

Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130972
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	315685
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Nicholson
Headteacher	Mrs E Webster
Date of previous school inspection	27 October 2003
School address	Chapel Street Ryhill Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 2AD
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is in a semi-rural, ex-mining village between Wakefield and Barnsley and is smaller than average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion entitled to free school meals is average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There have been significant staff changes, resulting in a period of turbulence for the school. A large influx of pupils from a neighbouring school has added to the well above average number of pupils leaving or entering during each school year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. It suffered a drop in standards after the previous inspection, when standards at Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science. This drop was, in part, caused by significant staff absences which had an adverse impact on pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the long-serving headteacher, working closely and effectively with the senior management team, has succeeded in raising standards during the last three years following a significant dip in 2005. The school has accurately judged its effectiveness to be satisfactory overall but good in some areas. Previous areas of weakness have been successfully resolved.

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average by the end of Year 6. Standards reached by Year 6 in 2007 in English were below those in mathematics and science, mainly because pupils' writing skills lagged behind those for reading in most classes. Some higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they should in English because of the lower standards reached in writing. Things have begun to improve this year. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are on course to meet their targets, which are higher than in 2007.

Good relationships between home and school and pupils' positive attitudes towards their schoolwork contribute effectively to their good personal development and well-being. Most pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of religions and cultures different from their own through the well planned curriculum. Pupils clearly enjoy being at school. Attendance is above average. Pupils' behaviour and relationships with one another are good, especially during playtimes.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but improving, partly because teachers are beginning to place more emphasis on improving standards in writing. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, especially for those who find learning difficult. Assessment procedures provide accurate information on the standards being reached and this information is used effectively to set new targets for pupils.

Pastoral care and support are strengths and parents showed how much they appreciate this in their mostly positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Academic guidance and support is good. Parents have plenty of opportunities to meet staff to review their children's progress towards challenging targets and there are regular reviews for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management have tackled the recent barriers to learning successfully as demonstrated by improving standards. Staffing is stable enough now for teachers to play their part. Staff monitor standards closely and are beginning to develop their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to give them a clearer picture of strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body, led by a conscientious chair, supports the school effectively, but its role in self-evaluation is not fully developed. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Nursery with broadly average abilities. Communication skills are particularly weak for many. Nevertheless, the good quality of teaching and learning in Nursery and Reception ensures that children settle in quickly

and make good progress. The spacious and extremely well equipped outdoor area with a new playhouse contributes much to children's physical development; their progress is especially good in this area of learning. Most attain the standards expected in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage, although standards in writing remain below average.

The Foundation Stage provision is managed effectively. Staff work well together to plan an exciting and stimulating curriculum that captures children's interests. A high proportion of boys were admitted to the Nursery at the start of this term and all thoroughly enjoyed using the wheeled toys outdoors and playing ball games with staff. The high quality classroom displays show the wide range of learning experiences offered. Staff carefully assess children's skills on entry and track in detail the progress they make in both classes. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and very well supported, enabling them to make good progress. The accommodation for Reception children is not as spacious as that in the Nursery but access to the outdoor area relieves the pressure on the indoor space.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Increase the involvement of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school effectiveness.

A small proportion of the schools where overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

There is a rising trend in standards at the end of Year 6 but up until the end of this year higher attainers were not doing well enough in English. Standards in writing were much lower than those in reading where pupils did well in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in Year 6 currently are average in mathematics and science and broadly average in English, which represents a marked improvement on 2007, maintaining the improving trend for the past three years. Progress is satisfactory overall across the school. Standards in reading are improving much more rapidly because of the strong emphasis on promoting reading skills in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they benefit from well organised support and tasks which are well matched to their capability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They say they like school and as a result attendance is good. The positive ethos and good relationships in the school result in good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils work hard in lessons. All pupils have been involved in an anti-bullying campaign and, as a result, they feel that no-one is bullied in school. The recently established 'buddy system', when older pupils look after the younger ones during playtimes, develops the older pupils' feelings of responsibility and confidence. The school's Healthy Schools Award reflects its success in helping pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and the 'Wake up, Shake up' early morning sessions get the day off to a lively start. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities they receive

