

Crigglestone Mackie Hill Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108211
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309619
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Chinn
Headteacher	Mrs Albery
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	Painthorpe Lane Crigglestone Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 3HW
Telephone number	01924 303520
Fax number	0

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Crigglestone Mackie Hill is a smaller than average school serving a catchment area that includes areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of those entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

There are four mixed-age classes in addition to the Year 1, Nursery and Reception classes. A new headteacher took up the post at the beginning of the current term after two terms as acting headteacher. The school has Healthy Schools status. It has also received the Active School award and the Basic Skills award.

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 significant strengths. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is excellent and this underlies much of their good and improving achievement. Pupils thrive academically and personally. Parents justifiably hold the school in high regard, referring to its 'vibrant and enthusiastic atmosphere'. They are appreciative of the values that the headteacher and staff pass on to the pupils. They say the school, 'encourages good behaviour and moral development, and is an asset to the community as a whole', and, 'makes the children its highest priority always'. Central to this are the strong commitment and very good leadership of the headteacher, who is ably supported by all staff.

Pupils currently achieve well throughout the school. From a starting point that is below typical expectations, they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They begin Year 1 having narrowed the gap between their attainment and typically expected standards. They continue to make good progress through Years 1 to 6. Pupils' current work and provisional national test results for 2008 indicate that by the end of Year 6, standards in English have improved on the recent past and are now securely average. In mathematics and science they are above average, which again represents good improvement.

Pupils' good progress is due to good teaching, effective use of assessment information and carefully considered modifications to the school's good curriculum. Daily practice in phonics for the younger pupils, and a guided reading session for all pupils every day, have contributed significantly to accelerated rates of progress in language development. However, at the higher levels, the gap between standards in English and those in mathematics and science persists, with significantly fewer pupils reaching the higher levels in English compared to the other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported throughout the school and the latest indications are that they make good progress to reach nationally expected levels at the end of Year 6.

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. The school's leaders promote a strong moral ethos in which all pupils feel valued. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils show sensitivity and maturity in their attitudes towards one another and towards adults. They are very proud of their school and make a good contribution to the community through an active school council and by helping others less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for charities.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders provide strong leadership and the headteacher has successfully sought to give staff the opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility. Assessment systems are good and help the school to know how well it is doing. The school knows itself well and has accurately identified its strengths and areas for improvement. Issues from the last inspection relating to the use of assessment and the development of language skills have been effectively tackled and the school's record of recent success shows it has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to the Nursery, children who are currently in the Foundation Stage had weaknesses in language skills but they were confident in calculation. Practical activities in short bursts provide children with a broad range of experience in all areas of learning. This results in good

progress for most children so that by the time they leave the Reception class, an average number of children reach the typically expected goals in most areas, although they still lag behind in their social and creative development.

The quality of teaching is good. Children's communication and language respond particularly well to systematic activities linking letters and sounds. Adults promote children's emotional development well. For example, a group of children discussing their feelings and asked to identify what made them feel sad were able to explain that 'sometimes you cry when you are happy'.

Careful assessment and tracking of progress help staff to target the learning needs of individuals and groups of children. Parents express pleasure at how quickly their children's skills or need for support are identified.

Planning for learning indoors and in the outside area supports teaching effectively, but sometimes adults direct too much, limiting opportunities for children to make choices and develop their own ideas.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Parents praise the speed with which their children settle quickly into the Foundation Stage. They value the effort the school has put into involving them in their children's learning from the very earliest stages.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in English at the end of Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with attainment levels below typical expectations for their age. They achieve well throughout the school and reach standards that are generally above average in mathematics and science, and broadly average in English at the end of Year 6. In 2007, results fell in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, where there was a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and also a high proportion of pupils who joined the school during that year.

This year, improvements were made in all three subjects at Key Stage 2. Targets for the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science were exceeded. In English, the target was exceeded at the nationally expected level but not reached at the higher level. This improvement in standards in English stems from a careful analysis of data last year by the school's leaders which led to changes in emphasis in the classroom. More time has been given to drama, which has helped develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Effective use of a programme that helps develop the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning has increased their confidence in using language. In conjunction with the phonics and guided reading programmes, these two modifications to the curriculum have enabled many pupils to make good improvements in their language skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils show care and consideration for each other and feel very safe at school. They are particularly appreciative of

the 'kind and helpful teachers', who help them to deal with any emotional difficulties they may experience. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and take full advantage of the healthy choices that are promoted in school.

