

Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107740
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336943
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cynthia Osborne
Headteacher	Mrs Eelin Megson
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2007
School address	Church Lane Linthwaite Huddersfield HD7 5TA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed the full team of six teachers. They visited eight lessons, carried out four extended observation walks of teaching and learning around the school and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including data on pupils' progress, pupils' work in books, monitoring of teaching and learning records, improvement plans, external reports, training information and school policies. They also looked at questionnaires from pupils and staff and 90 questionnaires from parents and carers.

- the impact of instability in staffing since the last inspection
- progress in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average and is situated in a semi-rural village four miles from Huddersfield. It draws its pupils from the immediate parish and beyond. The vast majority are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, fluctuates considerably because of the small size of the school. Currently, this figure is below that found nationally. Since the last inspection there has been considerable instability in staffing that have meant changes to the structure of the classes and the senior leadership team. Most pupils are taught in single-age classes, including Reception children, but Year 4 and Year 5 pupils are taught together in one large class. The school has achieved the Kirklees and the national Healthy Schools awards, both of which have been successfully revalidated at three-yearly intervals since 2004. A breakfast club, operated by the school, is open each morning before school and this was also inspected.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the academic progress of pupils at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics, and the attainment of the more able pupils throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school has been judged to have inadequate overall effectiveness because pupils' rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are significantly below those achieved nationally. While they reach standards that are around the national levels by the end of Year 6, this is largely due to intensive 'catch-up' during the final year because they are considerably behind where they should be by the end of Year 5. Teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school and in some classes it is good. However, some weak teaching is reducing the quality of learning for a minority of pupils. Some teachers spend too long talking to the whole class at a level that is too easy for some pupils. The school has implemented plans to raise standards in mathematics, but the pace of change is slow because of inconsistent teaching in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school the attainment of the more able pupils is below what could reasonably be expected, given their starting points. Test results at the end of Year 6 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is considerably below that nationally. These issues mean that not all groups of pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential, even though the school works well to prevent other forms of discrimination. The value for money provided by the school is inadequate.

Despite the academic underachievement, other outcomes are good as a result of the school's effective provision. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. The school provides a warm, welcoming and supportive environment and pupils greatly enjoy attending. There is a good family atmosphere in which everyone is valued and cared for. Parents and carers recognise and appreciate this and are very supportive of the school. However, 15 parents and carers of pupils, whom they believed to be underachieving, expressed considerable concern about this in their responses to the Ofsted questionnaire. The Church of England ethos is central to the school's work and pupils' spiritual development is good, as is their moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in their good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Likewise, their enthusiasm for learning and their interest in new experiences are strong. They are polite, helpful and considerate towards one another. These positive outcomes are the result of the school's good work in providing a stimulating and rich curriculum and good

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pastoral care, guidance and support. Extensive enrichment, such as the residential visits and drama activities, and a good range of after-school activities contribute to high levels of motivation and engagement and above average attendance. The teaching of personal, social and emotional skills is effective and pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management, although satisfactory overall, are less effective now than at the time of the last inspection. Staff changes, absences and temporary restructuring of roles and responsibilities have led to many additional pressures on the headteacher. A major building programme has also taken much of her time. She has continued to maintain a strong and successful lead in ensuring that the school provides a stimulating, happy and safe environment for pupils and staff. The cohesive team of staff and governors support her well and capacity to improve is satisfactory. Changes made since the last inspection have led to significant improvements, in particular to science and writing. The headteacher and staff evaluate the school's effectiveness systematically and produce extensive action plans. However, too many plans across too many areas have meant that impact has been diluted and the more urgent needs have not been sufficiently prioritised. The lack of clear and measurable success criteria means that rates of improvement cannot be clearly monitored. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching are gradually leading to improved outcomes. Some teachers do not always use assessment information effectively enough to secure more rapid improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress for pupils at Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that any inadequate teaching is improved as quickly as possible and that teaching in all classes is at least good by the end of the autumn term 2010
 - monitoring more closely the half-termly progress made by each pupil and taking swifter action when this is below expectation
 - reducing the amount of whole-class teaching so that learning can be more accurately matched to pupils' different levels of ability.
- Raise attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
 - evaluating current approaches to improving mathematics in order to increase the pace of change
 - checking more closely the consistency of teaching, learning and progress between classes.
- Raise the attainment of the more-able pupils from Reception to Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that all staff have sufficiently high expectations and understanding of their capabilities
 - planning learning activities that have a clearly specified target at an appropriate level to move the learning forward

