

Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108157
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337030
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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 of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Hall
Headteacher	Miss J Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	3 September 2006
School address	Cross Road Middlestown Wakefield WF4 4QE
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors analysed 39 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of the school's assessment and tracking of pupils' progress to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve their potential
- the achievement of more able pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the curriculum's impact on skill development to raise standards and to prepare for future well-being
- the quality of the school's self-evaluation and its use in planning for future sustained improvement
- the impact made by the new headteacher and chair of governors on improving the school's provision since taking up post in April 2009.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than the national average. It serves an area of relatively favourable social and economic advantage with the number of pupils eligible for free school meals low. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. A new headteacher joined the school in April 2009 following a period of leadership and staffing disruption. The school has the Activemark, Healthy Schools and Inclusion Now awards. A private pre-school playgroup operates on the school site and is inspected separately.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Main findings

Sitlington Middlestown is a satisfactory school that is improving following the appointment of the new headteacher. There are strengths in relation to the good personal development of pupils, including their attendance and behaviour, and their good care, guidance and support. Parents recognise the improvements in the school and are very supportive of the new leadership team.

During their time in school pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in English in Key Stage 2. This has been recognised by the school and it has begun to take action to raise standards in mathematics. Work to address underachievement of more able girls in English has been successful and there is now no notable variation between the performance of boys and girls. Skilled support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum and make progress similar to their peers. The satisfactory achievement of pupils, their good behaviour and above average attendance prepares them adequately for the future.

Although there is some good and outstanding teaching in school there is much that is no more than satisfactory, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan lessons well, assess pupils' progress and ensure that they meet the needs of different groups of pupils effectively. They make good use of resources and relationships are very good so most pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and enjoy school. However, in Key Stage 2 there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners and questioning does not always extend their thinking skills. Pupils are frequently unaware of how to improve their work and the use of targets to encourage progress is still in an early stage of development. Meanwhile, the satisfactory curriculum does not do enough to develop pupils' skills as they move up through the school because planning is not sufficiently systematic and does not have sufficient regard for information and communication technology (ICT).

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The able headteacher, her leadership team and governors have, in a short time, built sound foundations on which the school can grow and flourish following a period of uncertainty. They have very successfully tackled behaviour, the safeguarding of pupils, school self-evaluation and the monitoring of progress, while developing confidence and ambition in staff and starting to raise standards. There is an agreed vision for the school and all know how it will be achieved. The leadership team has also tackled a possible budget deficit with courage and

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forethought. While it is too early to see the full impact of all this work the evidence indicates that the school does have satisfactory capacity to improve because self-evaluation is accurate and the school has focused on improving areas of weakness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - increasing the level of expectation and challenge
 - using assessment information to set pupils' targets
- -ensuring that pupils understand how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work
 - improving the quality of marking
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematical calculation.
- Develop and extend the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that curriculum planning systematically develops a full range of skills, including the use of ICT, that contribute to pupils' future economic well-being.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

From starting points that are broadly in line with those of typical three-year-olds, overall progress is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including the more able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the very few from minority ethnic groups. However, this disguises areas of uneven progress. Lesson observations demonstrate that in Key Stage 1 the recently improved curriculum has accelerated the progress of younger pupils. Meanwhile, whole-school developments in the English curriculum have contributed to improvements in standards in English while standards in mathematics have not improved at the same rate, particularly in Key Stage 2. Observations in this key stage confirm that learning and performance in mathematics are not as good as in English. Almost all pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning, sometimes demonstrating high levels of enthusiasm and concentration. Pupils feel safe and secure and know how to maintain their own safety and the safety of others. Their behaviour is good and their attendance is above average. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate of others. Their good behaviour enables them to enjoy their lessons and they are becoming increasingly aware of their own responsibility for themselves and their learning. This makes a positive contribution to the school community. Pupils have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of healthy eating. The 'grow it, eat it' project, where younger pupils grew and ate their own fruit and vegetables, had a considerable impact on their appreciation of healthy food. Pupils usually make healthy choices and participate with enthusiasm in

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'wake up, shake up' and a range of sporting activities. They make an active contribution to the local community through links with the local church and senior citizens centre but there are fewer links with schools that are different from the school's community. This limits pupils' cultural development, although their spiritual, moral and social development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	2
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?

The quality of teaching is improving but remains variable and is stronger in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Pupils make the best progress in classes where teachers have a good knowledge of how well pupils are achieving and use this knowledge to plan challenging lessons with high expectations. In these lessons pupils are fully engaged, enjoy the activities and their thinking is extended by teachers' good questioning skills. Less progress is made in lessons where the pace is slow, pupils are not actively involved in learning and they do not understand what they need to do to improve their work. In these lessons teachers take too little account of pupils' prior achievement so pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Marking in some classes is detailed and helps pupils to

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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improve their work but this is not typical of all classes. All teachers make good use of new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, but there are limited opportunities in the classroom for pupils to use ICT. Teaching assistants are skilled and are well used to support learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all requirements but there is insufficient focus on the development of skills in ICT. Progress in mathematics is limited by the absence of a consistent, whole-school approach to calculation. The school is in the process of introducing a new curriculum that focuses on the progressive development of skills. This has been successfully introduced to Key Stage 1, where the curriculum builds effectively on the way children learn in Reception to promote the development of skills, concepts and independent learning. This is already leading to an improvement in girls' writing and a broader range of activities that involve pupils more in their learning. The school is planning to build on this success in Key Stage 2.

