

# Elland CofE Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107550
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	319247
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Gill

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs E McGowan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Westgate Elland West Yorkshire HX5 0BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 373159
<b>Fax number</b>	01422 311568

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a relatively small school that admits pupils from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, mainly disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are few pupils from minority ethnic heritages and very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school mid-way through their education. Since last inspected, the school has gained an Activemark for its work in physical education (PE). The school is part of a national pilot study entitled, 'Making Good Progress' in which individual pupils receive one to one tuition in basic skills. A Sure Start nursery facility adjoins the Foundation Stage classrooms. There have been several changes of headteacher in the last two years. The present post holder has been in place for just over a year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory school in which pupils feel safe, healthy, well cared for and proud of their achievements. Parents are enthusiastic about the changes which have taken place since January 2007. Some parents describe children who, 'can't wait to get to school', or 'are far more confident now', typifying the transformation that has taken place. Inspection findings agree.

Until recently, standards, by the end of Year 6, were exceptionally low. They are on an upward trend and whilst below average, are closing in on nationally expected levels. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, there is more to be done in raising standards generally, particularly in writing, which lags behind reading, mathematics and science. Some initiatives have been started in writing, but it is too early to see many gains in pupils' sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. Improvements in reading, mathematics and science have been achieved, for example, by productive training for staff, the valuable assistance of adult reading partners and a re-emphasis on practical investigations in science. Pupils who find learning difficult are progressing soundly because they are being identified correctly. As a result, they receive well tailored learning to suit their specific needs.

Average attendance demonstrates how far the school has come in making learning more interesting. Good habits in coming to school have been developed through the motivational rewards offered, exciting club activities and special events within the curriculum such as creative workshops. The majority of pupils show kindness to each other and are keen to learn. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although a small minority of pupils still need more than an occasional reminder about self-discipline. However, this does not prevent personal development from being good and occasionally superb in the way that pupils think deeply about their feelings. This high level of personal insight was demonstrated stunningly during the inspection. Year 6 pupils worked with an artist in residence to produce miniature 'treasure chests' containing poems that depicted their innermost dreams and ambitions. The celebration of this work, which included a reading of the poems, revealed pupils who had developed an emotional maturity beyond their years.

The culture of the school is one of care and consideration. Accordingly, pupils' new-found confidence and enthusiasm underpin the improvement in academic work. One Year 6 pupil was pleased to announce that, 'I am going to try very hard in my SATs this year because they are so important for my future life.' More ambitious teaching and a headteacher whose warm and inclusive manner prompted one parent to state that, 'She has a lot of respect for children and so gains a lot of respect back' have fostered this kind of aspiration.

The effect of teaching on pupils' learning has improved because unsatisfactory lessons, in Key Stage 2, have been eliminated. There are still some inconsistencies, which restrict the pace of learning, but the wide variation in practice does not exist anymore. In satisfactory teaching, which is the norm now, work is pitched at the correct level for pupils and they make reasonable progress. Good teaching is more adventurous, contains humour and incorporates imaginative practical activities that make learning fun. Elsewhere, pupils often reach the required levels, but without the dynamism in teaching to make learning remarkable. The school's assessment programme has resulted in more precise targets for pupils to reach, although the targets are not always understood fully by pupils themselves. Moreover, some marking is not precise

enough about how learning could be improved. Similarly, discussions in lessons sometimes skate too quickly over helping pupils to talk about their learning and how it could have been better.

The strong leadership of the headteacher has created teamwork among staff and governors. The deputy headteacher and subject leaders possess a clear idea of their roles and have been guided well in how to evaluate the school's impact on pupils' progress. The school's method of tracking pupils' progress, which is being used as a model of good practice within the local authority, has been put to good use. Progress is now measured meticulously by the headteacher who has given teachers the information they need to speed up learning. Governors now have all the information they need to offer support and help to steer the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall because it is too early to see the full benefit from the developments that have taken place. Nevertheless, the improvements in pupils' academic achievement and personal development indicate a good capacity to improve even further, especially now that the value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's knowledge and skills are below that expected for their age when they join the Foundation Stage. Personal development, skills in literacy and knowledge about the world are all particularly weak at the beginning. Nevertheless, children make good progress and most end their year in Reception broadly in line with skills expected for their age. Good leadership and management have maintained the effectiveness of this area of the school, despite the difficulties that have occurred elsewhere. Children make especially good progress in PE owing to the many well organised play activities, and in linking sounds with letters in preparation for reading. This is partly because staff are particularly good at spotting children who might experience difficulties. They work closely with parents, and Sure Start colleagues, to devise the most appropriate programme of activities for children. The generally good system of assessment is not quite as sharp as it might be in how staff record children's achievements after sessions and use the information to plan new activities.

