

Methley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134319
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	328887
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	424
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 Christian Foster
Headteacher	Mrs Tracy Dell
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Savile Road Methley Leeds LS26 9HT
Telephone number	0113 386 2540
Fax number	01977 516304

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school is situated in a former mining village to the south of Leeds. The area's improving socio-economic circumstances are reflected in the below average proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and, currently, no pupils have a statement of special educational need. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The Early Years Foundation Stage is incorporated into the school.

A private playgroup is also on site. This organisation was the subject of a separate inspection and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils make good progress. It provides good value for money. The overwhelming majority of parents who returned the questionnaire were fulsome in their praise for what the school achieves and its commitment to their children's well-being. The school is growing in popularity and pupil numbers have increased considerably since the last inspection.

Achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with average standards and leave with above average standards. They are well prepared for moving on to their next school: pupils have above average basic skills and are confident and self-reliant. The school recognises that the rates of progress in the lower school are only satisfactory, and is already addressing this situation. Indeed, pupils in the current first year of the lower school display strong progress built on their success when they were in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe. They have a clear grasp of right and wrong. Attendance is good, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good and pupils take their responsibilities on the school council seriously. As yet, their role in the wider community is less strong.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some practice is outstanding. However, there is variability. Some teaching is too teacher-directed, and does not always encourage pupils to become independent learners. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are part of its very high level of pastoral care. The school's academic guidance and support for pupils are, however, slightly less effective; whilst good overall, targets for learning are, on occasions, not as sharp as they could be. There is a good curriculum. Classroom activities mostly engage pupils' interest well. An extensive range of after-school clubs and visits enriches the curriculum. Nevertheless, there is no strategic policy to ensure that pupils are sufficiently aware of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom (UK) or in the world.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads from the front and is well supported by an increasingly effective and professional leadership team together with a very strong and committed governing body. The school knows itself very well and monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust. Leaders have a very strong commitment and determination to achieve excellence through well targeted actions. The last inspection recognised the outstanding capacity in the school, and this has been further underlined with the many positive developments over the intervening period in nearly every area of the school. The current actions in Key Stage 1 are also proving to be very effective. The school's determination to be totally successful, together with its many successes to date, shows that its capacity to bring about sustained school improvement is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Nursery, their skills are broadly in line with national expectations, although there are some weaknesses in their language skills and emotional development. They make good progress through Nursery and Reception, especially in the development of language skills and in their emotional development, with the current group of children rapidly developing their skills in these particular areas. This is because of the strong emphasis that the school places on combating these weaknesses, since they are important elements in the children's

development and growing confidence. Arrangements for children to settle in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well organised. A range of home visits and a gradual induction ensure that the children become comfortable with their teachers and the daily routine of learning and school life. Parents are welcomed into the Early Years Foundation Stage to share in their children's learning as volunteers and participants. They typically say, 'We have been amazed by the care and tailored learning methods from committed, friendly and approachable staff.' In Reception, children enjoy being part of the school's tradition of linking to a major city – in their case, Paris – and of starting to speak some French phrases. Accommodation is spacious and well organised with full use made of the outdoor area to allow imaginative play and encourage independent work. Teamwork is good and the provision is well led and managed. Staff are now making good use of assessment information to identify gaps in children's skills and plan the next steps in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently at the level of the best practice, particularly in encouraging pupils to be more independent learners.
- Give greater opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of the UK and world communities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with the expected skills for their age. They leave school at the end of Year 6, with above average standards. This represents good progress. However, the progress has been uneven between key stages. At Key Stage 1, standards have fluctuated year-on-year. In Year 2, current standards, as seen in class and in pupils' workbooks, indicate standards are in line with national averages. In this year, therefore, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. In Year 1, the school is building strongly on the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are achieving well. In Key Stage 2, there has been a continuously upward trend in the standards attained. The provisional results for 2008 show that pupils at the end of Year 6 attained standards which were above national levels overall. Current standards, as seen in Year 6 class work and notebooks, show that this upward trend is continuing. The school has set challenging, but achievable, targets for 2009. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly good progress. This is due to the good quality care and additional support which they receive in class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Good relationships and behaviour mean that learning continues uninterrupted and pupils show good enjoyment of school given the opportunity, they are active participants in their own learning. Pupils are realistic enough to acknowledge some instances of disruptive behaviour, but morally strong enough to know where the boundaries of unacceptable behaviour are set. Attendance remains good due, in part, to the determined work by the headteacher not to authorise holidays taken in term time. Many parents comment that their children 'never not want to go to school'. Pupils' good understanding of the need for healthy diet and regular exercise is well nurtured. They feel safe in school and act with careful consideration for their own safety and that of others. A significant number of pupils have trained in first-aid procedures

