

Martin Frobisher Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108148
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	309601
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Veronica Green
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Slowther
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Church Road Altofts Normanton West Yorkshire WF6 2NU
Telephone number	01924 302520
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school draws its children mainly from the village of Altofts, which generally has favourable socio-economic characteristics. Almost all children are of White British heritage. There are broadly average proportions of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A significant minority entering the school have skills which are below those usually expected. The school has gained the Investors in People Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark (BSQM). It is also recognised as a 'Centre of Good Practice' in the management and development of support staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides excellent, rich and enjoyable learning experiences for its children. Consequently, the children really love school and make the most of the opportunities provided to develop their skills to the full. Parents enthusiastically support the school. 'The school is very much a community in which every teacher knows every child and every parent' and 'The headteacher and the staff are outstanding' are typical comments. These sentiments reflect the exceptionally good partnership that exists between the school, parents and the local community.

Children get a first-rate start in the Foundation Stage and many make rapid progress, particularly in their language and social skills. This outstanding progress is maintained throughout school and, by the end of Year 2, children achieve very well and are attaining high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Writing is a strength throughout school. This year, the teachers have been particularly successful in raising boys' attainment. However, the school recognises that there are more strategies that can be employed to raise standards further. In addition, children achieve exceptionally well in their personal, social and health education and there are examples of high standards in art around school.

The high quality teaching challenges and motivates children to enjoy achieving their best in lessons. This is the main reason why the children succeed so well. Behaviour is exemplary. The children have very positive attitudes to learning and outstandingly good personal and social skills. When asked about school, many children say they 'like everything'. Most have an extremely good awareness of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. By the time they leave, at the end of Year 2, children are confident learners. They are responsible, caring and able to work independently. These skills prepare them well for their future learning.

The excellent curriculum successfully combines subjects together as topics and themes to make learning meaningful and enjoyable. Learning experiences are enriched, particularly in sport and creative aspects, by the many practical activities and visits in the locality. It is hardly surprising then that care, support and guidance for children are excellent. The staff make sure that all children are cared for equally well, included in all activities and given the help they need to succeed.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school is led exceptionally well by the headteacher who has the support of a skilled deputy headteacher. The teamwork of the staff is outstanding. All staff work together to improve all the school provides or develop new strategies to help children learn. A focus is firmly placed on meeting the needs of every child. The school has successfully improved its provision, especially in information and communication technology (ICT), since the last inspection. The dedicated and knowledgeable governing body supports the school very well. There is excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Most children quickly and happily settle into new routines in both the Nursery and Reception classes. This is because the staff have consistently high expectations of all children and ensure their needs are fully met. Parents feel that, for instance, 'Children are always made to feel important and listened to.' Great emphasis is placed on the development of children's personal, social and language skills, where children

need most help and where most progress is made. From broadly average starting points, with some below average, the Nursery children rapidly come to know what is expected from them and gain positive attitudes to learning. This is evident in the excellent relationships with each other. Children are happy learners who grow in confidence as they become older. Because children are extremely well cared for and taught very effectively, they achieve exceptionally well. They take responsibility, for example, for choosing activities and tidying up. The children benefit from the stimulating, rich and varied planned activities. Maximum use is made of the exceptionally good accommodation and resources for the indoor and outdoor curriculum. Children learn how to stay healthy, for example, by eating fruit and vegetables, some of which they grow in the school garden and cook and eat. The Foundation Stage leader, together with the staff, manages this phase exceptionally well. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children attain standards that are around or meeting the national expectations. A small minority of children exceed the expected early learning goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major issues for the school to improve. The school should continue to develop its own priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The excellent start that children make in the Foundation Stage is continued throughout the school. By the time they leave Year 2 they generally reach standards that are significantly above average. This represents outstanding progress. The school generally exceeds its targets because children's achievements are regularly reviewed and new targets set. Gifted and/or talented children achieve very well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make similar progress to others. Standards, however, do vary from year to year because of the differing abilities of the children in each year group. Writing is a particular strength because of skilled and enthusiastic teaching. As is the case nationally, at this age girls tend to outperform the boys, especially in writing. The hard work of the staff is narrowing the gap but there is still more to do to raise standards even further. Examples of high standards were also observed in art.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children really enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average and children arrive cheerfully and on time for the start of the day. They say that, 'School is exciting every day.' In lessons, they work very well individually or, for instance, with a 'talking partner'. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is outstanding. Children learn very well about their own culture and develop an increasing awareness of other cultures. The Harvest Festival, for example, supported aid to Africa. Children gained an understanding of a different lifestyle and an awareness of the fruits of Africa through the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Their behaviour is exemplary and relationships are excellent throughout school. Children say they feel safe and that, 'any bad behaviour is sorted out'. This results in children developing into confident and happy learners. Children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. They eat fruit, drink water and make healthy choices at lunchtimes and take plenty of exercise. Children have a say in the development of the school through the school council. Councillors take their roles seriously and have improved playtimes with the addition of play equipment. Their very positive attitudes

and very well developed social, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepare them very well for entry into Year 3.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

