



Withinfields Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107502
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 287832
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Withinfields
School category	Community		Southowram, Halifax
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire HX3 9QJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01422 363581
Number on roll (school)	293	Fax number	01422 344496
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms S Parthasarathi
		Headteacher	Mr Duncan Hetherington
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007	Inspection number 287832
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average size school serves an economically mixed area to the east of Halifax. Higher than average proportions of pupils enter or leave the school at other than the usual times. Eligibility for free school meals is above the national average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. A new senior leadership team is in post since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. It gives satisfactory value for money. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Pupils enter the school with skills broadly typical for their age and they leave with broadly average standards. They are making satisfactory progress.

The school has experienced a sustained period of disruption to both leadership and staffing, which has only recently come to an end. This disruption has had a very significant negative impact on several aspects of school life, including pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the consistency of leadership and management. The headteacher has coped well with these difficulties and is developing the strengths of an increasingly settled staff team, which is leading to improving provision and better achievement in many lessons.

Through 2006 the school worked closely with outside agencies to improve the quality of teaching, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching is now good because lessons are well planned and consistently have pace and challenge. Pupils are routinely expected to work independently and to think for themselves, and they do. This ensures that they now learn well in lessons. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science rose from the previous year and were broadly average. However, the recent very strong focus on ensuring that pupils have a firm grasp of basic skills has limited the opportunities for higher attaining pupils to achieve their best. The school failed to meet its targets for higher attaining pupils and overall achievement remains at a satisfactory level. Reliable information is collected about what pupils know and can do, but this information is not yet used to best effect to help pupils make better progress.

This school has clear strengths in the care it provides for its pupils. Pupils are valued as individuals and they know that staff are fully committed to their

well-being. As a result of the dedicated efforts made by adults, pupils make good progress in their personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have positive attitudes to school, their behaviour is good and they insist that they are safe in school. They value the emerging opportunities provided by the school council to have a voice in school life. The good curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to engage in learning activities beyond the classroom environment. They say this makes learning more real. Their interest in the range of sporting, creative and cultural activities is shown by the high and growing numbers who participate in what the school offers.

Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's recent improvements. In the last two years, the school has developed a good system for checking the quality of teaching and learning, which gives advice and guidance on how to improve lessons. This is welcomed by teachers and has resulted in a growing proportion of good teaching. The school has a clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, though it does not express them clearly enough in its written self-evaluation. The recently formed leadership group work well together and their strong team spirit is reflected across

the whole staff group. The current significant improvements in teaching suggest that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement for all pupils, particularly the higher attaining ones, in English, mathematics and science.
- Use the information gained from measuring the progress pupils are making to set precise targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school at about the expected level of development for their age. Because provision is now good in the Foundation Stage they make good progress in the Nursery and Reception class. Recent significant staffing difficulties, beyond the immediate control of the school, have led to inconsistencies in learning which explain the dip seen in the last two years' national test results. The 2006 results, and inspection evidence, indicate that achievement is improving. Better, more challenging teaching and modifications to the curriculum are now having a positive impact on the rate of progress being made by pupils. The full impact of these improvements has not yet been demonstrated through examination results. The school's internal tracking data give clear evidence of this improving progress, although higher-attaining pupils do not consistently reach the targets set for them. Pupils' standards are still broadly average by the time they leave the school, representing satisfactory overall achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is successful in fostering a positive approach to learning. In the Foundation Stage, many children have difficulty concentrating and working with others. They are helped to learn quickly to work and play for substantial periods, both on their own and in groups. Older pupils clearly enjoy school. One said, 'I like the work because teachers make it fun.' This explains why most pupils are keen to learn. Pupils are polite and well behaved, responding to the staff's high expectations. Relationships are very good. Pupils say, 'The teachers respect you so you respect them.' This is evident at lunch and break times where pupils play together harmoniously. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because lots of experiences, such as studying the beliefs of various religions, develop their understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. They understand the importance of toleration and the appreciation of others' points of view. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils know that exercise and eating the right things are important for good health. They say they feel safe in school because the 'adults take good care of them'. The school council gives pupils a valuable voice in school matters, such as fund raising for

