

Stubbings Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107510
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	324580
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Ross Parker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	94
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Eyre
Headteacher	Mrs S Maude
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Street Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire HX7 8BP
Telephone number	01422 842728
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Stubbings Infant School is smaller than average and housed in a Grade II listed building. The school is restricted in how it can use and adapt the building. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average as is the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school achieved Activemark in 2008, and has the Healthy Schools Award. There is a before and after school club on site which is run by a private provider and did not form a part of this inspection.

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. A typical parental comment describes a lovely warm and welcoming atmosphere where learning experiences are fun and varied. The school has prioritised making learning enjoyable so that children are confident and feel secure. The leadership and all staff believe that this will prepare children to be more effective learners, and ensure their future economic well-being. Children join the school at a stage of development that is broadly in line with national expectations and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Achievement is satisfactory but greater emphasis needs to be placed on the progress pupils make in each lesson.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have good awareness of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Because they feel secure and enjoy their learning they participate enthusiastically in a wide range of learning and play. Pupils' independence and understanding of others' needs is exceptional. They quickly grasp how they can contribute to other peoples' happiness by helping with their work, noticing if they are having a problem, or passing their ideas on to the adults. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is slightly below what is expected and the school is doing all that it can to improve this.

Lessons are well managed and enjoyable, though teachers do not always provide enough challenge to move all pupils on in their learning. Teachers set targets for each individual, but do not consistently check whether they have reached them. The curriculum is varied and stimulating and contributes well to pupils' development. Care and support are good. Adults provide very good guidance on how to develop as a person and a learner. Guidance on what to do next to improve is less well developed. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and the school's response to pupils' needs is seen by parents as exemplary.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some ongoing disagreements between some governors and the headteacher are distracting the governing body from focusing effectively on its monitoring role in holding the school to account. This has prompted some intensive support from the local authority. As a result of this partnership, the school is demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve. The school runs smoothly from day to day, and the outcomes for children represent satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage their development is broadly in line with national expectations except in the area of personal and social development, which is less well developed. By the end of the Reception Year children reach a level better than expected in their personal and social development, and as expected in reading, writing and mathematical calculations. They gain independence, collaborative skills, and the ability to work and play successfully with others. In particular, their enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning provide a good foundation for later success.

Children's day-to-day experiences are well planned, well presented and well resourced. There are very effective strategies to provide encouragement and rewards. The adults provide a good level of challenge and older children offer helpful examples of how to behave and learn. Good links with parents are established from children's first days in school.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Imaginative and carefully planned activities provide a good variety of experiences. There is a good balance between children choosing for themselves areas of work and play, and those that are directed by adults. Play can take its own route, for example when some clay biscuits 'caught fire' in the children's imaginations and the group reacted sensibly by standing well back.

What the school should do to improve further

- Resolve the disagreement between governors and the headteacher so that all adults are able to work as a team.
- Accelerate learning in lessons to at least match that of pupils' personal development in order to raise standards further.
- Make more consistent use of pupils' targets to help them to progress more quickly.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From broadly average starting points pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been average overall in recent years. The 2008 results show that pupils made better progress in writing and mathematics than in reading and science. However, all of this year group met or exceeded teachers' expectations in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because they are well supported. However, work set in lessons does not always provide enough challenge to pupils, especially those who learn quickly; pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The impact of the school's approach to teaching and learning is that children develop very positive relationships. They feel confident to approach staff and are considerate towards each other. This is because positive social behaviour is taught and practised from children's earliest days in school. In the café, for instance, children stay in the groupings they choose for the whole week. This ensures that mealtimes are opportunities for socialising as well as staying healthy. Some aspects of cultural development are particularly strong, due to the influence of visiting artists. Day-to-day routines enable pupils to be independent in many activities. They know what is expected and are able to organise themselves when they are working and playing. They need very little prompting to behave well. Decision making, problem solving, team working and a strong focus on thinking skills are building a strong foundation for success in later learning and in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers create secure and supportive learning environments where pupils feel very comfortable but sometimes lessons do not move children on quickly enough with their learning. Lessons are well resourced and activities are varied and enjoyable. While the adults give good support

to selected groups, the more capable pupils are able to take responsibility for their own learning. A lesson investigating electricity illustrated how well this works. One group devised their own plausible explanation of why electricity can pass through metal but not through plastic. The school has a range of strategies to stretch the more able pupils but these are not yet challenging them in every lesson. Assessment is thorough and teachers set targets to help each pupil to improve. These are helping, but teachers are not checking regularly enough to see whether pupils are meeting their targets in their day-to-day work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum focuses on pupils' personal, social and emotional development as a priority, and this has a good impact while supporting pupils to make satisfactory progress in numeracy and literacy. The frequent involvement of visiting artists significantly enhances pupils' enjoyment and creativity. Visits to local churches and museums bring aspects of learning to life and pupils enjoy exploring Indian dancing and the Chinese New Year. Enrichment activities, such as the very popular Tai Chi, give children a broader range of experience than is usual at their age. The way all aspects of learning are blended into themes, such as the comparison of modern life with that in Victorian times, gives a relevance to reading, writing and counting. Classroom environments are well managed to create a rich variety of stimulation linked to the current theme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school complies with all the legal requirements for safeguarding and works hard to promote satisfactory attendance and punctuality, though not all parents see this as a priority. In this small school, children and families are very well known and their individual needs are fully appreciated. The well-established expectations mean that little time is spent managing behaviour and staff concentrate instead on supporting pupils' well-being. The popular rewards system means that pupils fully understand what they need to do to develop as individuals and as learners. Systems for setting individual targets for improvement are in place, but are not yet an everyday feature of monitoring pupils' progress in learning. There are effective links to enable children to settle in to the school, and to cope with the move up to the next stage, but the school is looking to develop these even further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The whole staff team is committed to the school's clear mission to promote health and enjoyment so that pupils contribute to a community where everyone can achieve and prepare for economic well-being. Target setting is realistic and maintaining standards at a satisfactory level. The close involvement of the local authority over recent months means that all staff have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are clear policies to ensure inclusion, and these are effective in practice, although their impact is not reviewed regularly. Within the school, work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory, although it is recognised that more needs to be done within the immediate locality and the wider international community. Governance is currently inadequate because the governing body and the headteacher are at

present not working effectively as a team. Unresolved disagreements over a number of issues are unfortunately distracting their attention from further school 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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	4
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

Inspection of Stubbings Infant School, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8BP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to inspect your school last week. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn.

I have judged your school to be satisfactory.

You are happy, confident and really helpful to each other. You behave well and organise yourselves most of the time. The teachers give you lots of help and support. They also make sure that you enjoy your lessons so that you want to come to school. You also express your opinions well and the teachers really appreciate that.

I have asked Mrs Maude to make your school better and have left her with three things to do.

- Make sure that your level of learning is as high as your enjoyment and your support for each other.
- Check more often whether you have reached your targets and give you some new ones when necessary.
- Settle some disagreements between some adults so they can give all their attention to helping you.

Enjoy the rest of your time at Stubbings.