

All Saints Featherstone CofE (VA) Junior Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108257
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	324734
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	183
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	Mrs J Pye
Headteacher	Mrs J Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	North Close Featherstone Pontefract West Yorkshire WF7 6BQ
Telephone number	01977 722 600

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Almost all pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The socio-economic circumstances of the area the school serves are broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A fewer than average proportion of pupils is identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools Award. The school is led by an acting headteacher prior to the new headteacher taking up her appointment in January 2009. There have been several changes of leadership of headteacher and deputy headteacher 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: 3

All Saints provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Strengths of the school are the good start children have in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and pupils' good personal development. The leadership and management of the school remain satisfactory even though there have been several changes of headship and temporary leadership since the previous inspection. Parents have mixed views of the school. Most are highly satisfied but a minority have concerns mainly about individual issues and unavoidable changes of staffing. Parents should be reassured that their worries have been dealt with appropriately and the school is working to improve communication with them.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average throughout the school. Improvements have recently been made in standards in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing though have declined since the previous inspection and pupils' progress in this subject is not fast enough. This has been recognised by the school and the leadership has made efforts to accelerate progress in writing. Although the initiatives are improving pupils' progress, they have not yet resulted in marked improvement in standards.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but is inconsistent across the school. Nonetheless, relationships between staff and pupils are harmonious and behaviour management is a strength in all classes. Where teaching is first-rate, learning builds well on pupils' prior learning. Detailed attention is given to ensuring that pupils fully understand what they are to learn. Pupils have ample time to practise their new learning. This is not the case in all lessons, however, and these examples of the best practice are not always present, such as when pupils have too few opportunities to work in small groups or independently, and tasks set for pupils are not linked closely enough to their previous learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is mainly taught as separate subjects. Purposeful links between subjects have been established recently with a greater emphasis on the development of writing skills in other subjects. In most subjects in some year groups opportunities for pupils to write in different styles are now fully exploited. For example, in religious education Year 4 pupils write sensitively about forgiveness. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on such issues not only support their spiritual awareness but also give a purposeful opportunity for the development of writing skills.

The pastoral care of pupils is a positive feature of the school and this assists pupils' good personal development. Pupils enjoy school. They relate well to one another and to staff. Behaviour is good. Staff deal effectively with any rare incidents of bullying that may arise. Pupils appreciate the good start to the school day in the breakfast club and the 'wake-up, shake-up' session. This provides them with a good healthy start and prepares them well for the day ahead. Pupils' academic guidance and support are satisfactory. The systems to monitor pupils' progress give detailed information about individuals' progress though this information is not always used well enough to push on pupils' learning at a faster pace.

Leadership teams have been established since the last inspection and under the leadership of the current headteacher are increasingly becoming more effective in improving the school and in particular in steering the development of the curriculum. The impact of their management is not yet fully apparent, particularly in ensuring the consistency of best practice in teaching and learning. The leadership and governors understand what needs to be improved and this provides the school with satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the EYFS with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and achieve well as they move through the Nursery and Reception, especially in personal, social and emotional development. As a result, most reach and some exceed expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Leadership is good because of improvements in planning, teaching and the checking of children's progress. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching builds carefully on what children know. The leadership is working towards providing a similar approach to learning in both the Nursery and Reception. For example, leaders have identified that the linking of learning indoors with that outdoors is more precisely planned in the Reception class than in the Nursery. Throughout the EYFS there is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Classrooms are lively and exciting areas that stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into school life. All staff work effectively to establish routines to support children's welfare needs well. Relationships with parents are positive. They say they feel very welcome and that their children are 'more than happy' to come to school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in writing.
- Use assessment information more effectively to plan learning that builds more closely on what pupils already know so they make faster progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of best practice.

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. Progress varies from year to year and between subjects. Progress is satisfactory in reading, mathematics and science but until recently has not been good enough in writing. There are signs, however, that initiatives are now beginning to impact and progress is improving in writing. At the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average, though as at the end of Year 6 standards in writing are lower than in reading or mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in writing is less than normally expected.