to be involved in the local community and have raised money for a number of charities. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The recent turbulence caused by staff absence and staff changes adversely affected the quality of learning. As a result, standards in 2005 and 2006 were below average and this represented slow progress by pupils. Lessons vary in quality. In the more effective, good use is made of modern technology and pupils' attention is maintained with a rapid pace and enjoyable yet challenging activities. In an outstanding drama session with a visiting teacher from the local high school, older pupils threw themselves wholeheartedly into the activities. Pupils are less enthusiastic when tasks are routine and fail to motivate them. Some aspects of lesson planning, such as matching work to pupils' capabilities, are good, but planning to challenge more able pupils more appropriately, especially in writing, is an area to be improved. Assessment of pupils' progress is good and information is used well by staff to identify any pupils who may need additional help or support. The well trained support staff contribute much to pupils' learning, especially those with disabilities and those who find work difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers its pupils a good curriculum that meets their needs well. The wide range of additional activities, visits and visitors further enhances the pupils' curriculum experiences. Themed weeks, with African, Indian or French emphasis, also support pupils' understanding of different cultures. One particularly successful and memorable week for pupils was the Disability Awareness Week. Reading, numeracy and information and communication technology are emphasised well, developing pupils' basic skills effectively. The well planned personal, health, social and citizenship education curriculum impacts positively on pupils' personal development and their understanding of responsible citizenship. This is further emphasised in the work done by the school council. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to school activities and has gained the Regional Inclusion Chartermark. It is the weakness in English that prevents the curriculum from being first-rate. Transition arrangements are well established and the strong links with a local high school result in a highly successful programme of performing arts sessions which add to pupils' enjoyment and achievements in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff work hard to ensure that pupils are given good quality care, guidance and support. Safeguarding arrangements are well established and pupils say they feel safe. Pupils know they can talk to any member of staff about any problem because of the strong relationships that exist across the school community. A wide range of appropriate outside professional agencies is used to support individual pupils and their families. A recently appointed learning mentor is developing good support in a variety of ways to help pupils further both academically and personally. Monitoring attendance closely has resulted in an improvement and incentives to discourage lateness are beginning to work. Pupils' views are clearly heard through the school council, which is an active and enthusiastic body of pupils. The great majority of parents are

happy with the care and support given to their children, although a few said that they would like the school to take more notice of their views, suggestions or concerns. Systems to track pupils' progress are well established and effective in identifying any weaknesses, which can then be addressed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff operate effectively as a team. This is helping to drive up standards. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and, as a result, many of these pupils attain nationally expected standards. Staff know the school well and their evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Unfortunately, long-term absences and staff changes have disrupted management development. As a result some pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is well led and the business at all meetings is carefully and thoroughly reported. Although governors are dedicated, conscientious and fiercely loyal to the school, visiting it regularly, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the effectiveness of provision.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 the 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

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when I inspected your school recently. Yours is a satisfactory school that has had a lot of staff changes recently. I really enjoyed talking to you all and looking at the excellent displays of your work such as the glass crystals in the Nursery. These are the other good things about your school.

- Your attendance is good and it shows how much you enjoy being at school.
- I was impressed with how well you behave in class and around school.
- Children get a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is a lot for you to do and everyone has loads of fun in the outdoor area.
- Reading standards are good and a credit to you all for working so hard to improve your skills.
- There are many computers for you to use and I was pleased to see how good you are at using them in your lessons and in the big computer suite.
- The school takes good care of you all and is quick to support you if you need help.
- You have good links with the high school and it was good to see how much Years 5 and 6 enjoyed the drama activities.
- Staff from the Nursery to Year 6 work well together to provide all of you with an interesting and worthwhile curriculum.

I have asked your governors and staff to concentrate on the following to make it at least good in everything.

- Improve the standards you reach in writing as you move through the school, especially for the quicker learners.
- Make sure that the school governors are closely involved in checking how well the school is doing.

Thank you again for helping me with this inspection. You are right to be proud of your school because there are lots of good things happening there. I hope that you will carry on enjoying everything that it offers and try even harder in all of your lessons.