strong and effective senior leadership team, which is working well with all staff, including governors, to promote pupils' learning. There is a very strong sense of teamwork and a shared purpose to create a school where Every Child Matters. First-rate improvements include the development of highly effective assessment and tracking systems, which have been used well to monitor and improve pupils' progress.

Challenging targets are used well to improve pupils' performance. Although some judgements about past standards and achievements have been overgenerous, assessment is now far more rigorous. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, because self-evaluation procedures to check on its work are good. They are thorough, well documented and impact well on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Middle managers are starting to have a good impact on improving pupils' progress and in helping to identify staff training needs. However, some are new to their posts and so their roles are not yet fully developed. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, rising standards and excellent partnerships with a wide range of agencies, including parents, gives the school a 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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	2
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	3
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us with our work when we inspected your school. We agree with your parents and carers that this a good school with some outstanding features. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you. We were impressed that you were always very polite and took care of each other. You play a big part in making your school a happy and exciting place. Here are some of the good things that we found out about your school.

- You very much enjoy learning and do very well in most of your work by the time you leave school because you are taught well.
- You understand exceptionally well how to keep healthy and stay safe.
- You really enjoy taking part in all areas of school life, such as the school council, school community team, school productions and in all the great clubs that are on offer.
- Your teachers take excellent care of you.
- The headteacher and the governors run the school well.

In order to make the school even better, we have asked your headteacher and governors to ensure that:

- teachers provide you with more opportunities to develop your investigative skills in science so that you will learn more
- grown ups in the Nursery help the children to improve their language and understanding whilst they are playing.

Please continue to make Lepton school a wonderful place to be.