

# Wakefield the Mount Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108215
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309623
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jeffery Plumb

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Sarah Talbot
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	The Mount Thornes Road Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 8QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303750
<b>Fax number</b>	01924 303751

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves an area of mixed private and local authority housing. Recent demographic changes resulting in a falling roll mean that more children attend the school from outside the immediate area. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, but there has been a steady rise in the number of children entering the Reception class with speech and behavioural difficulties in recent years. Staffing difficulties have been overcome and the staffing situation is now stable. Two new appointments were made to the senior leadership team at the start of this academic year.

## 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. The personal development of pupils is good and they develop responsibility exceptionally well together with a desire to care for others less fortunate than themselves. The school very successfully promotes pupils' physical fitness and encourages them to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles. Children love school and attendance is above average.

Pupils achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are above the national average and better this year than last. A very notable proportion of pupils attain high levels in English, mathematics and science. This is because a creative restructuring of the senior leadership team by a headteacher with a clear vision focused on raising achievement has impacted positively on raising standards. Consistent application of strategies, such as implementing the calculating policy and the teaching of letter sounds, contributes significantly to improved standards. A plummet in standards in Year 2 in 2007, interrupting a trend of high standards for seven-year-olds, reflects a history of staffing difficulties at Key Stage 1 which impacted adversely on this year group. The problem has been resolved and, currently, pupils in Year 2 are making good progress and are on target to reach above average standards by the end of the year.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, although a small proportion is satisfactory. Effective strategies have been put in place to raise the quality of the satisfactory teaching, but in a few lessons the pace of learning is slow and the marking of pupils' books is not consistent across all classes. In most lessons teaching is challenging and activities are fit for purpose. Improvements to the curriculum have significantly enhanced pupils' learning, particularly their creative development, enjoyment in learning and acquisition of basic skills to prepare them for the world of work. The care, guidance and support are good but the tracking of progress is not as robust in some classes as in others. A strategy that has been put in place to address this is at too early a stage to evaluate its effectiveness.

Governance is satisfactory. It has good features in the support it gives to the school. However, the role of the governing body as a critical friend is less secure due to a lack of training. The headteacher has tackled with resilience the difficulties evident at the time of the last inspection and improvement since that time has been good. The capacity for further improvement and the value for money the school provides are good.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to Reception is mostly typical for the children's ages. A small but increasing minority have speech and behavioural difficulties and receive high quality support to achieve well. The good teaching and care which the children receive enable them to make good progress. By the end of Reception, most attain standards in the key areas of personal, social and emotional development, language and mathematical development which are higher than those typically found nationally.

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are effective. Assessments are mostly used to match work to children's needs. There is no formal structure to talk with parents about what their children enjoy doing at home, how they best learn and what they can already do before they start in Reception. A few parents say, 'Our children are not challenged early enough and begin to fall behind from what they could do before they started in Reception.' Children's positive attitudes underpin the interesting activities which they experience and enable them

