

Kirkheaton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107683
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324621
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Richardson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	401
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sandra Haigh
Headteacher	Mrs Samantha Gallant
Date of previous school inspection	June 2006
School address	New Road Kirkheaton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD5 0HR
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including curriculum planning; attendance records; the school development plan; financial records including the budget and external audits; governing body agendas and minutes; monitoring and evaluation records; and a range of policies. There were 314 questionnaires completed and returned by parents. The inspection team also received and considered completed questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether standards in the school have risen over recent time and are continuing to rise.
- How consistent the quality of teaching is and what impact this is having on learning, personal development and behaviour.
- What the impact on the school is of the recently implemented changes in leadership and management, personnel and structure.

Information about the school

Kirkheaton Primary School is much larger than average and is situated on the rural edge of the village of Kirkheaton. The village is a few miles to the south east of Huddersfield in an area which, while having a range of social and economic circumstances, is overall more advantaged than the average. For example, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very much below the average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English or who are from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average. While the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is more than twice the national average. The school was awarded the Naacemark for schools in March 2006, Investors in People in July 2006 and Healthy Schools Award in October 2007.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school that has the education and well-being of its pupils at the heart of its priorities. The recently appointed headteacher has been very successful in transforming the leadership and management of the school by creating new structures that effectively distribute responsibilities. This remodelling has empowered more staff to take up roles and responsibilities in a well coordinated way and given the whole staff clear directions for continuing improvement. Although changes in the school have yet to impact fully on standards, pupils are learning well and making good progress overall. In Key Stage 1 progress is satisfactory overall. Some pupils find the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 difficult to adjust to and their progress slows. The more able learners are not always sufficiently challenged.

The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. It is clear that parents, pupils and staff all believe strongly that pupils are safe, enjoy their learning and are developing the skills they need to contribute well to the community and to prepare them for their future. Support, guidance and care are excellent and pupils show outstanding development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their lives. Pupils not only understand very clearly the need to stay healthy but are keen to put it into practice and encourage other pupils to do likewise.

The changes in the school since the last inspection have led to a clearly focused agenda for improvement that is based on an accurate self-assessment using rigorous data analysis. The current rate of change and the great clarity about improvements needed indicate the school has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consistently challenge the more able learners by using the detailed assessments made to plan and provide engaging and demanding learning experiences.
- Ensure the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is managed with an emphasis on maximising the progress of all pupils, especially those who need time to adjust to the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Pupils make good progress in lessons and most of them thoroughly enjoy their learning. The best progress is seen in Key Stage 2 where learning accelerates. Pupils are aware of how well they are learning and in interview rated the help and guidance they receive from teachers very highly. Standards are rising, as seen in the outcomes of national tests, and are currently around the national average, having dipped significantly in 2007. Throughout the school pupils who are more able are not always effectively challenged; by contrast, the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Overall pupils achieve well.

Pupils behave very well and in most lessons behaviour is exemplary. In a few lessons pupils describe work as being 'too easy' and this leads to a little restlessness and a tendency to chat about things other than work. Pupils think the school prepares them well for their future lives; as one child said, 'The school helps us get smart and healthy.' Pupils play an outstanding part in keeping healthy. Pupil play leaders plan sporting activities and encourage younger pupils to 'do their bit' to make everyone healthy. Pupils show good team working skills in lessons, and activities such as 'Apprentice Week' help them to understand some issues from the world of work. Pupils make good contributions to the school and wider community, show their good attitudes through, for example, their good attendance, and demonstrate outstanding development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

The quality of the school's work

Teaching is good. It ranges from satisfactory to outstanding with most lessons being good or better. In lessons where there is high quality teaching, pupils' learning is dynamic and they are fully involved in assessing what they have learnt and what they need to do next. One of the strongest features is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to make teaching points clear. Another strength is the well thought out activities designed to challenge and engage pupils. In less effective lessons teachers talk for a little too long and diminish the enthusiasm of pupils who want to get on with their work. For some pupils, progress falters when they move from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and meet a different style of teaching and learning. Older pupils have more frequent opportunities to use their initiative in their learning.

Assessment is good and the school is now tracking pupils' progress effectively. The new systems are sharpening the identification of underachievement and specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is now taking more incisive action to help individuals and groups to accelerate their progress. Marking is of a high standard and is helping pupils to understand how they can improve.

The curriculum mostly meets the needs of different groups of learners, although occasionally there is a lack of challenge for some more able pupils. There is a growing emphasis on linking subjects together to accelerate progress, by adding challenge, relevance and purpose to learning. For example, linking the promotion of literacy, numeracy and technology skills with stories and traditional folk tales, in the project for younger pupils to design and build a bridge strong enough to support the largest troll. School leadership has clear plans to develop these links further. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities, which supports their personal development particularly well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well promoted. Pupils are very reflective. They grow in confidence in their own abilities and also develop a great deal of empathy for those of other faiths and cultures.

The school amply fulfils its aim to 'foster a caring and welcoming environment for all members of the community'. Parents very much value the quality of the support, guidance and care their children receive; they say, 'The school is a very caring, close community.' Pupils agree that they feel very safe and secure in school and they are confident they would find someone to help with a problem. Pupils are known as individuals and as a result staff are very quick to identify pupils' individual needs and to address any concerns they might have. A strong partnership with outside agencies is fostered for the good of pupils. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are more vulnerable is exceptional. This is because there is a very careful diagnosis of their individual needs. Pupils receive accurately targeted support for their learning and also for their social and emotional well-being. As a result these pupils make outstanding progress relative to their starting points and are able to benefit from all the school has to offer.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The management structure in the school has changed considerably over the last year. Under the excellent leadership of the recently appointed headteacher a new management structure has been created. This is distributing responsibilities and roles in a well coordinated way and bringing expertise to bear on areas of development in the school. The staff share the priorities of the senior leadership and understand them well. All the staff believe that the school runs smoothly on a daily basis and that the school is well led. Kirkheaton Primary is an inclusive community with equality of opportunity in evidence and an absence of discrimination. The school makes good contributions to community cohesion and there is strong involvement from pupils and staff.

