

Dean Field Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107481
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	397723
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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	Anne Collins
Headteacher	Andrew Midgley
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock
Peter Marsh

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent approximately nine hours observing eight teachers in 18 lessons. They held meetings with the leadership team, senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils and three representatives from the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including improvement planning, data about pupils' achievement, samples of their work, and policies and procedures to monitor the school's performance. They analysed the 65 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller school than most others of its type. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although a steadily growing number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A growing proportion of pupils join the school at other than the expected times. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The Ovenden Innovations Children Centre is based on the site. It is inspected separately and its latest report is available on the Ofsted website. The school works in collaboration with Ash Green Community Primary School.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the children with an outstanding quality of education. Pupils’ achievement through the rest of the school, both academically and in developing wider skills for life, is good. The school is not yet outstanding because a few inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and in leadership and management.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, demonstrating their good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, from their individual starting points.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is outstanding because of very carefully planned tasks that promote excellent learning. Tasks are accurately matched to the needs of most groups of pupils throughout the rest of the school, but do not consistently extend the thinking and independent learning of more-able pupils or encourage them to apply their skills to unfamiliar situations. Marking tells pupils their achievements but their next steps in learning are not always specific enough and acted upon. Presentation, including handwriting and the layout of work, is variable.
- Pupils’ attitudes to learning and their behaviour are consistently good in lessons and at play. They feel safe and have a good understanding, relative to their age, of potential dangers and how to manage them.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. His sustained focus on teaching as the basis of school improvement planning is supported by very appropriate training and performance management targets for staff. Middle leaders do not, however, yet have the skills to lead their areas independently. The curriculum is not consistently providing pupils with consistently memorable experiences to promote their enthusiasm.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
 - pupils capable of reaching higher levels are provided with tasks that extend their thinking and independent learning, and enable them to apply their knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar contexts
 - pupils always present their work neatly and orderly
 - marking provides pupils with specific next steps to improve their learning, which they act upon.

- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers in driving improvement, by making sure that:
 - middle leaders enhance their leadership skills so that they can take full ownership of their specific areas of responsibility
 - the curriculum promotes regular, memorable experiences that enthuse pupils in their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children make outstanding progress in the Nursery and Reception classes from levels of knowledge and skills that are often well below those expected for their age on entry. Speaking and listening skills and number work form the basis of all activities. Through making a jam sandwich, for example, the children learnt new words about the composition of different types of bread and their different tastes, as well as practising skills in cutting and spreading. Throughout the day, in routines and specific activities, they also make excellent progress in taking turns, sharing and being mindful of the needs of others.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 from their individual starting points. This matches the views of most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' reading levels are average. They make good progress in the sounding out of letters and groups of letters. Reading activities result in Year 4 pupils making good progress in putting information in order and in making inferences about the characters in stories. Pupils are also increasingly able to transfer literacy skills into other subjects, such as rewriting an Islamic story, using time openers, connectives and exciting words. Teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to write at length and to practise their skills of sentence construction. Standards by the end of Year 6 are improving year-on-year because of consistently good teaching and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, such as describing some features of two-dimensional shapes in Year 2. They show good resilience in learning, persevering towards their goals. More-able pupils in Year 2 write at length, using well-constructed sentences and accurate punctuation. A growing proportion of pupils join the school later than is the norm and, as with pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress towards their specific literacy and numeracy goals.

Quality of teaching

In both the Nursery and Reception Years, teaching is outstanding, aided by excellent links between activities. In their farm topic, careful planning resulted in exciting activities, such as building a model tractor, with the children wearing safety helmets to construct a bridge for the tractor to go across. Pebbles on the farm were marked with a letter to encourage writing and reading.

Good, systematic teaching of reading and writing gives pupils the skills to build up words from groups of letters and also to break them down. In a Year 1 lesson, the teaching of letters and sounds was brisk, prior learning was regularly reinforced and new learning built on. Teachers know their subjects well. Literacy is very regularly promoted across other lessons so that pupils practise specific writing skills, in particular, very regularly.

Lessons promote wider learning. From the nursery onwards, teaching encourages pupils to consider others' feelings. Texts promote pupils' consideration of moral and social issues, such as justice. As a result of checking other pupils' work, pupils develop evaluative skills and look at their own work more critically. Teachers' questioning is regularly probing, prompting pupils' quicker progress. Pupils show a good awareness of their targets for improvement, based on marking that tells them their achievements. However, points for improvement are less specific. There is little evidence in later marking that these are followed up. Even the youngest pupils have targets, presented in imaginative ways, giving them ownership of their learning. Pupils' presentation of their work, however, is very variable, including the quality of handwriting and layout of work.

