

Featherstone Girnhill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108168
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337031
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan McKenna

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Tenant-King
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
School address	Hardwick Road Featherstone Pontefract WF7 5JB
Telephone number	01977 722690
Fax number	01977 722691
Email address	headteacher@girnhill.wakefield.sch.uk

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Inspection number	337031

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with a governor, staff, a group of pupils and staff from the neighbouring Children's Centre. They observed the school's work, looked at documentation including the school development plan, records of monitoring and data about pupils' progress, and analysed the questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- standards in literacy and boys' progress
- attendance and the school's actions to promote it
- improvement in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection
- how current staffing issues are being managed.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well above the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is comprised of a Foundation Stage 1 class and a Foundation Stage 2 class housed in one unit. There is a Children's Centre on the same site which is managed by the school but which was not inspected. The breakfast club and extended provision at the start of the school day for Early Years Foundation Stage children, managed by the school, was inspected. A Nursery on site which is not managed by the school was inspected under separate arrangements. Awards gained by the school include the Healthy Schools Standard, SportsMark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. There has been a high level of staff illness over the past 18 months.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Girnhill Infants is a good school. The very strong commitment that staff have to ensuring that pupils' individual needs are met and the action taken to bring this about results in pupils feeling happy and secure. As a result, they are able to benefit from what the school offers them and they make good progress in their learning and personal development.

The care and support provided for pupils is outstanding. All children are valued as individuals and the excellent relationships that adults have with them help develop their confidence and self-esteem. Even at this very early stage in the school year pupils have settled well into their new classes. They feel safe in school and feel able to approach adults with any problems, confident that their concerns will be taken seriously. The significant barriers to learning that many pupils experience are actively and sensitively tackled. Pupils and their families are very well known to staff, and this enables action to be specifically targeted to individual need. The school's partnerships with a wide range of external services and organisations, for example, to give specific support to pupils with additional needs or vulnerabilities, are outstanding. Pupils learn to cooperate well with each other and they play and work nicely together. Pupils are keen to meet the school's expectations of them and they behave well. The school has worked very hard, and with success, to improve attendance, but the school recognises there is more work to be done to raise attendance further for some pupils.

Children enter school with attainment at well below expected levels. Communication skills are particularly weak, especially the boys'. The rich and stimulating environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit engages children in their learning very much and they progress well. Outdoor provision is not as well developed. Children's standards are higher by the time they enter Year 1, although they have not reached nationally expected levels. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum in Years 1 and 2 means that pupils build well on their earlier learning and all groups continue to progress well. Involvement in projects such as 'Open Futures', through which pupils grow and cook vegetables and fruit and learn about healthy eating, provide exciting opportunities which stimulates their learning. At the end of Year 2 they generally reach standards that are broadly in line with the national average. However, standards in speaking and writing are lower than other areas, particularly for boys. Pupils' progress is assessed and checked regularly and action is taken to help pupils who are identified as needing extra support.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides strong direction and spearheads the culture of high expectations for pupils, which other staff share. There is

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

a clear sense of teamwork which contributes to a harmonious and productive climate. Ensuring that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed is central to the school's work and it works closely with pupils and with families to promote this. The school is inclusive and cohesive and good efforts are made to engage with the local community. However, less work has been done to engage with communities beyond the school's immediate locality.

The school has improved well since its previous inspection. The absences caused by staff illness have been managed effectively so the impact on pupils has been minimised. Effective evaluation and monitoring has resulted in strengths and areas for development being accurately identified and well devised plans have been drawn up to guide action. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment, especially in speaking and writing and particularly for boys by:
 - providing more planned opportunities for developing speaking skills
 - providing more interesting and purposeful opportunities based on first hand experiences as a stimulus for writing activities.
- Ensure the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is as stimulating as the indoor provision.
- Undertake further work with relevant partners to improve attendance so it is in line with the national average.
- Strengthen community cohesion by engaging with a wider range of communities beyond the school's locality and evaluating the impact of action taken.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. They are keen to do well. They willingly do as they are asked and try hard to please their teachers. They pay attention and show interest in their work. Enthusiasm and enjoyment is greatest when they are actively involved in practical tasks. Not all pupils are very confident, but by teachers recognising and celebrating their successes and giving them positive feedback, pupils are motivated to persevere. They take pleasure in learning new things and doing well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities show a similar commitment to their work as other pupils, helped by the highly focussed support and attention they receive. Although boys' standards lag behind those of girls, especially in literacy, the practical curriculum that is being developed is engaging them and helping them to progress well. While many pupils readily converse with each other and adults and are happy to answer questions in class, often their speech is not clear. Many have a limited vocabulary and give very short answers rather than extended explanations. This has an impact on the quality of their writing.

Pupils make a good contribution to life in school through their positive attitudes and

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

behaviour and through sensibly carrying extra responsibilities, such as being 'star helpers' or school councillors. They are kind and considerate towards each other and take pleasure in each others' achievements. Pupils have a good understanding of the significance of diet and exercise in keeping healthy. They take full advantage of opportunities to be physically active in lessons and at break-times, and they enjoy the tasty, nutritious school lunches. All groups of pupils get on well together. The very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated and girls and boys often choose to work and play with each other. Pupils learn about and demonstrate some understanding of different religious and ethnic groups, but have limited opportunities to actually mix with individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds. While the attitudes that pupils develop stand to help them in the future and their attendance is improving, the lower attendance of some pupils impedes their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, and the quality has been maintained despite the current staffing difficulties. Teachers and teaching assistants create a very supportive climate for

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

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

learning through the positive way in which they communicate and act with pupils. They have clear and high expectations of pupils' conduct and work, and pupils try hard to meet these. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' progress and so have a good knowledge of how they are getting on. This usually results in the setting of work that is well matched to pupils' needs and helpful guidance on how to improve their work. Occasionally, pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their ideas and understanding through talking with others.

