



Dean Field Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107481
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 294526
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cousin Lane
School category	Community		Ovenden, Halifax
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire HX2 8DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01422 258258
Number on roll (school)	220	Fax number	01422 348693
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Anne Collins
		Headteacher	Dr Maureen Watkinson
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2005		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006	Inspection number 294526
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Just over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school population is predominantly White British, but there is a small group of pupils from minority ethnic groups, a few of whom are learning English as an additional language. An even smaller group is from the families of asylum seekers. The school's roll has fallen in recent years because of housing demolition. The number of pupils moving joining and leaving the school part way through the year is above average. The school received training school status in 2004 and is a member of the Halifax Excellence Cluster of schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Dean Field is a satisfactory school with some good features. Improvements in standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science mean that the school now provides sound value for money. One parent said, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds.' This opinion is matched by inspection judgements, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. A year ago pupils were failing to make sufficient progress in their learning, but the school thought it was satisfactory. The school's own self-evaluation is currently accurate in virtually every respect. Now pupils are achieving satisfactorily by the end of Year 6 (Key Stage 2). Moreover, some groups of pupils make good progress, for example, those in the Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes). Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well because they receive such purposeful teaching from teachers, assistants and learning mentors. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, but they are much closer to average than they were a year ago. In 2006, the school's results were the best they had been in the last five years.

Standards in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 are better now because new methods have been employed to accelerate progress. A daily diet of mental arithmetic, innovative methods to ensure that pupils are reading with greater understanding and regular computerised check-ups in mathematics have all played their part well. Standards in writing are still lower by comparison, but not inadequate. New techniques in teaching writing are being used to good effect in some classes, but is too soon to see much impact from them in terms of improved standards.

The key to the school's recovery has been the developments made in the assessment of pupils' learning. The school now has a precise knowledge of where pupils are up to in English and mathematics and what they need to do next. A straightforward system of assessment, which is understood by all members of staff, has replaced an overcomplicated one. New assessment routines are used well to identify individual pupils in danger of falling behind, even if they join the school part way through the year. However, the information from assessment has not yet been exploited fully enough to help in checking up on teaching. Therefore the aspects of teaching that have the most and least effect on pupils' attainment and achievement are not considered in sufficient depth.

Advances in leadership and management, including governance, mean that the majority of weaknesses in English and mathematics have been tackled successfully. The school's good quality partnerships with local authority consultants and colleagues from other schools have helped enormously. Leadership and management are more sure-footed now and the school has a clear idea of what more needs to be done. Judged by the advances so far, the capacity to improve the school even further is good. Leadership in any subject beyond English and mathematics has not yet been improved so well.

These subject leaders do not possess the same depth of understanding about attainment and achievement as that exhibited in English and mathematics.

The curriculum has improved since the school was last inspected. The programme of teaching for reading, writing and mathematics is much more relevant for the pupils no matter what their level of attainment.

Pupils' personal development is as good as it ever was and better in some aspects. This is because the care, guidance and support they receive are consistently good throughout the school. There is no doubt that pupils enjoy their education: they feel safe and looked after. They talk with pride about their success in aspects of learning such as reading. The school is skilful at designing projects that improve pupils' chances of leading a safe, healthy and outgoing life. By signing recycling pledges, raising money for goats in Africa and learning to cook their own tea, for example, pupils see the school as a place in which they can prepare confidently for their future life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in writing throughout the school.
- Improve the leadership of all subjects to match the successes achieved in English and mathematics.
- Use the evidence gained from assessment to make the monitoring of teaching and learning more effective in identifying areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's best ever results at the end of Year 6 in 2006 are in the process of being sustained this year. This is because the rate of progress in the current Year 6 class is good. Despite the well below average attainment levels on entry to Nursery, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. In 2006, they reached the national expected levels by the end of Reception for the first time. Elsewhere in the school, the satisfactory achievement leaves scope for even more improvement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Urgently needed developments have been made in Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress in written work, throughout the school, could be faster; it is the means to better achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and feel proud of their efforts. Every pupil in Years 5 and 6, for example, plays the violin, which has a tremendous effect on their sense of achievement. Good behaviour and keen attitudes are the norm, although a few pupils still find it hard to behave well, despite the supportive atmosphere in school. Good personal development has had a positive effect on academic achievement. Attendance, which was well below the national average a year ago, has improved dramatically to about average. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. It is fuelled by the

opportunities pupils get to help out in school and think about those less fortunate around the world. Pupils speak in glowing terms about their school and the way that health and fitness are promoted.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' sound achievements have been produced by satisfactory teaching that contains some good features such as the vastly improved system of assessment. Teaching in the Foundation Stage continues to get children off to a good start. In addition, the teaching of English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is often good. Pupils' progress is no longer inadequate because teachers know exactly what they can do and how they need to improve. There are still some uneven aspects that need ironing out, but they do not make learning unsatisfactory. Pupils' generally good behaviour, for example, is occasionally weakened by inattention that slows the proceedings. Not all teaching is slick enough to get pupils back on course quickly. Furthermore, although teachers have a clear idea about the purpose of lessons, sometimes pupils are not so clear. This makes it hard for them to assess their own progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is largely successful in helping to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, although there is more to do in writing. Frequent access to personalised computer programs ensures speedy learning, for pupils in Years 3 to 6, in reading and mathematics. The use of information and communication technology elsewhere in the curriculum is satisfactory rather than good. Provision for personal development and well-being is beneficial. Pupils find fulfilment through the plentiful physical education and the extra-curricular activities such as bird-watching or growing their own food. The curriculum also helps them to cope well with emotional turmoil, practise working in teams and discover good ways of keeping safe and healthy. It broadens their horizons and prepares them well for the future. The many visits and visitors, for example, help pupils understand more deeply about the world of work and the society in which they live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care for pupils underpins the recent improvements in attainment and achievement. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. Positive relationships ensure that pupils feel well supported and ensure that the good guidance about keeping fit, healthy and safe is absorbed. For example, pupils who had been skating during the inspection showed great pride in their achievements, but spoke equally well about the safety rules and how to apply them. Guidance about

how to improve work is good in many respects, but varies a little from class to class. The school works effectively to influence pupils' personal development. The work undertaken to improve attendance, jointly by the education welfare officer and the school, is first rate. It has changed pupils' appreciation of why good attendance is important.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's recovery has been driven well by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other key staff. They know how successful they have been in most respects. It is only in the Foundation Stage that not enough credit is given to the effect of good teaching on children's progress. Despite the good advances made in raising standards and achievement in Key Stage 2, leadership and management is satisfactory owing to the gaps in the way lessons are monitored and the lack of breadth in subject leadership. In addition, it is too soon for the new governing body to have made its mark fully. Governors and senior staff are justifiably pleased with their progress and understand that improvements need to be sustained and built upon. Nevertheless, there is a climate for academic success that staff and governors identify was not always there before.

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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	2

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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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 your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly.

Yours is a school full of interesting things for you to do. These are some of the things that we found to be particularly fascinating:

- the new accelerated reading and mathematics activities that involve the use of computers
- the very sociable atmosphere at lunchtime and the healthy food that you eat
- the many exciting clubs and other activities designed just for you such as cooking your own tea and sleepovers in the school hall.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested three things that we think will help. Your headteacher needs to see that:

- your writing improves to match the recent progress that you have all made in reading and mathematics
- other subjects receive the same injection of new life that was given to English and mathematics
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher look at your lessons, with your test results in mind, to spot the reasons for quicker and slower learning.

You can all help by trying very hard with your writing. We know you can do it.