

Honley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107724
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324635
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	231
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Childs
Headteacher	Mrs Chrisitne Lancaster
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Street Honley Holmfirth West Yorkshire HD9 6AU
Telephone number	01484 222802

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized infant school serves a village on the outskirts of Huddersfield. While children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, many of the families are in employment and this is reflected in the low take-up of free school meals. Almost all children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies from year to year but is generally below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage unit comprises of 48 children who attend the Nursery either morning or afternoon, and 64 children who receive full-time education in the Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Gold Standard, the Activemark, the Artsmark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. Comments such as, 'my child has benefited immensely from the experience of this school', and, 'what a fabulous start to a school career', are representative of the high opinion parents hold of the school. The school has made considerable improvement since the last inspection. Leaders' commitment to enabling children to achieve the best they can has resulted in continued high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Through the recruitment of high calibre staff, creative thinking, and imaginative use of the accommodation, the Early Years Foundation Stage unit has gone from being satisfactory three years ago to good with outstanding features now. Following the move to its new area, it continues to improve in leaps and bounds. Furthermore, leaders have not rested on their laurels in other age groups. External awards have been achieved in sport, health, the creative arts and basic skills, recognising the high quality work done in these aspects.

Achievement is outstanding. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is typical of that age. Good progress is made in both the Nursery and Reception classes, so by the time children enter Year 1 they are working at levels above those expected. The rate of progress picks up pace further in Key Stage 1 for all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. By the end of Year 2, children are working at levels well above those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, children's performance in other subjects is well above that expected. Children make outstanding progress because of first-rate teaching and an excellent curriculum, which considerably furthers their personal development as well as their academic achievement. Teaching is imaginative and links between subjects enable children to transfer and practise their skills. Although teachers encourage children to assess what they do well and how to improve in most subjects, this does not happen often enough in their written work.

The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent so children make remarkable progress in their personal development. Children love school and are bursting to take part in all that is on offer. This is seen in their above average attendance. The outstanding care, support and guidance provided by adults are extremely effective in providing for all, including the most vulnerable and those who learn more slowly. For example, adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit have taken advice from speech and language therapists and now use signing to speed up the learning and understanding of children with communication needs. Adults use every opportunity to promote children's personal development. Such an example is the 'children as leaders' initiative. After inventing a new game in physical education, children scrupulously listed the instructions in literacy lessons, and then patiently awaited their turn to be leader and teach the game to their classmates.

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of this dynamic school. It is visionary, committed leadership and a determination to be the best that makes it so successful. The school is the hub of the village and church community. Children are proud of their heritage, enthusiastically explaining to inspectors the history of important local buildings, and proudly telling of the environmental work they are undertaking in nearby woods. Children have a mature awareness of diversity because of the excellent provision for community cohesion. Through an impressive link with a school where most of the children are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups they are exploring similarities and differences in an enjoyable way. This also increases their understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others. Links with other schools and organisations enrich learning and, for example, further the skills of children with a gift or

