

Rawthorpe Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107620
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309447
Inspection dates	17–18 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms J Brady
Headteacher	Mr I Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
School address	Rawthorpe Lane Rawthorpe Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD5 9NT
Telephone number	01484 300080
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average school located in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. It is about to become federated with its neighbouring infant and secondary schools. As a consequence, governance has an interim status. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school incorporates a unit of resourced provision for children with physical difficulties, which is undersubscribed at the moment. Just over half of the pupils are of White British heritage. The rest are from 11 different minority ethnic backgrounds, but mainly Pakistani, mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black African. There is a small group of asylum seekers and refugees. A greater than average number of pupils are learning English as an additional language and a few are at an early stage of language acquisition. Nearly a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than is found normally. The school has a small group of pupils looked after in public care. The school's awards include: Investor in Pupils, Healthy Schools (Gold) and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school, with some outstanding features, has improved admirably in the last two years. When it was inspected in 2006, standards were well below average, teaching was no better than satisfactory and attendance was below average. These issues have been tackled with remarkable skill. Huge gains in pupils' personal qualities and advances in the influence of teaching on their academic progress have made a great difference. Overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding because there has not been time, in the school's revival, to improve pupils' progress in all subjects and there is still some teaching that is satisfactory rather than good.

Parents have been quick to recognise the changes. Comments such as, 'I think the teachers bring out the best in children,' and 'The school goes from strength to strength,' are common responses. Pupils love what the school offers them, which vindicates the school's efforts in improving attendance. As one pupil put it, 'You'd be crazy not to want to come to school.'

Pupils' first-rate personal development is evident in every lesson and around the school. It is rare now for learning to be disrupted by emotional outbursts. There is an atmosphere of calm that is underpinned by the policy of 'No shouting'. The school council came up with this slogan, which is now an indispensable feature of daily life at Rawthorpe. The school's prestigious awards are examples of the top quality care it provides. As a result, the positive climate makes it possible for pupils to enjoy interesting lessons. They play an active part in, for example, the school's sizeable brass band or entertain their parents with a steel pan performance.

The changes for the better have not just been in attitudes and behaviour; standards have shot ahead too. In 2007, standards by the end of Year 6 were well below average, which meant that, given their starting points, pupils were not doing well enough. Currently, standards in Year 6 are in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science, which puts them at a higher level than at any time in the last five years. This represents good achievement from a below average starting point in Year 3. Until this year, science was the least successful of the three subjects. This trend has been rectified; standards in science are much improved in Year 6 and are now in line with English and mathematics. However, achievement in science does not go beyond satisfactory in other year groups; this is an area of relative weakness within a picture of good progress.

Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching means that most lessons generate interest, promote successful learning and make sure that pupils play a strong role in assessing how well they have done. Nevertheless, there are still some pockets of satisfactory, rather than good, teaching. Some lessons in Year 4, for example, do not demand enough of pupils' attention in English and mathematics, and consequently the pace of learning is not brisk enough, particularly for the higher-attainers.

Inspired leadership and management by the headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors have painstakingly improved the care, curriculum and assessment of pupils' learning to the point that current standards in Year 6 are only part of a wider story of success. For example, higher-attainers and pupils who find learning difficult are now progressing well. Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees, those at an early stage of learning English and pupils who join the school part way through the year are all included well and are generally making good progress. Some innovative aspects of the curriculum make learning exciting. For example, pupils in Year 4 make podcasts of their work, launch them on the Internet and listen to them at home with their parents. The sense of pride that this creates is immense. The headteacher's exceptional

skill at giving pupils and staff the confidence to make the necessary improvements has proved crucial for the school's success. Everyone subscribes to the school's aims and direction, self-evaluation is very effective and superb links have been made with nearby schools. These features have a powerful influence on pupils' progress.

What has been achieved already in turning the school around denotes good value for money and an outstanding capacity to continue with these developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall rate of progress in science, to at least good, throughout the school.
- Improve the pace of learning in the minority of lessons where it is satisfactory rather than good.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Average standards in Year 6 represent good achievement from pupils' below average starting points. The difference in standards this year compared to previous results is remarkable. It results largely from some outstanding teaching. The trend, over a number of years, was for standards to be well below average and sometimes exceptionally low. However, all the measures taken since 2004 to improve pupils' progress are finally having their full effect, not least because older pupils know exactly what level they are at and precisely what to do to reach the next one. The fact that progress in science in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory rather than good does not outweigh the advances made. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are progressing well, partly due to the concentration on letter sounds in reading. All pupils benefit from an emphasis on effective verbal communication, not least those learning English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school has a very positive atmosphere; pupils say, 'We like our school and we respect it.' Their commitment to helping others and behaving well is strong. The school choir, which sung in the 2008 National Festival of Music, inspired a judge to comment on its energy and tremendous enthusiasm. These qualities are common throughout the school in everything that pupils do. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding, partly because pupils are so active in finding out how other people live during events such as International Day. The fundamentals of healthy living and keeping safe are very well understood, as is the enjoyment of being involved in the local community. Some pupils, for example, have worked with a group of local senior citizens to create a mural depicting a mill scene reminiscent of Kirklees many years ago. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education and have become well balanced individuals in the process.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Successful lessons get the best out of pupils because teachers know how to make learning fun. Pupils are often taught in groups according to their ability, which is proving to be a successful method. In mathematics, for example, learning starts with challenges against the clock and