charity. Class jobs and special responsibilities for the older pupils, such as being a buddy to a Reception child or a 'befriender' in the playground, give them a well founded understanding of being part of a community. Older pupils gain added understanding of the world of work through the Enterprise scheme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Basic skills are taught well. Lessons are stimulating and pupils say that they enjoy learning because teachers use a range of methods to help them understand. The school has developed greater consistency in teaching by sharing good practice. Lessons are planned to a common standard and are clear about what pupils will learn. Pupils know what they have to do. Teachers regularly observe each other in lessons and most have also visited other schools to keep abreast of effective teaching methods. Support staff make a good contribution to the success of lessons because their roles are clearly defined and teamwork with teachers is good. Good use is made of electronic whiteboards to help pupils to learn better. The school recognizes that assessment information could be used to better effect to set individual learning targets for pupils in English and science and in the foundation subjects. Although there is clear evidence of good learning in lessons and pupils' books, this is not yet fully reflected in the standards achieved by pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The needs of all learners are met well through a challenging curriculum which pupils say they enjoy. In the Foundation Stage there is a good balance between self-chosen and teacher-directed activities, supporting children's good personal development. Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Pupils' learning is enriched by visitors to the school, such as a 'Viking' actor, and visits to local places of interest. The school is effective in managing the learning needs of pupils with difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides a good range of sporting, art, ICT and other extra-curricular activities for pupils of all ages, including provision of a breakfast and after school club on the site.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils are taken very seriously. Procedures to ensure health and safety are in place and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are detailed.

Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils feel that 'teachers are patient and helpful to everybody' and this helps them all to settle quickly into school life. They

say that adults help them to resolve issues fairly and that this helps them to 'feel confident being in school'. The school seeks and listens to the views of all pupils, and parents report that their children enjoy being in school.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school now has good systems to track the progress pupils are making but does not yet use this information well enough to set targets with consistency across all subject areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has built a culture of effective teamwork focused on raising achievement. The leadership team has, with the help of the local authority, successfully implemented a good range of strategies to raise standards. These include sharing best teaching practice and improving the effectiveness of lesson planning. The quality of learning has improved because rigorous monitoring and review have led to improvements in the consistency and effectiveness of teaching in lessons. However, the school's written self-evaluation does not reflect the good quality of the school's work with sufficient accuracy. Leaders and managers are highly committed to equality of opportunity. The effective governing body knows the school well and acts as a knowledgeable critical friend, playing an active role in helping the school to improve. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The effective recent improvements in many aspects of teaching and learning show that the school now has a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so pleasant and helpful to us on our recent visit to your school. We liked talking to you and were pleased that you let us know how much you enjoy being in school.

I am writing this letter to let you know what we think your school is like.

We found that Withinfields is a satisfactory school with some good features.

We saw that you are currently making good progress in lessons, for three reasons:

- the teachers tell you exactly what you have to do
- they make the lessons interesting and give you lots of work to make you think for yourselves
- you behave very well, listen carefully and can be trusted to carry out what the teachers ask.

However, we have not yet seen the same evidence from the national tests you take. So please make sure that you continue to work hard in lessons.

You told us very clearly that adults in the school take good care of you and that you feel safe and secure. We found good evidence to let us be certain that this is true. We think that all the adults look after you really well, they want all of you to be happy and safe and they really do want you to do the best you can.

However, we think that the school could do two things to help you to learn more and to make better progress. Firstly, the school could set clearer targets for your learning in a range of subjects, but particularly in English and science. Secondly, it could raise the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science and look to gain more Level 5s for more of you, in the Year 6 tests.

These last two items mean more work for you, but from watching you work in lessons, I have no doubt that you will be able to do it!

Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful and may I wish you all good luck for the future.