

Sandal Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108270
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309641
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Murphy

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Lloyd
Headteacher	Mr Chris Cowlshaw
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Barnsley Road Sandal Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 6AS
Telephone number	01924 303525
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school serves a wide geographical area and a mixed community. It has a falling roll which reflects changes locally. The majority of pupils are White British but an increasing number are from minority ethnic heritages and include asylum seekers. A small minority are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. More pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although it varies considerably from year to year. Since the last inspection the accommodation has been improved and the school has achieved Healthy Schools status. An acting deputy headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Satisfactory care and guidance supports pupils' sound personal development and well-being. As a result, the pupils are generally considerate towards each other and adults. Plenty of sports activities help to promote pupils' good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and reflect the school's national award for encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy school and attend very regularly because the school and parents work together to promote good attendance. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, yet variable in quality. It is this inconsistency that is hindering good achievement on the part of pupils. Most pupils enter Year 3 with standards that are average. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, and means that by Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. The school works hard and provides extra classes to boost pupils' attainment in Year 6. It has improved standards in writing and narrowed the gap between writing and reading found at the last inspection. Working with parents to share their children's targets, explain calculation methods and engage parental support for homework are all helping to improve achievement in mathematics.

The curriculum gives pupils a satisfactory base for their learning. It is enhanced through a good range of well attended extra-curricular activities which include sports clubs, choir, dance and chess. However, its impact is restricted because at times activities are rather thin and give insufficient challenge and depth to pupils' learning. There are strengths in the way pupils contribute to their local and wider community.

Senior leaders make sound use of data about pupils' progress to match resources to the pupils' needs. For example, arrangements for tracking are easy to use and the number and deployment of teaching assistants has improved since the last inspection. However, pupils are not clear enough about their learning targets and have insufficient opportunities to become involved in assessing how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Furthermore, in some classes there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to take on responsibility for aspects of their learning; for example, when basic resources such as paper and scissors are given out by adults.

In the main, the school accurately understands its strengths and areas for development. Leaders at most levels contribute soundly to improvement. Evaluations are shared with staff, but the school does not always act swiftly enough to remedy any weaknesses. The quality and implementation of action plans are not rigorous enough to ensure faster progress. Improvement since the last inspection, the capacity for further success and the value for money the school provides are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged in their work so that they learn at a good pace.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and to become involved in the evaluation of their progress.
- Improve the quality of action plans and rigorously implement them to ensure more rapid improvement in key areas.

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

The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils make sound progress overall by Year 6. Slight variations in attainment on entry show that when a group of pupils join the school at an above average level, they make satisfactory progress and leave slightly above average. This means that the school is ensuring adequate progress for its pupils but has yet to raise targets to improve progress to a good level. Pupils' progress is weakened by variations in the quality of teaching and learning. The school's provisional results in the national tests in 2007 again indicate broadly average standards. Since the last inspection the school has improved standards in English, particularly in writing, from slightly below the national average in 2003 to slightly above the national average in 2007. The improvement is most marked in writing which has been a focus for development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes are generally positive and they enjoy their work. Behaviour is satisfactory: a small minority of pupils need extra help to behave well. Nonetheless, most pupils take real care to help and support younger pupils, and the role of monitors assists in the development of pupils' personal contribution to the school community. Pupils have limited opportunities for independent learning because teaching is at times over directed. Pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy help them prepare satisfactorily for the next step in their education.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It supports pupils' good contribution to the community and helps increase their knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils' attendance is above the national average and reflects their interest in what the school provides. Pupils express much enthusiasm for their sports clubs and confirm that they are keen to keep healthy. Sports activities are a strength of the school and benefit pupils social development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies between classes. At its best, spirituality seeps through the pupils' learning, for example when pupils in Year 6 closed their eyes to 'conjure up pictures in their head' to promote their imaginative writing. Following this, a pupil commented, 'I'm awash with ideas!' which was certainly reflected in the subsequent writing. Relationships are strong and caring, and pupils' behaviour is managed well. Teaching assistants are confident and give good support to groups and individuals. This helps to accelerate pupils' learning as they have extra opportunities to discuss their work and develop their understanding. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils so they know what they are expected to learn by the end of a lesson. However, pupils' learning in a minority of classes lacks urgency. At these times, questioning does not include all pupils sufficiently well. Pupils are not clear about what is expected of them and are

given insufficient opportunities to develop their independence. The quality of marking does not always give sufficient guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. When pupils of one age are grouped together by their ability, the work set is not well enough matched to the needs within each group.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school prides itself on nurturing pupils' enjoyment. Opportunity to play musical instruments, a range of visits and visitors and a themed approach enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils found out about India through studies in geography, and art and design, which enriched pupils' spirituality and creativity as well as their knowledge and understanding. Physical education, including swimming and games, all feature strongly with good support from outside agencies. Sporting spirit and teamwork are celebrated along with sporting success. Even though the curriculum is enhanced in this way, the match of tasks to pupils' needs is not planned well enough in some respects. For example, at times the content does not provide sufficient depth to make pupils' learning really meaningful or sufficiently challenging. Recently installed interactive whiteboards have opened up greater curricular opportunities, although these are at an early stage of use.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school creates a positive, caring environment for its pupils. Arrangements are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and promote their safety and well-being.

A small number of pupils and parents are concerned about bullying. The school has strategies in place to deal with any bullying and pupils say they have adults who they can readily turn to in school to help with any problems. The recent introduction of a new scheme of work for personal development, together with 'socially speaking' groups led by support staff help to meet pupils' emotional needs. Many links with outside agencies, for example, to support pupils learning English as an additional language or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, help pupils make sound progress. However, the targets set out in individual educational plans are often not precise enough to ensure that help is closely focused. All pupils have learning targets, but some pupils are unsure of them or what they must do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team have a clear focus on pupils' pastoral care and personal development. They actively check the school's work and understand its strengths and areas for development. Information gained from monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of teaching helps the school to evaluate its performance and set relevant priorities for development. Nevertheless, the plans of action to support improvement, although comprehensive, lack precision. This makes it difficult for the school including governors, to ensure a good pace of change because the timescales, responsibilities and success criteria are unclear. As a result, there is insufficient rigour in implementation by senior leaders. Governors are keen to assist school leaders by fulfilling their responsibilities of support and challenge to bring about improvement.

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

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	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**

I write on behalf of the inspectors to thank you for your help when we visited your school. You made us welcome and told us a lot about Sandal Endowed. The school provides you with a satisfactory education. The good things are that you know a lot about how to stay safe, and fit and healthy. You enjoy all the sports and clubs that the staff provide for you, often in their own time. We could see that you enjoy your days in school and your attendance is good. You have plenty of opportunity to add much to the school and local communities by taking responsibilities such as monitors, representing your school in sports tournaments or making visits. There are fewer chances for you to take on responsibility for aspects of your own learning in lessons.

We found that the teaching is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. We have agreed with the school that it will make sure that all of you learn as quickly as you can by ensuring the tasks set in lessons are really challenging. You have a contribution to make by behaving well all the time so that no time is lost. The teachers are going to give you more opportunities to become independent in your work and to think more about how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve. Your school leaders know what needs to be done for things to get even better for you and they are going to write some action plans and act on them quickly so that you can all be even more successful.

Best wishes for the future!