

Wakefield Flanshaw Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108216
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309624
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Susan Macbeth
Headteacher	Mr David Appleby
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Flanshaw Road Flanshaw Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 0AS
Telephone number	01924 303645
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the centre of Wakefield and is much larger than average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic families, the largest group being Pakistani, is increasing and now accounts for about one in four pupils. Most of these pupils speak English as an additional language; there are at least 12 different languages spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, having increased significantly over the last four years. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. There is an above-average number of new pupils starting at the school or leaving during term time. There has been much staff turbulence since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement: at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics; and at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science.

Inspectors agree with some of the school's positive views of itself including that pupils' personal development, whilst satisfactory, is stronger than their academic progress. However, its overall effectiveness is inadequate because standards are significantly below average throughout the school and pupils' progress is inadequate. The school has had some major barriers to learning to overcome since the previous inspection in 2004, when pupils achieved well in some subjects. The most significant has been the disruption to pupils' learning caused by staffing changes and absence. A key appointment was made a year ago, bringing a new deputy headteacher to the school. Working together, the headteacher and senior staff are tackling issues with determination, as the school teaches a rising number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The provision for these pupils is well organised and results in most making at least satisfactory progress.

While some parents praise the 'patient, dedicated and firm teachers', a few want the school to give greater consideration to the views of parents and pupils. Involving parents much more in their children's learning is recognised by the school as an area in which it could do better. Parents appreciate the caring and supportive atmosphere in school, which enables pupils to enjoy good relationships with staff.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but it is not consistently strong enough to enable a small but significant number of pupils to overcome a legacy of underachievement. 'Not improving enough', and 'left to roll along', are typical parents' comments. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning for literacy and numeracy, for example, are helping to 'turn things around' but some teachers do not always expect enough from their pupils. The beginnings of improvement are evident also in the school's assessments of progress for each year group. Nevertheless, standards remain well below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Standards at Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are also significantly below average. Pupils have big gaps in their learning, as shown by the school's low national assessment and test results over the last three years.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staffing turbulence has meant that there has been insufficient improvement since the inspection in 2004. However, there is a good team spirit amongst staff and the correct priorities for improvement have been identified. Staff are beginning to tackle effectively and with determination the low standards and areas of significant underachievement across the school. Involvement in an intensive support programme with the local authority is bringing a sharper focus to raising standards. There are clear signs that their collective efforts, particularly in improving standards and pupils' progress, are beginning to pay off. As a result, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. Staff work well together to ensure that most children enjoy school and are beginning to make good progress. Children enter Nursery with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age. Their speaking skills are very poor. The management of the Foundation Stage is effective in ensuring that children receive the attention they need in order to learn. As a result, children settle in quickly, are happy and most are beginning to make good progress in all areas. However, by the end of Reception only about half achieve the targets expected for their age. Their skills in communication and calculation are the weakest aspects of their development. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The two nursery nurses who manage provision in the Nursery are supported well by the Foundation Stage leader. However, the activities that are set out for the children to choose themselves are sometimes lacking in purpose and offer too little challenge, especially for the more able. As a result, activities such as using modelling material or construction equipment fail to hold children's interest for long. Staff plan a good range of activities to engage boys' interests and to help them to learn. When children work in groups, it tends to be the adults who do most of the talking, limiting speaking opportunities for children. In Reception, there is a strong emphasis on developing reading and writing skills. Plans are well advanced to move the Reception class next to the Nursery and to provide an additional outdoor area to improve children's learning experiences.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what all pupils need to learn in order to accelerate their rate of progress.
- Raise standards and achievement throughout the school in English, mathematics and science.
- Develop a more effective partnership with parents and provide better opportunities to listen to their views and concerns, as well as those of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are well below those achieved in similar schools. Pupils do not make as much progress as they could and, as a result, standards are well below average for seven and eleven-year-olds and have been so for three years. The school did not achieve its targets for English, mathematics or science in 2007. Until recently, a high turnover of staff contributed to pupils' poor progress because of inconsistencies in the approach to tackling underachievement. The school's own assessment data suggest there are early signs of some improvement in progress for all pupils, including those with LDD, but it is too early for this to have made an impact on national test results or in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. However, current standards of pupils' work show that progress is beginning to improve in writing and mathematics as a result of the teachers' higher expectations and a recent sharper focus on standards in these areas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils say that they enjoy school 'because everyone can join in and have fun whilst they are learning'. They are proud that they are welcoming to the many newcomers and pupils who are