In an outstanding Year 5 mathematics lesson, in which pupils designed an Olympic park, pupils used a variety of applications to work out the cost of materials. More-able pupils worked out the discount rate on every third building. However, this is not always the case. While tasks for most pupils provide a good level of challenge, those for pupils capable of achieving higher levels do not regularly extend their thinking as effectively as they could. Tasks do not regularly enough help pupils to apply their skills in unfamiliar contexts or promote their independent thinking. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported specifically and sensitively to work towards particular goals, such as being able to balance on one leg or to place speech marks accurately.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Clear expectations and a code of conduct, both of which pupils respond to, result in good behaviour in lessons and round the school. Records over time show that this is the norm. Most parents and carers and pupils agree. Although a few pupils have behavioural issues, the staff manage them well, providing them with strategies to modify their behaviour. Attendance is above average, helped by pupils' growing awareness of the importance of very regular attendance in promoting progress.

There is unanimous agreement by parents and carers that the school keeps pupils safe and deals with any bullying effectively. A programme of personal, social and health education provides information about different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, that is very appropriate to pupils' ages. It incorporates cyber-bullying, about which pupils speak confidently, and which also gives pupils the skills to deal with 'falling-out' with their peers.

The ethos of the school, which promotes good care and support, is equally important in pupils' good sense of security in school. Pupils respond enthusiastically to a range of opportunities to take responsibility. They carry them out proudly and this contributes to their increasing skills in working together, making decisions and taking responsibility for their actions.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's inspirational leadership empowers the staff, who fully support the school's aims and work as a cohesive unit. Thorough systems lead to regular, detailed monitoring of the school's work and determine the roles and responsibilities of staff, which are well matched to its needs. The focus on the quality of teaching is reflected in the structure of the leadership teams and enables constant cross-checking on the quality of teaching practices, the rate of progress and actions to address any pupils at risk of falling behind. The major focus on improving the quality of teaching is reflected in the school improvement plan, in the performance management targets of all staff and in training opportunities, often with Ash Green Community Primary School, to the benefit of both schools. The school responds to the changing nature of the school well, such as in the planning for pupils who speak English as an additional language. It demonstrates the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination. Monitoring ensures that pupils of all groups and abilities and those who are at risk of being potentially vulnerable, make good progress, through the provision of very appropriate activities to develop both their academic and personal skills. As a result, the school has moved from satisfactory at the previous inspection and its capacity to sustain improvement is good.

Senior leaders demonstrate an accurate, realistic understanding of performance and needs in their areas. For example, there is now a very relevant focus on strengthening pupils' mental mathematics skills and their application across learning. Middle leaders are developing their roles conscientiously but are not yet able to take full responsibility for their particular areas.

The governing body, through comprehensive knowledge of the school's impact and very probing questioning, is able to help determine its future course. It ensures that safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements and that there is a nurturing environment, evident also in the breakfast club.

The curriculum has correctly focused on accelerating pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Topics, themes and special weeks provide opportunities for regular creative learning but apart from the Early Years Foundation Stage where it is outstanding, there is not yet enough emphasis on promoting regular, memorable experiences to both accelerate progress and enthuse pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted interestingly. Pupils made good progress, for example, in their understanding of Hindu culture through making Diwa lamps and creating henna designs. The wide range of after-school clubs promotes many new skills.

An increasing strength of the school is its very positive relationships with parents and carers who are valued and welcomed into the school. The school encourages them to be involved in their children's learning and offers targeted support to meet their needs and to enable them to support their children's learning.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dean Field Community Primary School, Halifax HX2 8DQ

Thank you for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking with you about your learning and finding out what else you like about school. You behave well and show support towards each other, resulting in a happy school in which you feel safe. Your attendance is above average. The staff help you to develop your personal, as well as academic skills, through lots of different opportunities.

Your school is a good school. Good teaching and the good curriculum lead to you making good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make outstanding progress. You reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school is led strongly by the headteacher and he is supported well by other leaders and the staff.

The headteacher is keen to make the school even better. I have asked him to do this by making sure that:

- tasks for those of you capable of reaching higher levels extend your thinking, give you more opportunities to learn for yourselves, and also to use what you know in unfamiliar contexts
- you present your work neatly and orderly
- teachers' marking of your work gives you a very clear point for improvement in your next task, which they check that you have responded to
- lessons regularly incorporate memorable experiences to help learning to be really interesting.

I hope that you will help the staff to make these improvements by following their advice.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead inspector

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