to enjoy rapid learning in a bright and stimulating environment. Their well-being is fostered very well and in a safe environment. They are encouraged to become independent learners.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the satisfactory teaching to raise pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that pupils' work is marked consistently well and that all pupils are given clear guidance on what is required to improve their work.
- Ensure that parents are formally invited to inform the school on what their children can already do when they enter Reception: use this information to accelerate progress.
- Support the governing body with the training they need to more effectively challenge the school's leadership about the progress all pupils make.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and pupils attain above average standards by Year 6. Historically, during Years 1 and 2, pupils build effectively on what they learned in the Foundation Stage. However, standards at the end of Year 2 in 2007 declined, particularly for pupils capable of attaining highly. This anomaly has been addressed and, currently, Year 2 pupils are on target to do significantly better. In addition, the strategies put in place to raise achievement, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, are beginning to have a positive impact on standards in reading, writing and mathematics. For the past three years, standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently in the top 15% of schools nationally at the expected level for 11-year-olds. A very good proportion of pupils attain highly. In 2007, the school failed to reach its challenging target for higher achieving writers but new strategies, following an analysis of test results, have had a positive impact and more of the current Year 6 pupils are attaining highly in writing. This aids their work in many other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as do the few minority ethnic pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Effective projects raise their awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Attendance is very good and contributes to pupils' good achievement. Pupils' behaviour is good. A few pupils with challenging behaviour related to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress in improving their behaviour. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles. Pupils become skilled in handling money and developing the communication skills required in the workplace. For example, they participate in robust debates about important issues, such as, 'should mobile phones be banned in school?' There is a vibrant school council which gives pupils a voice. The school acts appropriately upon the local authority's ideas to improve the quality of education. Pupils have a mature understanding that rights go hand in hand with responsibilities as evidenced by the many ways in which older pupils care for younger pupils. Pupils gain a greater understanding of the local and wider communities when they initiate events to raise funds for people less fortunate than themselves.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall. Teachers successfully use their good subject knowledge to plan work which grasps pupils' interest. The vast majority of lessons move along at a rapid pace, with teachers varying activities so that pupils are occupied and concentrate well. Teachers know pupils well and use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking. Typically, teachers recognise that pupils learn best when they are actively involved in their work. This is the case whether they are working in small groups to prepare a class debate, making decisions about how to program computers or carrying out investigations in science. Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs and teachers balance effectively the need to challenge pupils whilst enabling them to become independent learners. This is why so many pupils attain high levels by Year 6. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils with learning difficulties and these pupils, consequently, make good progress. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time giving explanations to pupils to the degree that pupils become bored. This slows the pace of learning. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always give them clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The relevant, meaningful and enjoyable curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development. Recent and innovative modifications have resulted in improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' creativity develops well through rich experiences in dance and music. Physical education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' fitness. Most subjects contribute well to the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy. Good arrangements for personal, social, health and citizenship education support pupils' emotional development very effectively. French from Year 2 to Year 6 and the increasing range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum well. Extra strategies are used to good effect to support the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Robust procedures to keep pupils safe are in place and meet government requirements. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and have a trusted adult they can turn to with any worries they have. Parents agree with their children in this respect. Links with external agencies are strong and make a valuable contribution to pupils' well-being and achievement. Good links with the health authority ensure that young children with speech difficulties receive the support they need. Children are settled into school well on entry, but there is no formal system in place to find out from parents what their children enjoy doing at home or how they learn best. Transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils moving to secondary school are good. Overall, academic guidance is good. However, it is not consistent across all classes.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

School improvement is led very well by the headteacher. The new members of the new senior leadership team are clear about their responsibilities for driving up standards. Recently implemented actions to improve the curriculum and to raise achievement are impacting positively. Good analysis of performance data is very effectively used to support decisive action which benefits pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning is very helpful and proves a valuable support for teachers new to the school. However, some of the strategies put in place to support teaching and learning, although proving to be effective, are not monitored regularly enough to establish whether the gains those pupils make could be even more rapid than at present. All staff are involved in setting the priorities for development. These priorities focus on improving pupils' achievement. Governance is satisfactory. Although the governing body is very supportive, it does not feel sufficiently well trained to hold the school to account for the progress of all groups of pupils.

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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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 welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed talking with you. It is so good to know that you enjoy school and find your learning challenging and fun.

Your school is a good school. You make good progress and reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. The school cares for you well and helps you to become confident and independent learners. Your teaching is mostly good and you experience a rich range of exciting subjects. After-school clubs are good and contribute well to your enjoyment of school and your physical fitness. Your school is well led and managed.

We have asked your headteacher to make a few improvements so that your school becomes even better. These are to improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching some of you experience and that all of your books are marked with clear guidance about what you need to do to improve. In addition, parents of children in Reception are to be asked about what their children enjoy doing at home and how they best learn so that this information can be used to make their children's learning even better. Finally, the governors are going to thoroughly check on how well you are doing at school. I believe that with your help and support your school can improve further.