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

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, to sustain the upward trend.
- Ensure that all teaching provides activities that challenge and motivate all pupils to achieve well.
- Improve pupils' understanding of what they need to do to achieve higher levels.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards have been rising from the exceptionally low levels evident in 2005. Although still below average, they are close now to national expectations. This year, pupils' reading has improved in response to the school's efforts. Standards are now broadly average, but the short timescale of recovery means that they could be even higher. Standards in writing have been the hardest to improve. Achievement in this respect is recovering, but not as fast as in other

areas. Although satisfactory overall, the achievement of boys, higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities differs between year groups. Some are progressing faster than others depending on the strength of teaching. The good induction of pupils who join the school partway through the year results in them achieving satisfactorily.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say how much they enjoy school now that the behaviour has improved. They are very conscious of the pupils who find it hard to control themselves but are confident that the school has this in hand. They feel safe and appreciate the emphasis on health and keeping fit. They enjoy taking part in school life. For example, pride in being a school councillor, a house captain or taking part in the annual pantomime is striking. Most pupils respond well to opportunities for teamwork provided on residential visits, the play leadership scheme and fundraising for charity. The acquisition of academic skills for future life is now satisfactory. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Multicultural understanding is less well developed, but is being cultivated through new links with a local school. Chances to think spiritually are valued by pupils. Links with the church and local artists make this a very good aspect of personal development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning have improved: there are no longer inadequate lessons. Lesson planning has improved, although there are occasions when it is not fully clear what teachers expect pupils to gain in knowledge, skills and understanding by the end of the lesson. In good lessons, pupils enjoy the interesting tasks given to them and which show astute teaching of ideas and skills. In this way, pupils in Year 6 quickly grasped the connection between fractions, percentages and pie charts, leaving time for higher attainers to attempt investigations into the range and mode of the information they had collected. Similarly, science in Years 1 and 4 grabbed pupils' attention in understanding forces and viscosity of liquids, respectively, owing to the hands on nature of the lessons. However, in satisfactory lessons, teachers sometimes talk for too long or seemingly appropriate tasks lack the imaginative appeal for pupils. Also, whilst pupils are informed of their targets, at times, they do not fully understand what they mean.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum promotes satisfactory achievement in English, mathematics and science. This advance has been achieved in a relatively short time. Furthermore, there are good opportunities for personal development. For example, enrichment in the form of African drumming, clubs for socially valuable activities, such as signing, and sporting links with the local secondary school. A recent major initiative entitled, 'The Creative Classroom' is beginning to have a profound effect. For example, pupils using clay to create images of their town and lessons in Indian dancing undertaken with Asian friends from another school have accompanied the 'dream journeys' in Year 6. What makes the curriculum satisfactory is that the high expectations, challenge and fun in some lessons are not evident regularly in general teaching. This is because,

for example, the planning for basic skills does not yet exploit fully opportunities for speaking, writing widely and links with the arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The valuable care for pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, provides a climate for improving standards. The school tracks pupils' academic progress well, which helps teachers support those who are not keeping up. The 'Making Good Progress' pilot study is an effective addition to this process. The individual tuition, after school, given to pupils who need it is beginning to have a good effect. Although inconsistencies that remain in teaching prevent some pupils from understanding fully their targets for improvement, this does not prevent their overall care, guidance and support from being good. Pupils feel safe because protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working. Attendance has improved well because the school has implemented a tightly managed approach to absence coupled with an extended curriculum that pupils do not want to miss.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The combined skill of the headteacher, teamwork among the staff and the prudent contribution of governors has put the school back on course. The school now ensures pupils have good personal development and that standards are rising. The headteacher has taken the lead effectively in training colleagues in evaluation, particularly in interpreting how well pupils are progressing academically. The deputy headteacher and subject leaders now have a sound idea about how to take this further. They have, for example, begun to check on the quality of lessons and how well pupils are progressing. The school knows itself well: its plans for development are measured and comprehensive. Developments are in their early stages and have not had time yet to be fully effective. Nevertheless, the groundwork has been completed well.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

Inspection of Elland Church of England Junior and Infant School, Elland, HX5 0BB

Thank you for being so helpful when Mrs Halifax and I inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to many of you, particularly at lunchtime and in the special discussion groups that were arranged. We really enjoyed having our lunch in the dining room not only because it was 'dotty Wednesday', but also because you were so keen on telling us about your school.

You go to a satisfactory school, but one that is improving quickly. It is easy to see from all the notices around the school how hard you are all thinking about tackling bullying or being rewarded as one of the 'always' children who try to obey all of the rules. Your headteacher has done so much in a very short time to create a happy school. Some of you said to us about behaviour in the past, 'It could all get a bit manic at times.' Now there is, 'very little bullying, lots of PE to keep us fit, a new food policy and smashing menus'. You all seem to enjoy keeping busy and the clear rules that guide your behaviour. What is more, there are many opportunities, like Better Reading or Making Good Progress in which you can improve your learning.

Many of your parents wrote to us about recent improvements. We followed up all the opinions expressed and saw for ourselves how welcoming the school is and how confident you are all becoming. The Year 6 presentation of their 'Dream Journey' work, with the artist in residence, was a shining example of how well you can all do.

We know everyone wants to do even better and have suggested three things that will help. Standards in writing should be raised throughout the school to match the improvements being made in reading, mathematics and science. All lessons should contain the fun and demanding activities that make the best ones go so well. Teachers need to make sure that you are all very clear about what you need to do to improve your work.

You can all help by trying very hard with your writing, enjoying any new style lessons that are introduced and asking about how to improve your work.