



Castleford Wheldon Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108236
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288048
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Francis Street
School category	Community		Castleford
Age range of pupils	3–7		West Yorkshire WF10 1HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 723070
Number on roll (school)	156	Fax number	01977 723070
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Baker
		Headteacher	Mrs M Tricker
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007	Inspection number 288048
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Of the 156 children, 65 are in the Nursery and 13 of these Nursery children attend full time. Although the school has a small number of pupils from other minority ethnic heritages, most are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. The school's high commitment to do the best for each child underpins the very good partnership between home and school. Parents feel very welcome in school and appreciate the caring atmosphere in which their children grow and thrive. Significantly affected by illness, pupils' attendance is satisfactory. However, they love coming to school and feel safe and secure. Relationships throughout school are excellent. As a result, pupils trust the adults that work with them and are happy to go to any of them when problems arise. The very good emphasis given to promoting pupils' self-esteem results in pupils approaching learning confidently knowing that help is on hand if they need it. A good curriculum that is well supported through many additional experiences fosters in pupils a keenness to learn. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they willingly help each other in lessons. Pupils' kindness and care extends to others by, for example, older ones helping new children starting in the Nursery. While there is no formal school council, the pupils have good opportunities to voice their views and participate in making decisions. Pupils' work on environmental projects and involvement in community activities help them to understand their role in the wider world. They know how to keep themselves fit, healthy and safe. Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding and they leave at the end of Year 2, as confident young people who are well prepared for the future.

Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are below the levels typical for this age. They make good progress and most attain the learning goals expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Overall good teaching results in all pupils achieving well and attaining above average standards in Year 2. However, occasionally, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough, particularly of the more able pupils who could achieve even more. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to achieve well. Care arrangements are good, particularly with regard to pupils' safety and personal development. Teachers have a clear picture of each pupil's progress and support and guidance for individuals is good. However, because the setting of specific individual targets and teachers' marking are inconsistent, it is not always made clear to pupils what steps they need to take to improve their work, and hence raise achievement further.

The school is led and managed well. Improvements since the last inspection have resulted in the school's continued success. Good teaching and increased opportunities to support pupils' speaking and listening skills have raised pupils' performance. However, pupils' access to information and communication technology (ICT) is hindered by the school not having sufficient computers for them to practise their ICT skills more readily. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are good and strategies to improve pupils' writing and mathematical skills are having a positive impact on raising standards. The school has an accurate view of its performance and is in a good position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, are consistently challenged to help them achieve their best.
- Help pupils to understand more clearly the steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Improve the access to computers for pupils to practise their skills more frequently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good across the school. Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are below those typically expected at this age. Their literacy and mathematical skills are particularly weak. A high emphasis on speaking and listening skills throughout the school, good teaching and very effective support from home, results in children achieving well. Most attain the learning goals expected by the end of the Reception year.

This good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 where all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Progress occasionally slows in a few lessons where teachers give all pupils the same level of work, and hence a few pupils, particularly the more able, are not fully challenged. Despite this, standards are above average by the time they leave Year 2, and their scientific skills are particularly strong. In the 2006 national assessments, Year 2 pupils attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils did not do as well as expected and the school is now addressing this through additional support for targeted groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils speak warmly of their teachers and the fun things they do at school. Excellent relationships prevail throughout and pupils are encouraged to support each other, celebrate everyone's achievements and to act as a 'helping hand' to younger pupils. As a result, they gain in confidence, and so are willing to 'have a go' when new challenges arise. Pupils try hard in lessons and their behaviour is always excellent. They are very well mannered and show respect for each other and those who need their support, for example, by raising funds for charities. Pupils feel safe, know how to keep safe and say bullying is rare and if it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly.

