

Headfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107707
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	295354
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	556
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Whitworth
Headteacher	Mr Geoffrey Smith
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2006
School address	Vicarage Road Thornhill Lees Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF12 9PD
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large Church of England Junior school near the centre of Dewsbury has 95% Muslim pupils. Most come from three nearby infant schools. A sizeable minority come from private Muslim schools; many of these join the school at times other than the usual. For the majority of pupils English is not their first language and most speak languages other than English at home. A high proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the number with a statement of special educational need. Many have significant language and communication difficulties. There have been several staffing changes in the last few years. Central government funds additional staffing in recognition of the school's challenging catchment area. The school was awarded Investors in Pupils in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13(5) of the Education Act, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is because standards have improved and pupils achieve well.

This is a good school in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Over the past five years the range of opportunities available and the involvement of boys and girls alike has extended considerably because the school has the full respect of the local community and very strong support from parents. Links between Islam and Christianity are celebrated and fostered successfully because of excellent leadership, management and governance of this particular aspect. Staff and governors reflect the major faith groups and both work together extremely well to ensure this outstanding provision. As a result, pupils thrive, growing in confidence and maturity. A rich curriculum successfully broadens their experience especially through music, drama and sport and an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. This means that pupils have a rich educational experience. Both boys and girls are able to take full advantage of the equal opportunities open to them.

The school now has accurate knowledge of standards at the start of Year 3 from which to measure pupils' progress over time. This shows that from a slightly below average starting point pupils make good progress to reach nationally expected standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are rising rapidly as a result of the intense focus on speaking, listening and drama to help pupils write more accurately. They are now close to average with the majority reaching expected levels at the end of Year 6. Teaching quality is now good with some excellent teaching at the top end of the school where pupils' learning is most effective. As the pupils aptly say, 'teachers put humour into learning'. Older pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and carefully check their writing, for example, against their weekly personal targets. Younger pupils are not as involved in checking their learning and so they often repeat mistakes. In Years 3 and 4, teachers do not always match work sufficiently closely to pupils' needs and abilities and this too results in slower progress. Marking tends to praise rather than give clear points for improvement, except in Year 6 where it is of a high standard.

The school takes good care of its pupils and gives them good support. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy school, declaring, 'It is education and fun at the same time.' Attendance is now above average, a reflection of the school's successful measures to discourage parents from taking extended holidays during term time. This too has had a positive impact on overall achievement. Behaviour is good. Pupils have sensible and responsible attitudes saying, 'We really want to do the work and put our minds to it. After school activities are jam-packed!' They work and play together enthusiastically, throwing themselves into dramatic role play with great energy and good humour, as well as watching and learning from others appreciatively. At playtimes, play buddies make sure that everyone has someone to be with. Pupils act safely and show respect for the world around them. Their enthusiasm for sport and for growing (and eating!) their own vegetables gives them outstanding awareness of the benefits of living healthy lives.

Leadership, management and governance are good, resulting in considerable improvements since the last inspection. With characteristic thoroughness, energy and commitment, the headteacher and leadership team have tackled weaknesses successfully while continuing to

