

Wakefield Methodist Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108252
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337044
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Foster

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S St Clair Morgan
Headteacher	Miss Carolyn Gilrain
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Over half of the time available was devoted to observing the quality of pupils' learning. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's development planning and documents relating to safeguarding, the minutes from meetings of the governing body, children's records and school policies. Analysis was made of the 71 parental questionnaires returned along with those from pupils and staff.

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

- pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation in identifying where improvements need to be made
- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of teaching on pupils' learning and the progress they make.

Information about the school

The school is a little larger than average. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has been on secondment to the local authority and has since resigned his post. In the interim period, the school has been led by two acting headteachers. The current headteacher has been acting headteacher since September 2009 and was appointed as the permanent headteacher from the beginning of February 2010. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with a small, but growing, percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school's close links with the local authority's Primary Communication Resource result in the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs being well above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. An outside agency provides pre- and post-school care. The school has the Primary Geography Quality Mark Silver Award and the Activemark for physical education and sport strategy.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and where attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. The major reason for this is the consistently good teaching pupils receive. The newly appointed headteacher has identified clear areas for development. As acting headteacher, she formulated a development plan aimed at improving standards and achievement still further. Governance is satisfactory. Although governors support the staff and the school well, they are insufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating its performance.

Starting in Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that, though variable, are in line with those expected for their age, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Their progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is particularly good, and pupils attain high standards in the subject. The 2009 national data show that over the past three years, pupils have made outstanding progress in mathematics and science, and good progress in English.

During the inspection all teaching seen was at least good with about one fifth outstanding. The school provides a good curriculum that enables pupils to receive a broad range of experiences to give them a good education overall. They are cared for well. Staff give good support to their pupils and the pupils appreciate this, knowing they can always talk to an adult in school if they have a problem. The contribution pupils make to the school community is satisfactory. The school council is composed solely of pupils from Year 6; other pupils have limited opportunities to contribute to the school's development to ensure that their ideas and views are taken into account. Attendance levels are broadly in line with national figures.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Following a period of instability in leadership, the school's self-evaluation does not always identify the strengths and areas for development clearly enough. However, the headteacher, along with the staff, has started to undertake an in-depth evaluation of the school's performance and this is beginning to identify strengths and areas for development. Her experience, coupled with the high quality of teaching and learning found in the school, places it in a good position to sustain improvement. While links to the local community are good, the school has limited links beyond its immediate area. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' understanding of cultures nationally and globally by:

- devising a clear plan to ensure that teachers know what needs to be taught
- developing links with schools where there is a wider range of pupils from minority ethnic heritages
- seeking to gain links with schools in other countries to help pupils understand better the differences between their lives and those of children across the world.
- Develop the role of the governing body by:
 - developing a programme of regular visits to see the school in action
 - ensuring governors become more actively involved in monitoring the school's performance
 - ensuring governors participate more fully in planning for the school's future.
- Improve the pupils' contribution to the school and local community by:
 - extending membership of the school council to include representation from a wider range of year groups
 - ensuring that pupils' ideas are listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils behave very well in lessons and this supports their learning. The work in their books and their progress during lessons reflect the good teaching they receive. Teachers plan well for different levels of ability and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a result. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, all pupils were eager to contribute to the lesson and came up with some interesting ideas for stage instructions within the play they were writing. In a music lesson, taken by a visiting teacher, all pupils were fully involved in learning to play the guitar and because their attitudes were so positive, made good progress throughout the lesson.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and make good progress so that by the time they leave the school they attain above average standards. This has been consistently the case for the past five years. In 2008, standards fell slightly, but by 2009, progress and attainment were once again above average. At Key Stage 1, standards have fallen slightly over the past two years. The school's analysis shows that the Year 2 cohorts in 2008 and 2009 had been identified as low attaining groups while in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that they enjoy their lessons. They behave well overall, and particularly in lessons when their behaviour is often exemplary. While the school council is elected, it does not represent all year groups within the school. The current council feel that they could contribute more to the school and that their views are not always taken into account. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have good social skills and, from an early age, all know the difference between right and wrong. Their cultural development is good.

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

They appreciate the cultural mix within the school and take an active part in musical activities. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to exercise, both in and out of school time. A good proportion of pupils take up the opportunities offered. They know the value of eating healthy food and many choose the healthier options for their school dinner.