talent. Exceptional contacts with the junior school ensure a smooth transition for children at the end of Year 2, as well as continuity in learning. With the resolve and skill of the leadership team and the dedication and expertise of staff, the school is in safe hands, and in an excellent position to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children blossom in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. Parents report, 'the unit is a joy to enter; everything is there to provide a stimulating, purposeful learning environment'. This is because a strong, knowledgeable team led by a skilled and enthusiastic Early Years Foundation Stage leader knows their children's needs very well. Together they ensure children acquire a confident and secure start to their learning. A good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities are in place, supporting the development of skills across all areas of learning. Children devour the extensive range of activities provided, and thoroughly enjoy their learning. For example, children were captivated by activities in the excellent outdoor area, delivering letters and queuing up for imaginary ice-creams. Equally, children indoors took great pleasure in shopping in their model of the local High Street buying buns from the 'bakers'. As a result of the good provision and the high expectations of teachers, outstanding gains have been made in communication, language and literacy, and in children's personal development. From less than a third of children reaching the expected level in these areas three years ago, over three quarters now attain them. Training for staff has led to more accurate assessment and a recently introduced day-to-day system of recording milestones is already paying dividends. Children's safety and welfare are of prime importance and promoted exceptionally well. All welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide children with more opportunities to identify what is good and what could be improved in their written work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, this represent outstanding achievement from the pupils' starting points. The precise, frequent checks on children's progress allow any hiccups in standards to be addressed immediately. For example, though still above average, standards in writing slipped a little in 2007. Immediately, initiatives were put into place with the result that children are now making double the expected progress and writing to a high standard, for example, including similes and imaginative, unusual vocabulary in their work. Equally, a determination that children born in the summer months, and who have spent less time in school, would achieve as well as others, has resulted in the achievement of this group being exceptionally high. Work in topics such as 'the Victorian Kitchen' and 'Quentin Blake' has resulted in high quality learning and has raised achievement in subjects such as science, history, art, design and technology, and music. In addition, children are gaining skills including thinking creatively, formulating questions, and considering alternatives which they transfer between subjects. For example, when presented with a metal bolt children suggested numerous uses including using it as a lever, as well as food for their 'Iron Man'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children feel valued. They enjoy coming to school and thrive in the warm and welcoming atmosphere. A focus on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of this happy school. They especially benefit from the many opportunities to reflect on what is important in their young lives. Children know what is right and wrong and want to support and help each other, as reflected in their 'Caring and Sharing' motto. Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. For example, a group of pupils proudly showed how well their broccoli was growing in their vegetable plot, saying, 'it keeps you healthy and it tastes good too'. Children enjoy keeping fit by taking part in numerous sports and activity clubs including cheerleading and Pilates. They behave exceptionally well, are confident, polite and sensitive to the needs of others. Children are generous fund-raisers, collecting money for local, national and international charities. Adults provide excellent models guiding children well towards independence and becoming responsible citizens. This, together with the high standards children achieve and close links with the local junior school prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is of a very high standard. Specialist teaching in music, religious education and physical education has resulted in remarkable achievement in these areas. All adults have excellent relationships with children built on mutual trust. Lessons are planned in detail focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and skills and matched to particular needs. Lessons are conducted with pace and urgency so children learn at a remarkable rate. Teachers and skilled classroom assistants make a good team and have exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Learning is fun and meaningful. This was especially so in a religious education lesson where children quickly grasped the notion of the Five Pillars of Islam through an excellent demonstration and explanation by their teacher using kitchen roll 'pillars'. Teachers mark children's work conscientiously and write down tips to improve, for example, handwriting, spelling and grammar. While children check their written work before showing their teacher, they are not given enough help to focus on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. This is equally so when checking the work of their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a far wider range of activities and clubs than is usual for an infant school. The focus on the important subjects of reading, writing and mathematics is seen in the continued high standards. A range of interventions and the introduction of group education programmes for children who learn more slowly enables all capabilities to achieve as well as they can. Drama, visits out of school, work with artists and musicians, and imaginative teaching have stimulated higher level work in other subjects. Children are especially fascinated by the history of their village, and in learning traditional crafts such as knitting. The celebration of, for example, Chinese New Year and a visit to a Mosque give children meaningful experiences, a greater understanding of diversity, and a sense of belonging to a wider community. The outstanding

range of physical activities and focus on health increase children's awareness of keeping safe and healthy in addition to contributing to fitness levels.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults provide outstanding care, guidance and support. Children know they are listened to, cared for and valued as individuals and, as a result, thrive and grow in confidence during their happy time at the school. Parents overwhelmingly agree that children are well cared for and safe, and feel both supported and welcomed into this 'caring, vibrant school.' A strong team of teachers and support staff work closely together to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. Close links with numerous agencies ensure excellent support for those who are vulnerable. Child protection procedures are known to all staff, and safeguarding principles meet government requirements. Arrangements for health and safety are robust. Children feel safe in school. If they have a problem they go to trusted adults, reporting, 'they'll sort it out!' Adults know the children's needs very well. Children's progress is carefully monitored and followed to make certain of successful steps in their learning. The very high standard of care is a significant factor in children's enjoyment of school, their sense of well-being and the outstanding progress they make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The enthusiasm and vision of the headteacher are infectious and instrumental in the development of the school. Equally, the skills of the assistant headteacher play a vital role. As a classroom practitioner, she is an excellent model for colleagues and has done much to promote achievement in sport. Staff say they feel valued and want to be part of this vibrant school. Mutual respect, alongside very good training has resulted in a very effective team. Though some subject leaders are new to their role, they make a good contribution as they strive for improvement in children's achievement and enjoyment. Annual subject reviews with governors are integral to leadership and show staff never stand still. A wealth of well-organised information demonstrates the effectiveness of a school that is extremely successful in developing children's personal qualities as well as learning. The governing body provide excellent support for the school, questioning and challenging and holding the school to account. Leaders and governors know what the school does well and where improvements can be made and, most importantly, have the skills to do so.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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	2
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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

First, may I say what a delightful time my colleague and I had when we inspected your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We especially enjoyed our meals with you. It was very clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we received from your parents that you enjoy school and think that you are safe and very well cared for.

You are fortunate to attend a school that is providing you with an outstanding education. As a result, you reach high standards in your work and make really good progress in your personal development. This happens because your school is exceptionally well led and has first-class staff. Teaching is outstanding, so you learn at a remarkable rate. Your teachers provide really thrilling lessons, so learning is enormous fun. Your curriculum is exciting, as is the range of clubs available to you. We were particularly impressed by the work of the knitting club. You are very well behaved, work very hard and care for each other.

There is just one area that would make it even better.

- You are very good at using 'traffic lights' to let your teachers know what you have learned at the end of each lesson. Now you need with your teachers help to extend this further to decide what you have done well and what still needs improving in your written work.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.