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- providing time every day for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and improved.
- Reduce the number of priorities for improvement and define more accurately measurable success criteria in order to maximise the impact of change.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Classroom observations showed clearly that pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and engage well in lessons. They are keen to participate, and work well individually, in pairs, and in groups. This highlights how good the outcomes for personal and social aspects of development are throughout the school. In all year groups pupils have an outstandingly comprehensive knowledge of healthy lifestyles, and the Healthy Schools awards are well deserved. However, academic achievement is inadequate because learning and progress are extremely uneven. Pupils start in Reception at around expected levels and make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1 there has been a general pattern of improvement for two years and reading is particularly strong, bringing overall levels to above average, although the more-able pupils are not achieving sufficiently well in writing. At Key Stage 2, progress varies from inadequate to good, depending on the quality of teaching. This uneven journey means that pupils' performance is inconsistent from year to year. In mathematics performance is weak throughout the key stage. Most achieve average levels by the end of Year 6 as a result of considerable effort by pupils and high-quality teaching in this year group, but too few achieve the higher Level 5 in comparison with pupils nationally.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school because support for such pupils is consistent in all classes. Most pupils develop satisfactory levels in the basic skills that will contribute to their next stages of education. Those skills are further strengthened by their cooperative approach to teamwork, willingness to take on extra responsibilities and above average attendance. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good throughout the school, although a very small number of incidents sometimes disrupt learning where teaching is less strong. Pupils say they feel safe in school and feel able to discuss and comment on any issues about which they may be concerned. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They demonstrate mature attitudes to serious topics, and respond with delight and fascination to new experiences.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall because, despite good teaching in some classes, a small proportion of weak teaching is having a negative impact on a significant group of pupils. In turn, this affects pupils' final attainment, which is lower than it should be. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are carefully tracked and receive consistent additional support from well-trained teaching assistants. The strengths in teaching include lessons that interest and engage pupils, good questioning skills, clear instructions, the effective use of resources and the efficient use of teaching assistants. Relationships are good, so pupils feel confident to answer questions and attempt new learning. The strongest teaching ensures that the focus for different groups relates directly to assessments of what the pupils need to learn next. However, in some lessons, too long is spent by the whole class listening to the teacher talk. Too often, this is pitched at one level for all, which means that the more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not move on far enough to the next level of understanding. Marking is thorough and helpful, although too often pupils are not given sufficient time to read and act on the teachers' helpful comments. Where teaching is weaker, expectations are too low.

Outcomes that are deemed good and the outstanding awareness of healthy lifestyles are due to an extremely appealing and varied curriculum that helps to promote interest, and motivate and capture pupils' imaginations. Enrichment is a strong feature and opportunities such as hatching chicks and feeding lambs clearly have a positive impact, particularly on outcomes relating to social, spiritual and emotional development. Likewise, the many multicultural experiences such as Indian dancing and African

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drumming enthuse pupils immensely. During the inspection it was impressive to see all Year 4 pupils concentrating hard on their cello playing and learning much in the process. Indeed, art and music are particular strengths of the school. There is a good range of, and wide participation in, extra-curricular activities. The breakfast club is popular and ensures that pupils get a healthy start to the day.

