

Normanton Altofts Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108208
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309617
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ken Valentine

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 (total)	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Clive Hudson
Headteacher	Mrs T Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	Ash Tree Gardens Altofts Normanton West Yorkshire WF6 2NF
Telephone number	1924 302430
Fax number	01924 302430

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Normanton Altofts Junior School is above average in size for a junior school and the great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are more favourable than average and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average and only a very small number of pupils speak English as their second language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Normanton Altofts Junior School is a satisfactory school with good features. This warm, welcoming school provides a high level of care, which underpins pupils' good personal development. Pupils' outstanding attendance reflects their very high level of enjoyment of their education.

By the end of Year 6 standards are usually above average and, given pupils' above average starting points on entry to school, achievement is satisfactory. In 2008 the provisional results at the end of Year 6, together with school data, show there was a slight drop in standards and a significant factor in this was the high level of staff changes. Staffing is now more settled and pupils in school are now making the progress expected of them. However, pupils' standards in English remain below those in mathematics and science. This is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils and for boys. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately met and effective use is made of teaching support assistants. This results in these pupils' satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning, although inconsistent, is satisfactory overall. However, not all work is well matched to pupils' needs and there are missed opportunities for pupils to show independence in their work in class.

A high level of self-confidence and their commitment to the school community helps pupils' good personal development. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and assemblies demonstrate the school community as cheerful and uplifting. Pupils show good attitudes and behaviour, and they are making good progress in their knowledge of healthy lifestyles, safety and workplace skills. The curriculum is good and pupils are very enthusiastic about the range of enrichment activities on offer and greatly appreciate the good level of opportunities for residential experiences. The school leadership has introduced changes to the school curriculum that are having a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment for learning but these still have to fully impact on standards. Pupils are already motivated by the variety of activities now provided. Good care, guidance and support arrangements support pupils' personal development and academic monitoring is assisting further learning. Although the school is a friendly community a significant minority of parents express reservations about communications between themselves and school.

Satisfactory leadership and management are securing satisfactory achievement. The leadership team is experienced and competent and is balanced by energetic subject coordinators. All are determined to improve further. Although the quality of teaching has been monitored, this has not had sufficient impact, resulting in inconsistencies in the quality of learning. Self-evaluation is developing and the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards in English, particularly for higher attaining pupils and for boys.
- Improve the match of work to pupils' needs and provide more opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching leads to a better consistency in the quality of learning.
- Improve communications between parents and the school.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are usually above average. Given pupils' above average attainment on entry most make satisfactory progress during their time in school. Inspection evidence indicates that standards dipped slightly in 2008. This was particularly the case in English, where, over time, standards have not been quite as high as standards in mathematics and science. The performance of boys is not as good as girls in English, and higher attaining pupils, both boys and girls, sometimes do not achieve as well as they could. Although many pupils, including boys, are confident speakers their competence in speaking and reading is not always translated sufficiently into high enough standards in writing. The school has set challenging targets in both English and mathematics for next year to raise pupils' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is outstanding. They appreciate and take full advantage of the wide range of enrichment opportunities offered, particularly the residential visits available to all year groups. Pupils participate well in high quality sporting and other physical activities, both in lessons and after school. The inclusive, caring nature of the school is a strength and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. This is because rules are well known and effective. Pupils know the importance of healthy lifestyles and diet. They make a good contribution to their own community through the school council, as 'fitbods', buddies and leading the whole-school in the daily 'wake up and shake up' routine. As a result, they grow in maturity and confidence. Because the school is effective in teaching about relationships and making the right kinds of decisions, pupils support each other well, in a harmonious and happy learning community. Pupils' economic and workplace skills are developing steadily and Year 6 pupils enjoy their 'Dragons Den' enterprise activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers show a good level of subject knowledge and are well organised in lessons. However, teaching does not always fully meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the requirements of the more able pupils. This is because work is not always well matched to their needs. On occasions the teaching does not allow enough independence for higher attaining pupils to work to their own level and this arises in some instances through an introduction to work which lacks pace. Informative marking and good guidance from the majority of teachers enable most pupils to understand what to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides an interesting and varied curriculum that successfully links subjects together and pupils say this makes learning more meaningful and fun for them. They particularly enjoy the special themed weeks: recent work on 'Islands' has fired their imagination and encouraged them to do their own research at home as well as school. Good improvements have been made

in the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection. Pupils use these skills and their writing skills well to support learning in other subjects. The good programme to support pupils' personal development ensures that they know how to stay safe, fit and healthy. Sport and music are strengths of the school and French is taught in all classes. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults in this caring school are fully committed to the support they give to pupils, and this is central to the pupils' good personal development. It helps to build confidence and openness and is an important factor in creating the happy and harmonious environment evident within the school. As a result, all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, feel safe and grow as confident learners and young people. Health and safety procedures are comprehensive ensuring that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet the current requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and that, 'bullying is not a problem'. They are confident to talk to teachers about any concerns and say, 'We trust our teachers and know they will sort any problems out.' There are systems in place for monitoring the progress of pupils. However, the use of these systems has yet to fully impact on improving the achievement of the most able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since the time of the last inspection there has been a change in the headship and in a number of other leadership roles. The quality of leadership is satisfactory. There is still more to do to accelerate achievement and secure consistently good quality of teaching and learning. Improvements have been made to the curriculum and, similarly, aspects of care, guidance and support are now better than at the time of the last inspection. Governors have been supportive of school developments and are satisfactory in the conduct of their role. They are fully behind the leadership in its successful efforts to produce a school community which works so well together. School leaders are aware of the school's overarching strengths and weaknesses. Although self-evaluation is satisfactory the leaders do not always evaluate well enough the effectiveness of the provision in terms of outcomes for pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place and has identified where teaching could be improved. However, this has not yet led to the necessary improvement and the quality of teaching and learning remains inconsistent. The school has not done enough to take into account parents' views particularly about the quality of communications between themselves and the school.

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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?	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	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

In my recent inspection I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

I was impressed by the outstanding enthusiasm you have for your work. Your high level of attendance will certainly help you in future. You really seemed to be enjoying yourselves even at the very start of the day when I watched some of you in the 'wake up and shake up' session!

This is a caring school that gives you such a lot of interesting things to do. You have a good range of subjects to learn and it was pleasing to see the enthusiasm you have for French. The good range of residential visits you are able to go on will help maintain your good personal development.

Teaching at your school is satisfactory and you are making satisfactory progress to reach standards that are better than those reached by most children. However, your standards in English are not as high as they are in other subjects and boys and the more able pupils could do even better. I am suggesting to the school that you have plenty of challenging work in future and have more opportunities to work independently. Your teachers are working hard on your behalf. I have asked the school to ensure all lessons are as good as the best. I have also asked that the system of messages between the school and your parents and carers is improved. This way everybody will be kept fully informed about all the interesting things that are going on at school.