learning to speak English. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils say it is improving because of their good response to the school's higher expectations of them. They feel any bullying is dealt with swiftly and judge that they are safe in school. Limited opportunities for pupils to make choices and influence their own community, for example, as a school councillor, restrict their personal development. They miss having a formal venue where they can express their views although they appreciate the open access they have to a learning mentor to discuss more personal issues. The school recognises pupils could have a stronger voice in how the school develops and has recently introduced a curriculum initiative to support the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils welcome the opportunities they have to learn to socialise with each other when they go on residential visits. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; they acknowledge that the choices they make about keeping fit and eating well have been influenced by the school. Their preparation for the next stage in their education is hampered by their poor basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There has been a strong and successful initiative to improve the quality of teaching, with staff being ably supported by external consultants. As a result, most of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and some was good. Training to ensure that planning takes account of the different ability levels within a class, and that learning objectives are clear to staff and pupils, has helped to make teaching more effective. As a result, standards are beginning to rise. Most teachers make good use of technology such as the new interactive electronic whiteboards and laptop computers to enhance pupils' learning in many subjects. However, there are still inconsistencies in practice with some teachers being more successful than others. This is affecting the quality of learning and having an adverse effect on pupils' progress. In the best lessons, pupils are provided with tasks that are challenging and interesting. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning when supporting pupils, particularly those learning to speak English. Pupils in the 'nurture groups' are taught well and enjoy being successful. Progress is not as good as it should be for higher attaining pupils when teachers give them work that is too easy. More generally, progress also slows when pupils are not sure about how to achieve what is expected of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Providing an effective and worthwhile curriculum is seen by the school as a critical element in raising standards, and some important steps have been taken towards achieving this aim. A curriculum based on developing key skills for different subjects was introduced recently. There is a continuing strong focus on improving the English and mathematics curriculum. Some parents have expressed an interest in helping with reading but their offer has not yet been acted upon. Some learning activities are not sufficiently creative or imaginative to hold pupils' interest and some lack enough challenge for the more able. The curriculum is enhanced by an interesting range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors, adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is strong support for pupils' personal development, with the introduction of a programme for the social and emotional aspects of their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers know their pupils well and respond appropriately to individual needs. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are in place and there are appropriate policies for child protection and health and safety. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for in school. The school provides satisfactory personal and academic guidance for pupils. Better systems to assess and analyse pupils' progress have recently been introduced. Information about pupils' progress is being used increasingly and more effectively to identify underachievement and to set relevant targets for pupils. By directing help to where it is needed most, it is helping to ensure a more consistent progression in pupils' learning. Teachers' marking mostly gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work. All pupils have their own individual targets but some of these are not challenging enough for more able pupils and many are unclear about what is expected of them. Including individual targets for pupils with learning difficulties in their exercise books is a positive step and helps keep them focused.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leaders and managers of the school acknowledge the school's weaknesses and are beginning to tackle them successfully. Progress since the inspection in 2004 has been inadequate. The newly formed leadership team, with the advice and support of external consultants, is beginning to move forward on the correctly identified priorities. Better systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work have been introduced. There is a special focus on monitoring the quality of learning, which is beginning to improve. An example is the nurture groups which are effectively focusing on pupils' progress and achievement in English and mathematics. More challenging targets are being set and staff show a strong determination to work together to meet them. The analysis of pupils' performance data is more rigorous and beginning to establish exactly how well the pupils in each year group are performing. Additional support is now targeted to where it is most needed. The newly appointed chair of governors is committed to establishing a school that is highly valued by the community. Governors share this commitment and have embarked on a training programme in partnership with governors from a nearby school. Whilst their work is satisfactory, governors recognise they could be more involved in helping to monitor the school's effectiveness and hold it more 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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Wakefield Flanshaw Junior and Infant School, Wakefield, WF2 0AS

Thank you for talking to the inspectors and for being so friendly and helpful.

We think, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools agrees, that your school is not doing as well as it could in some areas and needs significant improvement to make it more successful. Your school has been given a Notice to Improve. Another inspector will visit you again in about six to eight month's time to see if things are improving.

We were pleased to see how well children in the Nursery and Reception are working to improve their reading, writing and mathematics. It was good to see you making full use of your computers.

We have asked your teachers to try and make sure all lessons are interesting and give you work that makes you think really hard to help you all do as well as you can. We are sure you will enjoy the challenge. Your headteacher, governors and staff are all working together and have their plans firmly in place to make school more interesting and enjoyable for all of you. They are right to concentrate on improving your reading, writing and mathematics. We hope that they also encourage your parents to help much more and that all the governors will visit often to help the school improve.

Thank you again, for helping us with this inspection. We liked the way you make friends with new pupils and look after them. It shows how sensible you can be and I expect it will not be long before your school council is set up. I hope that you will carry on trying your hardest to do even better in your lessons.