and resuscitation techniques and this enables them to play a potentially valuable role in helping others. Their economic understanding is good, and through opportunities, for example, to fundraise to pay for their Christmas party they develop an understanding of money management. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall, although examples of outstanding and satisfactory lessons were also seen during the inspection. In the best lessons, and these form a strong majority, teachers' planning ensures that pupils' learning is placed at the centre of activities. In such lessons, teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and good subject knowledge; they encourage the pupils to be active participants in their own learning rather than passive recipients. Pace is brisk and time-related tasks are used well for learning. Children learn to assess and analyse their own and others' efforts, become independent thinkers and cooperate well with each other. Such lessons end with good plenary sessions which effectively summarise pupils' knowledge and understanding.

A small proportion of lessons are less effective because they are more teacher-led which reduces slightly pupils' opportunities for independent learning. In these lessons, the classroom teaching assistants are not fully used in supporting learning, pupils are not always actively engaged and, as a result, their interest wanes a little. Marking is generally effective and tells the pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work, although this is not uniformly the case. Teachers use assessment well to inform their planning. Tasks that are well adapted to pupils' different needs are common to the vast majority of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff have worked hard to develop a good skills-based curriculum which is balanced, interesting and engaging. Rich and varied activities are created for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge and understanding. All statutory requirements are met and diligent attention is given to English, mathematics and science. Planned, purposeful activities enable pupils to develop a range of skills that will benefit their economic well-being. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to learn through experience. For example, pupils can enjoy simulated archaeological digs in their classroom or experience the severity of a Victorian education by sitting in rows, writing on slates or standing in the corner if they give the wrong answer! 'Fun Time Friday', the many clubs and the numerous first-hand experiences provide opportunities to develop good personal, literacy and numeracy skills. Residential visits are offered to Year 6. French is taught throughout the school, and is supported by an after-school and lunchtime French club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff are dedicated to the welfare of pupils and they provide very good wrap-around pastoral care for them. The learning mentor provides a valued point of contact for pupils who are feeling vulnerable or needing support but as parents comment, 'the whole team are there to help your child, which is so nice to know'. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Procedures to

ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. Fine detail, such as pupils signing internet safety agreements and up-to-date medical care plans, adds to the good quality of care that reassures so many parents. Procedures for ensuring attendance and monitoring bullying and racial incidents are extremely thorough and support the pattern of good behaviour in school. Good assessment procedures ensure the school tracks pupils' progress well. The setting of targets for pupils' academic performance usually has a positive impact on their progress. At times, however, targets are not as sharp as they could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides particularly strong and dynamic leadership. With judicious appointments, she has built a team of senior leaders and teachers who share her vision and commitment. The school has an accurate view of its performance, based on robust monitoring and evaluation procedures. The new governing body is increasingly knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. It provides effective support in holding the school rigorously to account. Staff and governors have created effectively a successful school, with a single, purposeful ethos to offer the best education and care to the pupils. It successfully promotes equality of opportunity but does not yet have clear policies to promote community cohesion and this limits pupils' understanding of the wider community to satisfactory. The school is effectively using the resources of a new building, in conjunction with some innovative teaching practice, to excite and engage pupils in their learning, and, thereby, to raise standards, particularly in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Rigorous budgeting underpins plans for improvement, which the school successfully implements.

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?	2
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	1

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 talking to me and the other 'special visitors' so readily and for showing us your work and telling us all about your school. We very much enjoyed our two days with you and agree with you that it is a very happy place to be. We could see why you rarely miss a day of school!

We were impressed by your behaviour both in class and around school. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously. You go to a good school and a very caring one. Some of the best things about your school, apart from the fabulous new building, are the exciting lessons which most of your teachers give you, in which you learn lots of new facts by finding out things for yourselves. This helps make your learning really enjoyable and so you achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Most of you do this all of the time but we should like everyone in all classes to have the same chance to learn actively, and to help direct their own learning. So, we have asked the headteacher to make sure that this happens.

We think, too, that you would really benefit from knowing lots more about all the different people that live in the UK and in the world, so we have also asked your headteacher to put this important feature high on her list of priorities for your curriculum.

Your school is well led and managed by your headteacher and deputy headteacher. Together with the other teachers and governors, they make a really good team. But you are also part of that team, which is why you must continue to do your best in class and make the most of all the opportunities which the school gives. What we saw of the school tells us that you all will do your best, and make Methley Primary an even better school in the future.