Standards in the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below average in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence demonstrates that standards overall have improved and pupils met their targets. Standards are now broadly average in reading, mathematics and science though below average in writing. Standards in reading have risen but the gap between pupils' performance in reading and writing has widened since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in lessons as they have good help and support with their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved and welcoming to visitors. They clearly enjoy school and state, 'Teachers are jolly and make learning fun.' Pupils' efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, such as through the use of 'Golden Time', which helps to boost their confidence and raise self-esteem. Bullying and racism are rare, but when they occur they are dealt with effectively. Thoughtful and well led assemblies, in which pupils sometimes play an important part, help ensure good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Cultural diversity is well represented, for example through dance workshops, Islamic art and celebration of festivals such as Diwali. The school council makes a positive contribution to school development. For example, it has been involved in playground improvement. Attendance is satisfactory, although the school does much to promote the benefits of good attendance. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe. The gaining of Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award has supported their understanding of leading healthy lives. Links with local high schools, together with pupils' satisfactory grasp of basic skills, prepare pupils soundly for their next phase of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is outstanding on occasions. Throughout the school, teaching interests pupils to learn because relationships are extremely positive. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time talking to the whole class, which reduces the time available for pupils to practise and develop their learning independently or in small groups. Teaching assistants are used well to assist lower attaining pupils in small groups. In some lessons, teachers identify meticulously what is to be learned by pupils and plan the next steps of learning precisely to suit the different levels of attainment. In others, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to focus closely on small steps in learning. Teachers provide effective additional help for the few pupils at an early stage of learning English so that they quickly grasp a basic understanding of the new language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Increasingly, the school is forging links between subjects to add more purpose to learning. Information and communication technology helps pupils to develop basic skills and to enhance the presentation of work. Opportunities are increasingly being sought to enable pupils to develop and practise their writing skills in other subjects. A broad range of extra-curricular clubs are enthusiastically attended by pupils. Visiting speakers and visits, including a residential experience, add to the enjoyment of learning. Links with a local high school support the teaching of Spanish. Pupils' personal development is positively enhanced in the curriculum, which encourages pupils to reflect on issues related to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff have high regard for the welfare of pupils. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures meet requirements. Pastoral support for vulnerable pupils, those learning English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Academic guidance is satisfactory and developing but is inconsistent across the school. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics and these are shared with parents. Marking usually acknowledges pupils' achievements but does not always indicate the next steps in learning. Pupils' safety, and health and well-being are promoted effectively and this impacts well on their good personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders and governors have an appropriate understanding of what needs to be improved. They have identified the right priorities for development. Some initiatives have been successful in improving standards, although those to improve pupils' achievement in writing are recent and have not yet resulted in improved standards. Leaders, including subject leaders and other staff, work together with enthusiasm to raise standards. Monitoring roles are developing but have not yet assured the consistency of best practice in teaching and learning across the school.

Systems to record pupils' attainment provide a detailed view of individuals' rate of learning to identify over time the progress pupils are making. The checking of the performance of different groups of pupils is in place but the information is not used well enough by the leadership to judge the impact of its initiatives.

Governors have strong links with the church and the parent teacher association but links with other community groups are less well established. Through regular visits to the school, governors gain a sound understanding of the school. They are supportive of the leadership though express their views of how the school could be improved.

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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	3
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 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

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	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

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed the days we spent with you. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You achieve satisfactorily and reach broadly average standards, although standards in writing are below average.

Your personal development is good. I was impressed by your good behaviour and interest in lessons. At all times you were polite and courteous. I was pleased that you all get on so well together and that your attendance is satisfactory. To improve the school further I have asked the school to improve standards in writing. I also want the staff to plan work that builds more closely on what you already know so you make faster progress. I have also asked the leaders to make sure that the quality of teaching and learning in lessons is consistent so that it is always as good as the best.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have a good start to their schooling in the Nursery and Reception. They make good progress because they are taught well.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I am sure that you will keep doing your best and working with the new headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.