then rattles along at a fast pace that ensures interest is maintained. Occasionally, teaching is satisfactory rather than good in its effect. Most pupils reach their goals, but higher-attainers are not fully stretched and the slower pace of the lesson causes some pupils to waver in their interest. One of the strongest features of teaching is the way in which pupils are taught to evaluate their own work. In Years 5 and 6 there is some excellent practice in which pupils are proficient at assessing the work of their classmates as well as their own. Teachers are able to encourage this valuable form of assessment because they have such a good grasp of pupils' levels of attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has a good influence on pupils' academic skills. The school has revised its planning in English and mathematics very well, in line with national thinking, to add greater relevance to pupils' learning. The programmes in science have recently been strengthened, but have yet to have a good impact in all year groups. Central to the school's provision is the way that the regular timetable is interspersed with special weeks such as those for science or the celebration of books. There are very good opportunities for pupils with musical interests to play in the various school bands or sing in the choir. The curriculum's impact on personal development is huge. The school is justifiably proud of what it does to create socially aware, healthy and safety conscious pupils. Older pupils speak highly of the residential visit in which they learn a great deal about caring for the environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care provided for pupils has resulted in such enormous advances in their personal development that academic improvements have been inevitable. The work conducted by many colleagues working for external agencies, the community development worker and the behavioural improvement worker is coordinated wonderfully to provide maximum impact. The class charters that involve pupils in deciding how to behave and the conferences with teachers to discuss academic targets both highlight the superb way in which pupils are guided and supported. To this end, teaching assistants are valuable assets particularly in the way they help pupils who find learning difficult. Links with the local infant and secondary schools ensure that pupils are admitted and prepared for transfer very smoothly. Child protection arrangements are in place and working. The school capitalises on pupils' love of competition by awarding prizes for things such as clean classrooms, attendance and trying hard in class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from good leadership and management overall, although several aspects are excellent. Senior managers are well aware of areas for development, such as further impact from newer members of the leadership team and the need for subject leaders beyond English, mathematics and science to evaluate standards. Academic standards have been raised by a combination of powerful means: improving behaviour; allowing pupils to participate fully in school life; and an exemplary system for tracking academic achievements. The school has been recognised locally for these features, and other schools benefit from learning what is happening at Rawthorpe. The headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors have changed the school

dramatically through a strong belief that the pupils could at least reach standards in line with the national average. This belief has been realised by rigorous evaluation and inspired action. Leaders have a precise knowledge of how good the school is and what still needs to be achieved.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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.

Annex A

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

Inspection of Rawthorpe Junior School, Huddersfield, HD5 9NT

Thank you for your help when my colleague and I inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so friendly. You go to a good school, which is outstanding in some respects.

The children who sat with us at lunchtime, those to whom we spoke at playtime and the groups who came to show their work all gave a great account of the school. Many of you agree with the comment made during the conversations that, 'We like our school and respect it.' How different, you told us, from the situation a few years ago when unkind and disruptive behaviour spoilt lessons and turned many of you off school. The 'No shouting' rule seems to have made such a difference. Just think of the sense of calm that a visitor feels when standing in your entrance hall. The peaceful music playing, DVD loop of photographs showing your many achievements and the interesting work to look at - all show what an energetic but controlled school yours is.

The Investor in Pupils Award was given to your school for putting your needs first. This is not just a piece of paper in a frame on the wall, it represents something that happens everyday: fun lessons that help you assess how good your learning is; family style assemblies that reward hard work and effort; and the many chances for you to help out and play a full part in running the school. No wonder you behave in a way that shows you love being at Rawthorpe.

The top quality things about your school are how you respect and respond to the care that is shown to you by all the adults. Your headteacher and staff know exactly what they need to do to improve the school even more. However, out of their long list of suggestions, I am asking them to concentrate on two things in particular. First, to increase the rate of progress you make in science. Pupils in Year 6 are doing well, but younger ones need more time to be able to learn as quickly. Second, to make sure that teaching in all lessons helps you to learn well. You can all help by trying extra hard in all your lessons, particularly English, mathematics and science.

Best wishes to you all especially in the exciting times ahead when the Rawthorpe schools have even closer links.