Work skills, including teamwork and decision making, are embedded in the school day. Staff promote the importance of punctuality and courtesy in relation to their future work roles. The consequences are evident in the pupils' pride in their positive attitudes. As pupils say, 'We take what we've learnt in school and take it out into the community, such as behaving responsibly.' Pupils take full advantage of the good opportunities to extend their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to the point where Year 6 pupils submit their homework online. This offers them a good platform for preparation for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning in small groups support pupils who need additional help. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to work with pupils on a range of support programmes that help to redress weaknesses in their learning. This has been especially successful in improving reading skills. Effective use of speaking and listening activities, especially in drama, problem solving and investigative science, helps teachers to engage learners through good use of language. This encourages pupils to think and discuss their ideas. Occasionally, planning for lessons focuses on the activity and what pupils will do, rather than the skills pupils need to have in order to learn. Marking, however, offers pupils good constructive guidance on how to improve their work. 'Teachers are the best,' a group of pupils said. 'They listen, they are kind, they come and help you and never say 'you should have been listening' if you don't understand what you have to do next.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good range of extra-curricular activities makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school. The school's strong commitment to personal, social and health education helps pupils to feel valued as community members and to stay healthy and safe. The emphasis on music, art and French, expands pupils' cultural horizons, although they have fewer opportunities to learn about wider cultural influences in Britain's multi-ethnic society. Good sports links with other schools, after-school sports clubs and daily physical activities such as the 'Wake up, Shake up' routines, provide pupils with good opportunities to keep healthy. Residential trips provide older pupils with yet more opportunities to enhance their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Safeguarding and child protection requirements are fully met. The school acts swiftly when risks to pupils' health or safety are identified and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their local environment. As a result, pupils have a heightened awareness of how to keep safe when out of school.

New procedures to track pupils' academic progress are successfully identifying those pupils who are struggling and who would benefit from additional support. Pupils generally understand how and why their targets are set, because they are closely involved in deciding them. They say their targets, 'highlight the things we have to work on so we know where to concentrate the most.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong leadership of the headteacher, in close partnership with other senior staff, provides clear direction. The headteacher has gathered, motivated and developed a team which shares her vision and sense of purpose. Good structures have been set in place to widen leadership responsibilities for subjects and key aspects across the staff. The school has a good understanding of its performance. Improvement planning is focused on outcomes for pupils. Leaders at all levels undertake monitoring of teaching and learning, giving the school an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of its provision. Rigorous evaluation of data has led to the implementation of actions that are helping pupils to accelerate their rate of progress across the school. The school's leaders acknowledge that they now need to ensure the recent impact of their actions is sustained. The process of target-setting is effective, with the school regularly adjusting pupils' targets to make sure they are demanding. Productive links with a variety of agencies are used to ensure appropriate levels of support and to enhance pupils' learning. Strong links with parents are increasing their awareness of how they can contribute effectively to their children's education. Finances are well managed and the school provides good value for money. Governors are committed, ensuring that they are well informed in order to hold the school to account.

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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	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the two inspectors who visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for being extremely courteous and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and other staff. We came to the conclusion that Mackie Hill is a good school with some excellent features.

We think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you very well. This helps you to keep safe and healthy. We were delighted to see that you get on so well with one another and all the adults who work with you. We found that your work in mathematics and science is very good and that you are making big improvements in English, too.

You told us how much you enjoy so many things that you do at or after school: the sports, the music, the 'wake up, shake up' routines, visits to the pantomime or Butterfly World, for example, and the art, gardening and cookery clubs. An impressive list! It came as no surprise when the older pupils told us they would be sorry to leave Mackie Hill.

To help your school to improve even more, we have asked your headteacher and the other staff to help more of you reach the higher levels in English at the end of Year 6. You can help, too, by paying careful attention to the advice that your teachers give you.

We are sure that you will carry on enjoying school and continue to build on the improvements that you are making now. Most of all, we hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make Mackie Hill an even better school in the future.