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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan work effectively to enable pupils to make good progress. Based on what pupils have learned in previous lessons, they ensure that work matches pupils' individual needs. At its best, teaching is inspirational. Pupils are fully motivated to learn and talk excitedly about their work. One pupil's comment was typical, 'We are thinking about what our main objectives are to complete our work successfully.' Teachers assess pupils' work accurately, giving them clear guidance about how it can be improved.

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' learning well. It is enhanced well by the many opportunities pupils are given to participate in musical and sporting activities. The school provides regular opportunities to develop their personal qualities. For example,

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

many pupils from the school recently joined with other pupils from the local area and nationally to sing in the Royal Albert Hall in London. Groups of pupils are taught to play musical instruments, such as guitar and percussion, by visiting teachers. Visits and visitors further support the curriculum, particularly the residential visits undertaken by pupils in Key Stage 2, which help to develop their social skills well. Curriculum planning to promote pupils' cultural development is underdeveloped.

Pupils are cared for well. Staff are aware of their duties in caring for pupils and the good relationships in the school mean that pupils readily talk to staff if they have any problems. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support in their learning and personal lives. Pupils in the local authority's Communication Resource have good support when they work alongside pupils in the main school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because of the above average standards they attain, their good achievement and the good links the school has developed with receiving schools.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision for improving the school further is shared by the staff and governors. Though subject leaders have, in the past, undertaken lesson observations to monitor their subjects, this has not been happening recently because they have been given limited opportunities to do so. They recognise that this is a retrograde step and are eager to resume this aspect of their role. The governors meet frequently, but are too reliant on the headteacher for information. Although they support the school well, they are not involved effectively enough in making visits during school hours, evaluating its performance and planning for its future development.

The school enjoys good relationships with a range of partners in helping to support pupils' learning. The links to the on-site local authority's Communication Resource are good. Pupils who attend the centre are integrated into the school well. The school's arrangements for ensuring that all pupils have equal access to all aspects of the school's provision are good and are a major part of its ethos. The links with the local churches are positive and local clergy lead assemblies in school. The school's arrangements for promoting community cohesion are satisfactory. While local awareness is good, the school's plans for improving the wider aspects are at an early stage of development. Arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements. Staff have received

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

training in child protection and safeguarding procedures and this training is to be updated in the very near future.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education. The staff know the children well and plan exciting activities allowing them to make good progress in all areas of learning. Children start in Nursery with broadly expected skill levels for their age, although they are declining over time. Learning experiences are planned so that children work inside and outside and they have freedom of movement between activities. The development of their language skills is paramount to the work in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are given many opportunities to practise these skills, such as when they talk to other children about what they have done and also during activities. They learn about healthy living and know that they should wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. The partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to meet with staff and are invited to participate in learning activities with their children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. All staff are involved in the planning process and know their roles in providing a good education for the children. They work closely together to provide a stimulating environment for learning based on the effective assessment of what children have learned previously and of the progress they are making.

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

Parents' views of the school vary widely. Most parents are happy with the school's work and the progress their children make. However, a few have concerns about behaviour management, the progress their children make and the information they are given to help their children in their learning. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour was good and that they make good progress. However, they support parents' views about the information they are given by the school. This is recognised by the new leadership team and plans are in place to ensure that there is improved communication throughout the school, similar to that found in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wakefield Methodist Voluntary Controlled 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	33	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	52	33	38	8	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	34	47	54	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	32	44	51	11	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	30	34	47	54	7	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	34	38	44	12	14	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	33	51	59	6	7	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)	17	20	51	59	9	10	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	31	45	52	9	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	22	44	51	13	15	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	23	51	59	10	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	32	41	47	9	10	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	45	36	41	8	9	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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wakefield Methodist Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School,
Wakefield WF2 7RU

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to thank you for helping us with our work and to tell you what we found out about your school.

You are fortunate to go to a good school where you are cared for well. The staff work hard to make learning enjoyable and they teach you well. You are taught so well that you make good progress and reach standards that are higher than in many schools in the country. We were impressed with the way you behave, particularly in lessons, and with the way you get on well with each other. You told us that you feel safe in school and that there is always an adult to talk to if you have any problems.

The staff arrange many exciting activities for you and you participate enthusiastically. Your residential visits help you to develop good relationships with each other.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to:

- make you more aware of how people live in other parts of this country and in other countries across the world
- involve the governors more in checking how well the school is doing and in planning for its improvement
- give more of you the opportunity to take more responsibility in school.

You can help them by continuing to work hard and making sure that your behaviour stays as good as it is now.

Yours sincerely

John Foster

Lead inspector

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