



Featherstone Purston Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108200
LEA Wakefield
Inspection number 277923
Inspection dates 8 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Elizabeth Charlesworth CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Nunns Lane
School category	Community		Featherstone
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 5HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 723550
Number on roll	201	Fax number	01977 723550
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr C Keith
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Pam Baldwin

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Featherstone Purston Infant School is a larger than average size mixed infant and nursery school in the village of Purston on the outskirts of Featherstone. The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals does not reflect the higher levels of disadvantage in the area. All have English as their first language and the proportion of the pupils designated as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

It is not surprising that pupils enjoy coming to this good school; one said, 'I like it so much I've never had a day off'. Standards are above average because of good provision, pupils' attitudes and the value placed on good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has an accurate view of itself, challenged and supported by an able governing body, which made a wise choice in selecting a headteacher to follow the former long serving incumbent. Innovative features of the curriculum, though too early to judge the impact, engender the confidence and support of staff, who detect an increase in pupils' confidence. The role of coordinator is underdeveloped, but the headteacher identifies this as a priority and is coaching and developing teachers to take on the role.

Staff know pupils well and foster supportive relationships. Lessons and activities are planned imaginatively, taking into account their needs. However, although the school collects information about performance, this is not used systematically to ensure pupils themselves know how to improve their work. Nevertheless, they are well cared for.

Parents work well with the school, supporting development from the moment children start in Nursery. Response to the inspection questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive; one parent said, 'teachers are willing to take on new ideas'. A minority take their children on holiday in term time, making attendance barely average. The school is working to find ways of persuading parents to keep this to a minimum.

In the good Foundation Stage, staff plan activities that allow children to work and play well together. They thrive in this stimulating environment and play a full part in school life.

Issues identified in the previous inspection report have been tackled successfully, standards have been maintained and there is the capacity to go on improving. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish roles and responsibilities for coordinators to identify, monitor and evaluate further developments within the school.
- Use assessment data more rigorously and consistently to raise levels of challenge and set individual targets, so pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well so that by the time they leave school in Year 2 standards of attainment are above average. The school's assessment, verified by inspection evidence, is that when three-year-olds enter Nursery, they have weaknesses in language and communication, and overall have skills that are below average. The emphasis put on learning to work together and develop speaking pays

dividends so that by the time they reach Year 1, pupils are ready to start the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 because teachers recognise where pupils need support and challenge, so work matches their needs. This particularly helps those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who benefit from additional support both in class and at lunchtime, so they too make good progress.

In 2005, at the end of Year 2, all pupils gained at least the expected Level 2 in mathematics, though the strongest performance at the higher level was, and still is, in reading. As a result of monitoring pupils' work, the school has put in place systems to improve writing from an early age. Predicted scores for the imminent standard tests for the current Year 2 indicate these are working, as writing and mathematics come closer to the higher standards in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The very positive atmosphere in school ensures pupils develop good attitudes and work hard in lessons. They talk with increasing confidence about their work and cooperate well with each other. Many say they 'enjoy making new friends' and they clearly show respect and understanding for the feelings of others in the school. Very good relationships contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. 'At playtime, everyone shares.' Pupils are polite and courteous at all times, behaving well in lessons and around the school. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with strong moral development, an area much praised by parents. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the benefits of regular exercise. The recently introduced school council is helping them to understand citizenship and their part in the wider community. They are very proud of the roles they play and like the way staff listen to their opinions and help them implement their ideas. Although the school has worked hard to improve attendance, it remains satisfactory overall although there is above average authorised absence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching throughout the school ensures pupils learn well. 'Teachers help you to learn a lot,' said one. Effective organisation and well established routines create a calm and productive atmosphere where pupils are keen to work. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide interesting activities that relate to children's starting point and help them to develop good learning habits. Teachers' clear expectations successfully encourage good behaviour and contribute to the pace of learning. Effective discipline and reward systems back these up well when necessary. Very good relationships give all pupils increasing confidence to answer questions and give opinions. New teaching developments are thoughtfully and consistently introduced and have a good impact

on standards and progress. Effective systems enable teachers to identify and help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support staff contribute positively to learning by working closely with individuals and groups to ensure their progress.

The school's good range of assessments accurately track pupils' progress. These give predictions and targets, identify areas of concern and steer teachers' planning. Sharing this information amongst staff is helping to ensure that lessons often challenge pupils well. However, the information is not yet used to its full potential and there are some inconsistencies in approaches. As a result, some opportunities are missed to identify individual targets, to match work more sharply to pupils' needs and promote even higher standards and progress.

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Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges the curriculum as good. The headteacher, ambitious for the school, is introducing changes that broaden and stimulate pupils' experience. Pupils and parents love the opportunity for creative arts, part of which is 'mix-up', where pupils choose their activity and meet and mix with others of different ages and different teachers. Teachers noticed that some find it difficult to cope with the change from learning through structured play to more formal desk-based learning. To meet their needs, they are gradually changing the way learning is planned in Year 1 to give pupils a more active role. It is too early to say whether these initiatives are effective in raising standards, though teachers have noticed an improvement in confidence, particularly among the youngest children.

The curriculum is enriched with visits to places of interest, the focus this year being on stimulating creative writing. Visitors to the school include members of the local sports organisation, adding to the provision for healthy lifestyle and preparing for mini-Olympics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This caring school provides a happy and secure environment in which all pupils grow and develop well. They enjoy coming to the school and feel safe, confident of where to turn for help if needed. There are good arrangements to ensure they settle quickly into the nursery and older pupils are well prepared to go on to the junior school. Parents are particularly impressed by how well adults know all the children and their families, 'like one big family'. Secure child protection and other safety arrangements are established. Pupils who have extra learning needs receive good support, making good use of outside agencies where appropriate, to enable them to play a full part in school activities. Although a new target setting system has recently been introduced, insufficient use is made of the school's assessment system to make it clear to individual pupils what they need to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher knows she has inherited a good school and has vision and ambition to make it outstanding. She is maintaining the school's high standards and is developing further the opportunities for pupils to enjoy school and achieve well. She has an excellent overview of the school's strengths and where it needs to put its energies into improvement. All members of the school community are united behind her in realising her vision. However, the role of the coordinator has not been firmly established as an important layer of management and middle managers are not yet making a full enough contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of performance. The deputy headteacher, also the Foundation Stage coordinator, fulfils her role very well.

The school is governed well. Members of the governing body are passionate advocates for the pupils. The governing body is going through a period of change as it re-establishes committees to carry out the work of monitoring, challenging and supporting the headteacher further.

The school has secure systems for performance management and staff benefit from the headteacher's commitment to professional development. The school actively consults pupils and their parents and carers and does its best for them. Good leadership and management put the school in a strong position to bring about further improvements and to raise standards even higher.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know two inspectors recently visited your school to see how well you are getting on. Mr Painter and I would like to say thank you for being so polite and friendly and for telling us how much you like your school.

We agree with everyone who says Purston is a good school. We think Mrs Baldwin and all your teachers and helpers are doing a good job. We especially like the way you work hard at your lessons, and how well you all behave. We are sorry we couldn't stay for 'mix-up' but we heard about all the exciting things you do from lots of people.

You told us how much you enjoy school and all the interesting things you do. We enjoyed the biscuits that some of you had made for us.

There are two things we would like your teachers to do to make things even better for you. Firstly we would like Mrs Baldwin to organise it so that more of your teachers are involved in keeping a check on how well things are going in school and to make suggestions for improving it. Secondly we think you need to know what you have to do in your work to make it even better.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Purston becomes an even better school.