Effective efforts have been made to widen the curriculum through providing a range of stimulating activities which interest both boys and girls and engage them more actively in their learning. Those generated by the 'Open Futures' project are particularly effective. There was great excitement at the 'giant' pumpkin, for example, and when a making a fruit smoothie. Such work provides a meaningful context for learning, and the school recognises the need to extend this, especially in relation to writing. There is effective additional curricular provision for those needing extra help, for example, through the reading recovery programme.

The outstanding quality of care provided for all pupils and the excellent relationships they have with adults is one of the reasons that they feel so safe in school. A very strong feature of support is the work with some families that starts even before pupils enter school, utilising, for example, links through the Children's Centre. Specific support is targeted to help meet the needs that some families have so that barriers to pupils' learning are tackled. Another strength is the breakfast club, which ensures that pupils experience a nourishing, calm and punctual start to the school day. The school has worked assiduously to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, overall attendance is higher than at the last inspection and there are now no pupils who are persistently absent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a very determined approach to promoting equality of opportunity and driving school improvement, setting challenging targets and ensuring energy is focussed on the correct priorities. All staff in this small school carry additional responsibilities and these are carried out conscientiously and to positive effect. The governing body is supportive of the school and knows its strengths and areas requiring developing. Some governors are taking steps to ensure that they have a more detailed

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

understanding. However, there is not a full complement of governors in place and their strategic role is not fully developed. Leaders regard pupils' safety to be of high importance and strong attention is given to ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place. The school works very hard to engage with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Outstanding partnerships with external organisations help the school enhance aspects of its provision, such as the curriculum and the range of specialist support for pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit provides children with a very welcoming introduction into school. The extended provision at the start of the school day, during which parents and carers can accompany their child into the classroom, provides daily opportunities for them to see the activities their children will be undertaking and to talk with staff and receive feedback on their progress. They value this very much and it helps pupils to settle in very quickly, aided by the warm relationships with staff. Indeed, at the start of the morning, children's faces pressed up against the door waiting for entry displays their eagerness to come to school. They rush straight in and start playing immediately. This is testimony to the rich and stimulating environment within the unit. A wide variety of attractive toys and interesting activities are available. A notable feature is the emphasis given to writing, with many signs and labels on display to stress the significance of the printed word. In contrast, the outdoor area is less stimulating, with little to promote children's language development. The unit is well led and managed and

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

has improved well since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. In particular, there is now a comprehensive assessment system in place to measure progress, and, at this early stage of the school year staff were busy making their initial assessments of children's starting points in order to inform future teaching. As in the main school, children are very well cared for and welfare requirements are fully met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaires, written comments and conversations with parents and carers during the inspection indicate that they are very supportive of the school and happy with the provision it makes for their children. Responses to many questions were entirely positive. A typical comment was, 'the school is great and staff are always there if I need help of any kind.' Evidence supports the positive views expressed by parents and carers. The issues which received the most negative responses, albeit from a very small minority, were to do with the progress made by pupils, information given about children's progress and the help given to parents so they can support their children's learning. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good progress. Parents receive formal reports on progress three times a year and have the opportunity to discuss these with teachers, as well as additional informal opportunities to discuss progress. Parents, therefore, are kept well informed. The school is making good efforts to help parents and carers support children in a variety of ways.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Featherstone Girnhill 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 inspector received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	51	33	46	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	58	30	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	45	31	44	8	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	39	38	54	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	51	32	45	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	42	34	48	7	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	32	45	63	3	4	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)	21	30	44	64	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	42	41	58	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	46	37	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	32	48	68	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	43	40	57	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	49	32	46	3	4	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.



Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when my colleague and I visited your school earlier this week. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. I am writing to tell you the findings from the inspection.

You think your school is good and I agree. Adults care for you very well indeed and give excellent help to those of you who need some extra support for whatever reason. This helps you feel happy and safe, and you feel able to go to an adult if you are worried about anything. You are kind to each other and you behave well too. The school provides a lot of interesting things for you to do and this helps you learn well. It was good to see you so excited about growing vegetables. Teachers give you a lot of encouragement with your work and teach you well. They check regularly on how you are getting on so they can give you the right help to do even better. You work hard and are happy when you do well. You make good progress and by the time you leave school you reach the same level in your work as most pupils in the country.

Even though your school is good, part of my job is to help it become even better and so I have asked it to improve four things. I have asked staff to help you reach even higher standards, especially in speaking and writing, and to help make sure that boys do as well as girls. I have asked that the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage is made as interesting as the indoor classroom. I have asked the school to give you opportunities to mix with some people and groups who live further away from your school and who come from different backgrounds to you. Finally, although many of you come to school regularly, some of you have too much time off and so I have asked the school to help make sure everyone attends well. After all, you can't take part in all the fun activities if you are not at school, and this means you won't learn as well as you could.

I send you and your teachers very best wishes for the future.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.