There are rigorous systems to care for pupils and the school makes good provision for their personal development and well-being, including a full range of activities during and after school that ensure that they are involved in sport and physical activities. The excellent road safety programme contributes as much to thinking and social skills as to road safety. Very good relationships enable staff to establish friendly and trusting relationships with pupils, who feel safe, cared for and ready to learn. The school works well with families and outside agencies to support all pupils, including those with additional learning needs.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The newly appointed headteacher and chair of governors have quickly become established as effective leaders who recognise the strengths of the school and the areas that require improvement. They have developed good working relationships with other leaders in school, the governing body and the local authority to tackle the correctly identified priorities for improvement. Staff, who have experienced change and uncertainty in recent years, are positive about the future; all are well motivated and want the best for the pupils. They have benefited from increasing involvement in whole-school planning and opportunities to explore a joint vision for the school's future. Good strategies to monitor the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning have been identified in a carefully considered and appropriate development

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plan that is being used to drive improvement. It is too early to see extensive impact from the work undertaken but there has been significant improvement in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The management of behaviour and arrangements for the safeguarding of children have been key areas for improvement and both have been addressed very successfully with good outcomes. There have also been improvements in the quality of the writing of more able girls evidenced in school data and seen in lessons.

The school is effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. As a result, there is now no variation between the performance of different groups of pupils, particularly the more able, and the consideration and respect that pupils show for others. The school is a cohesive community where all work well together but there is limited evidence of the promotion of community cohesion beyond the school. In particular, there are gaps in pupils' opportunities to learn with children from different cultures in the wider community.

Governors are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the school community and they meet regularly with staff. They discharge their statutory duties and ensure that pupils and staff are safe. They understand the challenges that the school faces and work to bring about improvement. They are undertaking training to improve their knowledge and skills in order for them develop the skills required to challenge and support the school and to be more influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. Governors are well informed about the views of parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of three with skills in line with those expected for their age. Progress is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development but less so in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Overall, they make satisfactory progress. Children enjoy their learning and demonstrate the ability to concentrate on an activity that interests them. They behave well, respond well to instructions and help to tidy up. They are kind and considerate to each other.

Children are very safe and happy in a welcoming and well-resourced learning environment. The outdoor area is a particular strength as three- and four-year-olds meet and benefit from working together in a variety of very well-planned areas. The school field is also well used for activities that require more space for the development of specific skills. During one activity, children on the field were asked to listen and identify the range of sounds they could hear. This underlined the strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. Staff have good knowledge of the children in their care and planning is supported by up-to-date assessment information. Teaching varies between satisfactory and good. Good teaching provides clear instructions and challenge to develop independent enquiry while the satisfactory teaching is more directed and limits opportunities for children to make choices and decisions. The provision is very well supported by skilled nursery nurses and teaching assistants who ensure that all children regardless of their needs can access and benefit from the learning environment.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have been working closely with the local authority to improve provision and the impact of this is evident in the good-quality assessment and planning systems. However, inconsistencies in teaching remain. Staff take good care of children to ensure their health and safety. Good relationships with parents and carers help to ensure a happy and productive experience for children. Parents value the quality of the provision and the progress that their children make.

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

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the change to the school since the arrival of the new headteacher. Typically they write: 'There has been an amazing transformation in the school in a very short time. Everything is suddenly better and though it will take time for the changes to have an effect parents are delighted with the

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changes that have already been made.' The few concerns expressed mostly relate to the period before the change of leadership with some parents concerned that the changes were coming too late to benefit their children. Concerns include lack of progress, poor information about progress, lack of information about how parents can help their child to improve and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

The inspectors found evidence to uphold these concerns earlier in 2009 but judge that the appointment of the new headteacher is addressing the concerns and that there is improvement as reported by the majority of parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sitlington Middlestown 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	67	29	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	53	41	46	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	19	60	67	9	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	24	62	70	3	3	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	21	24	65	73	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	25	52	59	9	10	4	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	32	56	64	3	3	0	0
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)	29	34	48	56	6	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	26	56	64	4	5	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	43	44	51	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	22	60	69	5	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	28	32	54	61	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	42	49	55	2	2	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.



Inspection of Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School, Wakefield, WF4 4QE

I would like to thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we came to inspect your school. You were all very helpful and polite and displayed a lot of enthusiasm for your work. A particular thank you to the pupils who gave up some of their time to talk about their work with some of my colleagues.

I think that your headteacher, the governors and the staff are all working hard to make your school better. You attend a satisfactory school that is improving. By the end of Year 6 standards are average and your achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. However, we think that you could make even better progress in these subjects, particularly in mathematics in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The staff look after you well and you feel safe and happy in school. Teachers involve you in a lot of interesting activities and visits. The 'grow and eat' project also looked very exciting. Your behaviour is good and you take very good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. Most of you attend school regularly and arrive on time. You know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the activities the school provides during and after school, including 'wake up, shake up'.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. I have asked your school leaders to:

- improve teaching and learning for the older pupils, particularly in mathematics
- improve the curriculum to give all of you more opportunities to develop new skills.

You can help by finding out how you can improve your work and achieving your targets.

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