develop the school's many strengths. Scrupulously accurate self-evaluation reflects the honesty and integrity with which the school tackles issues and overcomes them. At the same time, the school continues to give pupils a well-rounded education in its drive to turn out literate, confident speakers of English at whatever stage they join the school. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those whose first language is not English, achieve well and all pupils are prepared well for their future lives. The pace and effectiveness of changes, led by a strong leadership team, indicate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers in all Years 3 and 4 classes set interesting and challenging tasks that match the learning needs of pupils with different abilities.
- Make sure that the marking of pupils' work in all classes gives clear steps for improvement as well as encouragement.
- Involve all pupils in checking their work against small, achievable targets, so that they understand what they have to do to improve its quality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English achieve well. Standards have improved markedly as a result of improved teaching quality since the last inspection. The school slightly exceeded its challenging targets for mathematics in 2006 and standards in both mathematics and science are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 6. In English, the school narrowly missed its targets because of weaknesses in writing at the higher levels. The trend in the school's results is upwards and the evidence from pupils' work indicates that the school is likely to meet its challenging targets in 2007. Achievement is best in Years 5 and 6 because pupils are fully involved in assessing their own learning. The school has identified a dip in Year 4 and in some Year 3 classes, but good management ensures pupils do make progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils take great pride in their school exclaiming, 'we are a sporty school and we love technology, music and art.' They like their teachers, saying, 'they are so kind' and 'give you a lot of extra help if you ask.' Older pupils delight in using new words and phrases as they talk together, a reflection of the improved provision for speaking and listening in lessons. Younger pupils can be a bit restless when they have to listen for too long. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and pupils certainly know their views matter. Pupils are confident 'there is no bullying or racism because we have a good anti-bullying policy and teachers help you calm down.' The few pupils who need support to moderate their behaviour know 'the green room' is somewhere they can go for extra help. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this results in harmonious work and play. An example of that is when Year 6 pupils brought costumes from home to perform in an assembly a special mime and dance based on a 'Bollywood' song they had worked on with a visiting artist.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the best lessons, the pace is lively and pupils have lots of opportunities to speak, learn and use new vocabulary in a wide range of situations. Enthusiastic teachers enthral pupils with imaginative activities, actively involving them, for example, in a Year 5 lesson when drama brought history to life. As pupils said, 'It's fun learning about the Greeks like this!' There are, however, inconsistencies in the level of challenge in some lessons for younger pupils and an over-reliance on worksheets. In these lessons the pace of learning slows and pupils lose concentration. They are left unclear about how to improve their work because teachers' marking over-praises their efforts but often fails to point out how they can improve. In contrast, Year 6 pupils check their work meticulously against targets and strive to improve their standards. This is helped by teachers' marking which points out how to make things better. In all classes, technology is used effectively as a teaching tool and pupils use computers extensively to aid their learning. Skilled teaching assistants, learning mentors and bi-lingual support workers work very effectively particularly with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those with English as an additional language, to help them learn and practise new skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes good provision for literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. The increased emphasis on speaking, listening and drama to help better develop pupils' communication and writing skills is proving successful. It enlivens pupils' learning and promotes their good achievement, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school has identified weaknesses in provision in some Year 3 and 4 classes and, although there is still more to be done, it has taken suitable steps to remediate this. There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular clubs. These include many different sports and creative activities and homework clubs. Physical movement clubs for pupils with specific difficulties contribute very well to their outstanding social development. Visiting artists, dramatists and musicians as well as the school's rich Islamic and Christian heritages, make an outstanding contribution to pupils' cultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care and support for pupils lie at the heart of the school community. Pupils are confident that they are safe and speak highly of the support they receive. Child protection, and health and safety procedures are in line with the latest national guidelines. Effective procedures ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good levels of support and guidance from skilled staff. Pupils joining the school, often new to the country and with little or no English, are carefully assessed and supported so that they settle quickly and begin to learn well. Learning mentors and behaviour improvement workers are particularly effective in supporting pupil's needs and in promoting their enjoyment of learning. Good tracking systems give a clear overview of pupils' progress, highlighting that those pupils who are involved in assessing their own learning make the best progress. Homework is used as an effective home/school link with, for example, pupils designing fridge magnets and postcards to remind them to bring homework back. Strong links with outside agencies, infant schools and local

secondary schools promote community cohesion well through effective transfer arrangements and joint newsletters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher knows the school and community exceptionally well. The pupils' perception is that, 'this much appreciated headteacher really enjoys being our head.' Together with the deputy headteacher and four assistant headteachers each in charge of a year group, this formidable leadership team has had an immediate and effective impact on standards and achievement which are now rising steadily. They have an excellent grasp of the quality of teaching and learning in the school based on stringent checking of performance in relation to pupils' progress. There is a strong team spirit where everyone's contribution is valued. Self-evaluation is well founded, honest and accurate giving managers a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School improvement plans show the school chooses initiatives well to promote high standards in all it does. An outstandingly successful feature is promoting equality of opportunity. This is fully appreciated by parents who regularly attend workshops at school in reading and mathematics arranged by the neighbourhood enrichment officer. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about school development and contribute significantly to school improvement, fostering important links with the local community.

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Annex A

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?	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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	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.

Annex A

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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all and talking with so many of you. Thank you for being so polite and helpful during our visit and for showing us so many of the exciting things you do in school. We agree with you that many of your teachers make learning fun and we were impressed at how quickly you learn new words and how well you act, especially when you were rehearsing Dracula! We also enjoyed your 'Bollywood' dance and your musical performances. So you will be pleased to hear that we agree with you that you go to a good school. You are well taught and your headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as all the staff in charge of each year group, take good care of you. We think your school makes outstanding provision for your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is because all the staff really care for every individual child and want you all to have the same opportunities. The after school clubs are also excellent, giving you a very wide choice of activities indeed.

It is part of our job to point out what schools could do to improve and we believe the following will help your school to be even better.

- We want all the teachers who teach Years 3 and 4 to set suitably different work so that pupils with different abilities and needs work on interesting and challenging tasks.
- We want all teachers to give clear steps for improvement as well as encouragement when they mark your work. This will help you to improve.
- Last, we would like all of you to be involved in checking your work against small, achievable targets, like you do in Year 6, so everyone understands what they have to do to improve its quality.

We hope that you will enjoy becoming markers and assessors like your teachers. On behalf of the inspection team I wish you all the best for the future.