Care, guidance and support are good and lead to a strong sense of security among pupils and good behaviour. Effective strategies have been put in place to improve attendance since the last inspection.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The caring ethos of the school is driven passionately by the headteacher. Many outcomes, particularly in relation to pupils' well-being, are good as a result of the team's determination and ambition. Highly effective partnerships are harnessed effectively to assist this process further. There have been improvements since the last inspection, such as in attendance rates and standards in writing at Key Stage 1. Some aspects of teaching have improved because of more rigorous monitoring and targeted training. The remaining inadequate teaching is the exception rather than the rule. Improved tracking of pupils leads to the setting of challenging targets and helps to identify where to provide intervention strategies. For example, the additional targeted support for reading and writing in Key Stage 1 is helping to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. Improvement planning is extremely detailed and involves staff at all levels. However, changing circumstances and instability in staffing have meant that priorities have not always been reviewed and adjusted quickly enough. Capacity is nevertheless satisfactory. Governors provide valued support to the school and are increasingly involved. The governing body has recently conducted a useful evaluation of its effectiveness leading to an ambitious action plan to help it improve further. The school has highly positive relationships with parents and carers who value the good-quality communication. All safeguarding regulations and duties are met and staff suitably trained. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and developing well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception at levels that are broadly expected for their age, although this includes a range of abilities. Since the last inspection there have been increasing numbers of children with lower than expected levels in communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress during the year, and levels of attainment reached are around average in all six areas of learning. However, the more-able children are not always suitably challenged by the activities available for choosing. A satisfactory range of activities is provided so that children can make choices inside and outdoors. The environment is safe and secure. Daily planning is detailed for literacy and numeracy, but less so for other aspects of learning. As a result, the provision is basic in its design, although meeting statutory requirements. Effective, more-focused teaching of ability groups takes place to ensure that children's learning is targeted at the right level in the basic skills, particularly in writing. Children engage in their learning well and behaviour is good. This is because adults teach the children effectively how to behave and they have high expectations of children's conduct. As a result, children are sociable and helpful towards each other. They are keen to talk about their learning and are confident when working independently. They willingly take on responsibilities in the classroom. The work of the Early Years Foundation Stage is evaluated satisfactorily and an action plan for improvement is in place. However, staffing uncertainties have meant some instability in leadership and management, although the transition between staff has been satisfactory. Good relationships with parents and carers have continued and good levels of care ensure that all the statutory welfare requirements are met.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Completed questionnaires were received from 56% of parents and carers. The vast majority are extremely happy with the school and feel well informed about their children's progress. They find the school to be welcoming and friendly, particularly for those children who have transferred from other schools. Many parents and carers said how much their children enjoy coming to school and learning. A few parents and carers commented on concerns about their children's progress. Some of these parents and carers also commented on behaviour issues within their children's class. The findings of the inspection team uphold these comments, both positive and negative. Evidence has clearly identified that progress is inadequate for some children. Behaviour in the school is good overall, but where teaching is inadequate there is sometimes disruption to learning due to the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority of pupils who take advantage of the situation.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Linthwaite Ardron CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	51	37	41	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	55	61	33	37	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	50	42	47	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	48	32	36	11	12	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	46	51	31	34	10	11	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	40	44	49	7	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	53	40	44	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	36	38	42	6	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	43	38	42	8	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	36	37	41	16	18	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	38	42	8	9	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	35	39	41	46	8	9	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	54	29	32	9	10	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



01 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linthwaite Ardrion C of E (Aided) Junior and Infant School, Huddersfield, HD7 5TA

Thank you very much for making the other inspectors and me so welcome when we visited your school to carry out our inspection. You were all very kind, helpful and sensible when you answered our questions and showed us round the school. This impressed us very much. We also thought that your behaviour in lessons and in the playground was good. You are keen to learn and very enthusiastic about your school. We agree with your views that it is a very warm, friendly and caring school, which means that you feel safe and enjoy your lessons.

There are some things that the school is not doing well enough and in some year groups you are not learning as well as you might. We are giving the school a 'notice to improve' and we have set some targets to help it to get better. Another inspector will come in around six months time to check that things are improving. These are the three main things that we have asked the school to do.

- Improve some of the teaching in Key Stage 2 where some of you are not making enough progress, so that everyone achieves really well.
- Improve your levels in mathematics across the whole of Key Stage 2.
- Make sure all the teachers give some groups more challenging work so that they learn more.

We hope that improving these things will help your school to become a good school overall, although there are many things that are good already! For example, the way you understand and can talk about healthy lifestyles is outstanding. The school provides many extra activities to make your learning more fun, like the African drumming that you enjoyed recently. The adults teach you how to behave well. There are lots of opportunities for you to do jobs around school and you do these really well, especially the play leaders. We hope that you will all continue to attend school well and do your very best work. This will help your headteacher and all the other adults with the changes they are going to make straight away. I wish you all the very best in your future time at school.

Yours sincerely

Dr Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Lead Inspector

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