The many good opportunities to talk about their work and feelings help pupils express their thoughts, safe in the knowledge that it is acceptable to be wrong. Pupils show real joy and delight in celebration assemblies and other occasions, for example, when discovering new resources or watching birds feed at the feeders they have put out for them. Their very good understanding of pursuing healthy lifestyles shows when they

select healthy options at lunchtimes and exercise on the new 'trim trail', on the climbing wall or through the very successful 'walking bus'. They know it is important to look after the environment and are involved in many recycling activities. The very good community links and visits and visitors help pupils explore and enjoy the wider world. Pupils' growing confidence, together with their good basic skills, prepares them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy learning because 'teachers make lessons fun'. Through very good support from teachers and support staff, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully involved in all lessons and achieve as well as their classmates. In the best lessons, learning is lively with teachers using exciting resources such as children's photographs to help them recall what they already know about themselves. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities where they are actively involved in their learning and discover things for themselves. Good use of the interactive whiteboards helps pupils see more clearly what they have to do. Most lessons challenge pupils well, hold their attention and engage them in sensible discussions with others. However, in lessons where challenge and pace are sometimes missing, teachers give pupils of all abilities the same tasks and this means some pupils do not work to their full capability.

Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and this ensures additional support is targeted effectively to ensure that those pupils who need extra help achieve well. However, with inconsistencies in marking, it is not always made clear to pupils why their work is good or how they might improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for the future. There is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy, calculation and problem solving, scientific investigation and ICT. The school's emphasis on promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills has led to pupils' greater confidence in this area and hence, standards have improved. Appropriate strategies to address the relative weaknesses in writing and mathematical skills are having a similar positive impact. Limited access to computers means that pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise their ICT skills to achieve more in this subject. A very good personal, social, health and citizenship programme, underpins pupils' very good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and stay safe. Many attend the after school clubs that include gymnastics, 'fun fitness' and other activities. Extensive visits to places of interest and regular visitors such as artists and other professionals enrich pupils' experiences of the world of work and leisure well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. 'I like this school because all the grown ups are kind,' said one pupil. The school's 'FEET' initiative encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning and many stay to work with them at the start of every morning session. A parent commented that, 'This is a wonderful school with a real sense of community.' Very good induction arrangements for new starters in the Nursery ensure children settle quickly. Similar good arrangements help pupils settle as they move from year to year.

Procedures to safeguard pupils' health and safety are good. The good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to make good progress. A strong team of teaching assistants support pupils' individual needs well and external agencies are consulted when necessary.

Assessment procedures are good and any pupils not making the expected rate of progress are quickly identified and given additional support. However, teachers' marking is inconsistent in helping pupils understand why their work is good or offering them advice on how they might improve it. There is also inconsistency in ensuring all pupils are fully challenged and providing them with guidance as to what steps to take to achieve their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and have ensured the school's continued success and pupils' outstanding personal development. The headteacher, well supported by her staff and governors, sets a clear direction for improvement. Subject leaders know what is required to improve the curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are good, for example, teaching is monitored rigorously to help teachers improve their practice. Procedures to track pupils' progress are very thorough so that those who need additional help are identified early. A review of pupils' attainment in writing and calculation skills in mathematics led to the introduction of effective strategies that are helping pupils improve their performance in Year 2. While there have been considerable improvements in provision for ICT since the last inspection, the school does not yet have a sufficient number of computers to help all pupils practise their skills often enough.

Governance is good. Through regular monitoring visits and review of pupils' performance, governors are kept well informed and very actively involved in the life of the school. Money is spent wisely to provide valuable resources such as interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. Excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies help pupils experience life beyond the school.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2

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	2
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	2
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

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we visited your school recently to look at your work and talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so friendly and polite. Please thank your parents for filling in a form that gave us their views about the school and we are delighted that everyone likes the school so much. We liked the way you all get on with each other and I really enjoyed having lunch with you and seeing you choose healthy food. I also loved chatting to you about all the birds and the squirrel that eat the food you put out.

Here are some of things that make your school good:

- The school takes good care of you and you have many friends to help you.
- You love being at school, work hard and get good results.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting and fun activities for you.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you know so much about staying fit and healthy.
- The school organises so many activities and visits and you meet lots of interesting people who help you learn new things.

Your school is good but there are a few things that could be better. We have asked your teachers to do the following:

- Make sure you do even better by giving some of you even harder work.
- Make sure that when they mark your work they help you understand what you need to do to improve it.
- Make sure they have more computers so that you can use them more often in your lessons.

It is great that you enjoy school so much and we hope that you continue to do well.