The management structure involves well planned and frequent meetings between unit leaders. Each leader has the oversight of a section of the school and the education, personal development and well-being of a cluster of year groups. This structure ensures that coherence and continuity are well considered and provide a good basis for determining the needs of individuals and cohorts. The 'Learning, Enjoyment, Achievement and Fun' team is working effectively on improving provision and personal development of pupils.

Plans to involve parents more are being implemented and parents' responses to the questionnaire show that a very large majority feel the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. All parents who responded said they believe the school keeps their children safe and the inspection showed that safeguarding procedures are of the highest quality.

Documentation concerned with management is of high quality. There is a range of policy documents that encapsulate procedures and practice well. The school development plan is a rational and clear response to the careful analysis of performance data and the outcomes of other measurements such as monitoring and evaluation. Aligned with clear planning is the monitoring of progress that is shared with the governing body. The school development plan is arrived at collaboratively and provision for continued professional development is in place; unit leaders take responsibility to help in this development. The school's use of performance data is becoming more sophisticated and data are now used more effectively to inform planning for classes and for individuals. The unit system of year groups contributes well to these developments.

The leadership has a clear understanding of the achievements of the school and

areas for development in the school. In the comprehensive self-evaluation form the clear vision for improvement is informed by thorough data analysis. Through this good quality, reflective process the leadership has identified standards, achievement and progress in writing as areas for development.

The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively. They recognise that they are now more tightly focused on their role and have clearer tasks and responsibilities. They are strongly motivated to serve the school as critical friends and recognise how they need to continue to develop this role. They have initiated a programme of governors visiting the school regularly that is informed by a detailed protocol to allow them to feedback systematically to each other and to the school. Issues that are contentious such as eliminating the provision for time out of school for holidays have been thoroughly discussed. The decision to adopt this policy is entirely focused on ensuring the best possible education for pupils by avoiding loss of learning opportunities. Financial probity is established. The leadership has managed to return the school to a balanced budget and is now 'in the black'. Resources are effectively deployed and judicious investments such as the ICT equipment are benefiting children.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the Early Years Foundation Stage children's ability levels are generally in line with those expected for their age. Careful assessments and the use of the recently developed 'Children's Journals' ensure learning activities meet children's interests as well as their learning needs. The classrooms buzz with purposeful activity as children greatly enjoy a good range of stimulating learning activities. They are encouraged to explore things for themselves and be creative and imaginative in their learning. They enjoy correcting 'Boris' the Bat when he tries to trick them in reading and are fascinated by growing their own bean plants and observing any changes: 'My bean has grown really tall. It has grown up to the sky!'

There is a strong focus on fostering pupils' personal, social and emotional development and encouraging them to be independent learners. As a result, pupils

make good progress overall but make particularly rapid progress in their personal and social development.

The care and attention to pupils' welfare is outstanding. This is helped by very strong partnership with parents and daily sessions planned for each group of children to work with their key worker. As a result, children settle in very quickly and feel very happy and secure. The leader provides clear direction for a strong and committed staff team with a keen desire to improve further. The current focus is to improve pupils' early writing skills further and to increase opportunities to share the best teaching practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Large numbers of completed questionnaires were received by the inspection team from parents and also from staff and pupils. The parents very strongly support the school and the work it is doing to prepare pupils for their continuing education and personal development. Nearly 100% of parents say their children enjoy school and feel safe. They believe the school is giving good support to children to help them learn, let them know how well they are doing and explain how they can improve. Almost 100% of parents who responded believe the leaders in the school are doing a good job. The view of staff is also very positive with 100% believing the school is well led and almost 100% believing their contribution to the school is valued. The least positive view is concerned with the success of meeting the different needs of individual pupils, with over half believing this is always so and the remainder believing it is so for most of the time. Inspectors believe that the most able are sometimes insufficiently challenged by the work they are asked to do.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007/08, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007/08, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/08, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007/08, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a Key Stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



20 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Kirkheaton Primary School, Kirkheaton, HD5 0HR

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed us into your school. We enjoyed our time with you, talking with you and seeing you at work and play.

Your school is a good school. Your headteacher and the school staff are providing you with a good education. Your parents told us that they agree with this. The teaching is good and you are making good progress. You told us the way staff care for you and help you to do well is outstanding and we agree. You play your part well in trying to learn and you show that by your excellent behaviour, good attention and good attendance. You also show you can be very responsible in the way you work and care for each other. You told us that you feel very safe in the school and that you know how to stay healthy and you help each other to be as healthy as possible.

The headteacher leads the school very well and she and the staff make sure you are safe and happy. You and your parents agree that you enjoy school and feel safe. Your parents also believe that the headteacher leads the school well.

We think that the school can help you even more by making sure that all of you have work that engages you and that you do not find too easy. They could also help you move from the early years up through the school by making changes to what you do and the way you work as you get older.

The other inspectors and I know that the school is getting even better. We also know you want to play your part by working hard, enjoying what you do and making sure you carry on caring for each other. Remember what the teachers tell you about how good you are and 'You are a star just the way you are'.

We wish you all the best in your future.

Ian Richardson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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