

Sitlington Netherton Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108158
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309604
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	198
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Newsome
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Mason
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	Netherton Lane Netherton Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 4HQ
Telephone number	01924 302885
Fax number	01924 302885

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Inspection number	309604

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data, school documents and parents' questionnaires. In addition, there were discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff, pupils and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school draws pupils from an area of average social advantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. Few pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are of White British heritage and all pupils speak English as their first language. The Foundation Stage includes part-time places for up to 52 children aged three to four. The school has achieved the following awards: Investors in People; Investors in Pupils; Basic Skills Quality Mark; Gold Standard Artsmark; Active Mark; Healthy Schools Award. Children arrive in the Nursery with skills which are broadly expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sitlington Netherton is a good school. It promotes outstanding personal development and well-being among its pupils, along with a true regard for lifelong learning by pupils, staff, governors, parents and the local community. The school's motto, 'Working and Learning Together', springs to life every day here. Senior leaders know the school well, as signposted in their accurate self-evaluation and clearly expressed priorities. Although the senior leadership team is still relatively new, the headteacher drives the school forward with a vision that lacks any hint of complacency. In close partnership with the deputy headteacher, she endorses simple yet highly effective strategies to improve pupils' academic achievement while retaining the highest regard for their social and emotional well-being. The leadership recognises the value of effective parental involvement in pupils' learning. Indeed, the school has won national recognition for its excellent practice in this area. Staff acknowledge that parents are strong ambassadors for the school, representing it as they do at training events and as they raise the profile of the school in the community. Well established links with other schools ensure that pupils benefit from expertise in modern foreign languages, for example. This adds to their cultural understanding as well as preparing them well for secondary school. Governors play a strong role in the school's development. They offer expertise and challenge and form strong working partnerships with staff and pupils. High standards, good achievement and strong, innovative leadership demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

Pupils achieve well from average starting points no matter what their age or ability. This is because the school tracks their progress accurately and pinpoints the pupils they need to push faster or to support more intensively. Improved assessment and tracking procedures mean that the 2006 drop in standards was expected, mainly because of the larger than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2007, standards rose again and were above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Although double the national average, fewer Year 6 pupils attained the higher levels in writing, compared to reading, mathematics and science. The proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching higher levels in writing was broadly average, but smaller than in reading or mathematics. Levels of academic guidance and support are good. Careful use of data means teachers know exactly what levels of challenge to put in front of pupils in their lessons in order to inspire rather than deflate. However, the various marking strategies that teachers use to show pupils how to improve their work lack a common clarity. The school rightly judges that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and this is borne out by high levels of achievement by all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This allows pupils to start the next phase of their education confident that they will be successful. The rich curriculum provides pupils with interesting activities both in and out of lessons and this adds to their enjoyment of school. Parents commend the 'fantastic opportunities', the school offers their children.

Pupils regard their time at Netherton with equal affection and pride. They are firmly of the opinion that 'All schools should be like this one!' They are very enthusiastic about all the things they do and, when asked, could not think of one thing they would wish to change. Consistently high and ever rising attendance levels reflect their love of school. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school places an intense focus on this important area. Inspiration is drawn from the school's work to maintain its valued Investors in Pupils status. Motivational phrases pepper classrooms and corridors; pupils are never more than a swift glance from a positive or nurturing message.

Behaviour is exemplary and the environment calm. One parent observed wryly, 'Children's behaviour and respectful attitudes are constantly good. Adults could learn from them.' Pupils are adamant that no bullying occurs in their school and are aghast that the question is even asked. The benefits of lifelong learning are a cause for regular celebration in assemblies. When adults achieve success in training courses or professional qualifications, they receive applause and go up to receive their diplomas in front of the whole school so pupils see the importance of learning for future success. Pupils have discussions with governors and investigate at first hand some of the headaches associated with overseeing the school budget. They learn the rudiments of many important life skills crucial for future success. The contribution pupils make to the school family and local community as they become increasingly valuable national and international citizens enables them to understand more about the value of social responsibility and how important it is to respect differences between people. Pupils say they feel safe in school and learn increasingly about how to live healthy and safe lifestyles. Adults in school play their part well and provide first-rate pastoral support to ensure that pupils are well cared for. All the appropriate measures are in place to safeguard pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Consistently high quality provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, most children work securely within, and some exceed, the goals expected for their age by Year 1. Children's physical development is particularly strong, partly because of the well resourced, tactile outdoor area that parents helped to create. Children's personal and social development, along with their language and mathematical skills, are securely established, although the school accurately identifies writing and calculation as skills to develop. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff provide an exciting range of daily activities that capture young imaginations. 'Write Dance' is a prime example. This innovative programme helps children to develop a love of writing through links between physically demanding and creative activities. For instance, children produced a riotous record of orange and red on black from the two-handed, crayoned accompaniment that represented their musical interpretation of a volcanic eruption. The well observed principle of turn taking is a struggle here. Everyone enjoys this activity so much that they find it difficult to walk by and not join in. Nevertheless, children's behaviour is immaculate and particularly impressive so early in the year. Adults track children's progress carefully. This, along with increasingly effective links with staff in Years 1 and 2, supports children's good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.
- Introduce a unified approach to teachers' marking and the recording of how pupils can improve their work.

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?	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 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	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?	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	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**

Inspection of Sitlington Netherton Junior and Infant School, Netherton, WF4 4HQ

Thank you for making my recent visit to your school so enjoyable. You were very helpful and it was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and listen to your views.

I'm sure you and your parents will not be surprised that, at the end of my visit, I judged yours to be a good school. You reach high standards in your work and do well at Netherton. Everyone I spoke to told me how much they enjoy coming here. This was easy to see as I moved from class to class - you all work very well and behave beautifully with no time wasting. You are very keen to discuss issues in class and to be actively involved in school life. School councillors and team captains are good at making things happen. You know what your targets are in class and try your hardest to succeed. Some of you told me that teachers say, 'Challenge yourselves first, then ask for help if you need it.' Many of you are good at doing this. It's good to be so independent. Your headteacher and everyone who works in the school make sure that you face daily challenges, both in lessons and in the way you develop as young people. As a result, when you leave the school you are ready to meet and succeed in a whole range of activities. Being adaptable and self-confident are very useful skills and you have buckets full of both! All the adults take very good care of you and you know lots about how to stay healthy and safe. Above all, you know how to look after each other and think this is very important.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school could improve. I have asked your headteacher and all the staff to help you to reach higher standards in writing. You concentrate so well in lessons that I know you will help with this aim by trying your best. I have also asked that all your teachers make sure they give you the same clear guidance about how to make each piece of work you do even better. It is very important that you read and remember their suggestions so they don't have to write the same thing again next time. They are too busy planning more exciting lessons and activities for you to want to do that!