



St Margaret's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107990
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287987
Inspection date 30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ralph Higgs

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Town Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Horsforth, Leeds
Age range of pupils	4-11		West Yorkshire LS18 5BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 3862520
Number on roll (school)	399	Fax number	0113 2819419
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Brian Griffiths
		Headteacher	Mr A Willey
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large school mainly draws its pupils from a relatively advantaged residential suburb. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and an increasing proportion comes from minority ethnic groups. A very small but growing number are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school moved back to its extensively re-modelled and re-furbished building a year ago, after a lengthy period housed in temporary accommodation in a local secondary school. The new enlarged accommodation has allowed the completion of a long standing amalgamation with a small infant school. The school holds the Investor in People and Investor in Pupils Awards, the Advanced Healthy School Award, the Active Mark 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: 2

This is a good school, which provides good value for money. Pupils' achieve well from their entry into Reception until the time they leave Year 6. Their personal development is outstanding because of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. It is a popular school in which parents have great confidence and typically say, 'We are very pleased with the school and glad our children are part of it.'

Children make good progress in Reception. Lively teaching in spacious surroundings, and very good outdoor play facilities, contribute to the good provision in the Reception class. The attainment on entry of the children is broadly average although literacy and numeracy skills are relatively weak. Children make good gains so that almost all children reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Reception. This good rate of progress is sustained across Key Stages 1 and 2 by all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is due to good teaching and also to pupils' excellent attitudes to work. Consequently, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, and this is reflected in their well above average attendance. They say, 'school is cool', and they really look forward to going to school each day because the teaching is interesting and they enjoy being with their friends in a very happy atmosphere. This is evident by their very good levels of interest and concentration in lessons. They work very well together and try their best to complete work. They make an excellent contribution to the school community as shown by their pride in gaining several important quality awards. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They show a high degree of self-discipline around the school and when playing energetically and safely in the yard. They have an excellent grasp of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep fit. These qualities are promoted effectively through a good, rich curriculum.

Pupils' learning and achievement are good because the quality of teaching is good across the school. It is underpinned by excellent relationships and effective planning, which takes account of pupils' needs. Teachers use a wide range of strategies, including the effective use of large, interactive computer screens, to engage and sustain pupils' interest. However, teachers do not consistently use marking and feedback in lessons well enough to enable pupils to understand how they might improve their work. Consequently, pupils do not always have a good enough grasp of the targets they are aiming for and how to reach them.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection, despite the difficulties created by working in temporary accommodation and the demands of managing a major re-building programme. This is because leadership and management are good. The headteacher strongly directs improvements with a clear vision and is ably supported by other senior leaders. The school knows itself well, as it frequently checks its provision. However, it has slightly cautious views about pupils' personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support, which have been judged more highly by this inspection. Governors are experienced and effective. They have made a

significant contribution to shaping the strategic direction of the school and financial management. Now that the whole school is together, in the new building the impact of effective teamwork can be seen in the rise in standards in Key Stage 1 and emerging strengths in curriculum planning. These factors show that the capacity to further improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have a good understanding of their targets and clearly know what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good throughout the school. Since the successful completion of the amalgamation with a nearby infant school, the improved collaboration between the two staff teams has brought a faster rate of progress across Key Stage 1. As a result of the smooth transition from Reception to Year 1 and the way in which pupils build on their early skills, standards in all subjects are above average by the end of Year 2.