First-rate teaching reflects the school's keen commitment to constantly improving children's learning. Meticulous assessment of children's progress and subsequent planning ensures that differently aged children in the same classes make first-rate progress. Such close attention to detail is very effective in raising children's achievements and maintaining high standards from year to year. All adults use developmental questioning very well to wring every last drop of learning from children. Learning spaces ooze interest, inventiveness and creativity to capture children's imagination and stimulate their creative flair. High quality displays of children's work adorn the classroom walls. These are excellent catalysts for children as they develop into increasingly independent learners. Skilled support staff work hand in hand with teachers to ensure the needs of every pupil are met successfully. This is because staff go to great lengths to develop individual learning programmes designed specifically to accelerate each child's learning at an appropriately challenging pace. Parents heap much praise on the quality of teaching with comments such as, 'Staff are very dynamic in the way they teach.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The stimulating curriculum is challenging, creative, diverse and inclusive. Learning through creative activities is excellent and enhances children's cultural, personal and spiritual development. Uplifting music provides a soothing background to the soundtrack of children's happy school days. The strong programme of personal, social and health education ensures children become increasingly aware of the important elements that characterise safe and healthy lifestyles. For example, the school council instigated playground buddies to help children gain greater emotional security and enjoyment when outside. As a result, children increase in confidence and self-esteem. A long-term focus on ICT means that children's skills are now at a high level. The interactive whiteboards and laptop computers provide important learning resources in classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults emulate the fine example set by the headteacher as they work seamlessly as a team to provide exceptional care for children of all ages and abilities, whatever their individual needs. Parents comment, 'Staff are outstanding. It's a big thumbs up for the school.' Children are very clear about who will help them should they have a problem. There are appropriate systems in place to safeguard children and vulnerable learners receive the necessary support, including that from outside agencies. Lunchtime staff promote healthy eating and ensure children are happy and well supervised. Conscientious teachers, support staff, administrators and caretaking personnel create a clean, bright and stimulating environment. Detailed assessments generate accurate data which, in turn, are used on a daily basis to offer just the right levels of challenge, motivation and support to children. This is the key to the first-rate progress they make in their academic, emotional and personal development. Children have a good understanding of where

they are up to in their own learning: they help to assess their own progress and are beginning to know their targets. Effective links with other local schools support children's smooth transfer at the end of Year 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. The staff are responsive to change and forward looking. The school self-evaluation procedures provide an accurate analysis of its strengths and areas for development. The teachers monitor the work of the school purposefully and thoroughly. They quickly identify where improvements are to be made, which is evident in the high standards that characterise the school. Children's performance in reading, writing, mathematics and science is carefully analysed for weaknesses and action plans are put in place, which bring about improvement. For example, the provision and standards in ICT and the quality of children's writing have significantly improved since the last inspection. Continuing professional development for teachers is very well established and staff share good practice between themselves. Support staff, as well as teachers, are keen to develop their skills and expertise to meet the children's needs. Because they keep up to date with new initiatives and willingly enhance their skills, they make an extremely positive contribution to children's learning. Parents are extremely supportive and proud of the school and fully involved in school life. The very knowledgeable governing body fulfil their statutory duties exceptionally well and are very supportive of 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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 on behalf of the inspectors to say how much we enjoyed visiting your school. You made us feel very welcome. We especially liked your Harvest Festival and enjoyed listening to all those songs you learned so well. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your lovely work. It was very interesting to listen to what you had to say.

We believe you go to a splendid school. We think that your headteacher is excellent. She works very well with the teachers and all the other staff to constantly improve your school. The teachers work exceptionally hard so you achieve your targets and enjoy your lessons. All the staff care for you extremely well and make sure you feel safe and happy.

You told us how much you love school, work hard and look after one another. We saw for ourselves that you behave exceptionally well and we were impressed by your good manners and how much you enjoy lessons. You have so many exciting things to do. Your work in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is of a high standard. Well done! We also noticed how much you have improved your writing. We think some of you should carry on trying new things to help you do even better work. Your teachers, we are sure, will help you to achieve your targets. There is also some lovely art work on display around school that you have done in your 'mix up' lessons which makes your school a bright and attractive place in which to learn.

Thank you so much for helping us while we were inspecting your school. We hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy your lessons.