Standards have been sustained at above average levels at the end of Key Stage 2, despite some fluctuations in individual subjects. Progress for all groups of pupils is good throughout the school. The school largely met the high and challenging targets that it set for attainment in Year 6. However, it is quick to recognise and respond to any changes in overall attainment. For example, determined action by the Key Stage 2 team to improve the quality of writing has reversed the slight dip in English standards in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils mature very well into confident young citizens. From an early age, they develop very good social skills and an acute sense of right and wrong. They demonstrate a very high degree of concern for each other and their community. 'We are all friends here,' they say. This extends to raising money for good causes, such as the 'Rebuilding a School' fund for Malawi. Pupils feel very good about themselves because the school treats them as individuals and strongly values their opinions. This encourages their well above average rates of attendance and excellent punctuality. Pupils are very quick indeed to take on responsibilities whether as 'helping hands' in younger classes or playground buddies in Year 6. The school council is exceptionally effective and has taken a leading role in helping other pupils understand the characteristics of the Investors in Pupils award. The school council has also organised play equipment to be enjoyed by the pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. Healthy eating is also exceptionally well promoted with the pupils bringing only healthy options for their snacks. Pupils' good basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Classrooms are bright, well organised and welcoming. Pupils are keen to get on with their work and do well. This is because teachers plan work for them which is usually just at the right level, listen carefully to what they have to say and are always on hand to help. Teaching assistants also are skilled at helping pupils to understand work, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers use their good knowledge of different subjects to make effective links that encourage deeper understanding, for example between English and history. However, the quality of marking and feedback to pupils in lessons is inconsistent. Whilst there is some good practice, recent policy changes have not yet become established in all classrooms. Consequently, pupils have a sound, and some a good, understanding of what they should be aiming for, but targets for improvement are not always sharply focused on what needs to be done next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of all learners. A major strength is the promotion of pupils' personal development. There is a strong emphasis on physical, health and citizenship education. There is also good provision for literacy and numeracy. The links made between subjects are being further developed. However, the school has recognised that the use of computers to extend learning is developing further. This is partly because access to computer facilities was restricted until the recent move back to new premises. The excellent computer suite in the learning resource centre is being used well to bring about improvements, guided appropriately by a new scheme of work.

There are good opportunities for enrichment. For example, some specialist sports coaching is provided and there are productive links with the local community, including with the nearby specialist science college. A wide and varied programme of interesting clubs is also available outside normal lessons. These are popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Every child really matters in this school, as the commitment to being an 'Investor in Pupils' clearly shows. This ensures excellent levels of care and outstanding personal guidance. Pupils feel safe and valued because the school places a very high priority on ensuring their well-being. The procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are robust and meticulously maintained. The ready availability of fruit and water, and the stress on regular exercise, shows the school's outstanding commitment to pupils' health. The very caring staff team knows pupils really well. Consequently, pupils are very confident that there is someone to turn to if they need help. For example, the

learning mentor is highly effective in helping pupils overcome any worries. They also appreciate being able to sit quietly in Kirsty's Memorial Garden when they feel the need to reflect.

Parents receive a very high level of information about their child's education. An excellent feature of this very positive relationship is the sharing of the weekly 'ethos statement' which encourages discussion about moral principles. Common systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress are well established across the school and are used very effectively to allocate additional support if required. Close and very constructive liaison with external agencies also ensures that pupils with specific learning needs get prompt attention.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although the school has a successful record of maintaining high standards, it is constantly seeking to improve further. The hard work that has gone into planning and equipping the new building demonstrates a vision for learning that emphasises enjoyment and achievement. This is shown by the provision of an excellent learning resource centre. Considerable investment is also made in staff development, which is evident, for example, in teachers' confident use of the new computers in each classroom. Consequently, the stability of staffing is a real strength as the school has been able to build up staff expertise over a lengthy period. This translates into effective team work and commitment to the success of the school. Self-evaluation is good, based on well established systems of checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work. The creation of new curriculum teams is improving the leadership of these areas and helping to make the links between subjects more meaningful to pupils. For example, one boy commented on how he could practise his writing in history because, 'that's literacy too'. Increasingly, the views of pupils and parents are being sought to help review and improve the quality of provision. For example, this has led, as pupils say, to 'less time sitting on the carpet, and more time working', and the introduction of a popular breakfast club to meet parents' wishes.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	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?	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.

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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the really warm welcome you gave to me when I recently visited your school. I enjoyed the discussions I had with you and was impressed by how clearly you expressed your views. This helped me a lot to understand your school.

These are the good and excellent things I found out about your school, which provide you with a good education.

- You work very hard in your lessons and to reach high standards.
- You develop into mature young people as you receive excellent personal guidance.
- Your attendance is very good and your punctuality is excellent.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well with each other and with adults.
- You clearly know how to stay healthy and keep fit.
- You are keen to help one another and the school council does an excellent job.
- Your teachers try hard to help you learn as well as you can.
- There are lots of interesting things to do in lessons and after school.
- The staff take excellent care of you and keep you safe from harm.
- The headteacher, staff and governors do a good job and are trying hard to improve your education even more.

As the school provides you with a good education, I have decided that there is only one important thing to do to help you learn even better. This is to ask the school to improve:

- How it helps you understand what to do to reach the next level in your work.