

Lightcliffe CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107572
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	287856
Inspection date	3 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Hyatt
Headteacher	Mr C Woodbridge
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Wakefield Road Lightcliffe Halifax West Yorkshire HX3 8SH
Telephone number	01422 202235
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by pupils; pupils' personal development and well-being; the quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data, the school's own records, parents' questionnaires, lesson observations and interviews with staff, pupils and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, and very few speak English as an additional language. The school has Investors in People status and has received the Healthy Schools Award. It is also involved in the Investors in Pupils initiative.

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. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is outstanding, and pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. The school's Christian teaching underpins much of its work in this area. Staff and pupils alike are fully aware of the importance of the school's mission statement - 'Giving all the opportunity to succeed.' The great majority of parents are supportive of the school's work, a typical comment being, 'My child feels happy, safe, and well cared for - and is making good progress!' The pupils themselves echo this view through comments such as, 'School gives us everything we need to prepare for the future.'

Pupils' standards when they enter Year 1 are above average. They make good progress across both key stages, and so standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently well above average. Relative weaknesses in writing by the end of Year 2 have been successfully addressed, and as a result in 2007 pupils' standards in writing improved and were significantly above average. In Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science have been very high in each of the past five years. Achievement is good in all subjects, and particularly good in science. Due to the good quality support provided for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, these pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates. However, the most able pupils are not always stretched and, as a result, a few of these pupils do not attain the standards they are capable of.

Pupils love coming to school. They speak enthusiastically about a 'happy and lively place, where everyone gets on and the staff care for you'. Attendance is consistently above average. Pupils feel strongly that bullying is kept well under control, and all feel safe in the school. They have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy; several very young children spoke confidently about how eating the right foods and taking exercise 'keeps your body strong and helps to stop you becoming ill'. They all appreciate the excellent range of healthy foods provided by the school. Pupils show high levels of confidence and self-esteem, and feel that they are valued members of the school community. Older pupils enjoy looking after the younger ones, and school council members take great pleasure in carrying out their roles. Behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent, but awareness of other cultures and faiths is more limited. Very high levels of basic skills and some outstanding work carried out through the Investors in Pupils programme means that they are very well prepared for their future education and the world of work.

The quality of teaching is consistently good, and some is outstanding. Relationships in classrooms are very positive; expectations, both in terms of standards of work and behaviour, are suitably high. A particular strength is the use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, one teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively in a physical education lesson with Reception children to help them develop their jumping techniques. Lessons are planned carefully in order to maintain pupils' interest, and learning typically moves at a brisk pace. Pupils respond by displaying a genuine keenness to learn, and all make good progress. Much of the work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils and supports their learning well, although the level of challenge for a minority of the most able pupils is not always high enough. Teachers' marking is of good quality and gives useful guidance to pupils on how to improve. Pupils particularly enjoy marking their own and each other's work, saying that this helps them to get a 'better understanding of how to be even better'.

The good quality curriculum supports pupils' progress effectively. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. A particular strength is the good quality teaching of certain subjects, such as physical education and music, by specialist staff. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities, particularly in sports. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in events at the local high school, such as cross-country competitions and dance festivals.

The quality of pastoral care provided for pupils is outstanding and, as a result, pupils feel secure in knowing that there is always an adult to talk to. The strong emphasis on pupils' emotional development throughout the school is evident. Staff know their pupils very well indeed and are strongly committed to meeting all their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by a team of dedicated and devoted support staff, who work particularly well in collaboration with class teachers. All statutory requirements for child protection are met. The school has recently developed systems for tracking pupils' progress. Although these are relatively new, there is evidence to show that they are effective in helping staff to accurately assess the progress of individuals. As a result, staff are able to work with pupils in setting challenging yet achievable targets.

The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is well supported by a team of committed senior staff. They have a clear vision for the future of the school and are determined that all pupils should reach their maximum potential. The work of subject leaders is a particular strength, and through their work in monitoring learning, they make a valuable contribution to the school's accurate self-evaluation. There is much emphasis on staff development, and all staff feel that they are very well supported and receive ongoing encouragement and support. Governors carry out their roles well and are strongly committed to the school. They assist leaders by exploring issues in great detail. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, for example, in relation to achievement and standards in science, and provision for physical development in the Reception class. It is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are above those typically expected of children of their age, particularly as far as their spoken language is concerned. As a result of good quality teaching, children make good progress throughout the year. A recent emphasis on letters and sounds has brought about a significant improvement in children's skills in this area. The stimulating environment and good quality resources are key factors in the children's enjoyment of learning and the good progress they make. Much emphasis is placed upon emotional and social development, and children quickly learn to work and play together well. The outdoor area has improved since the last inspection and is used well by staff and children to develop imagination and support learning. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and improvement planning shows a clear vision for the future, in line with current trends and developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils are provided with sufficiently challenging work to fully extend their capabilities.
- Improve pupils' awareness of faiths and cultures other than their own.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Lightcliffe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Halifax, HX3 8SH

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome in your school. I really enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you learn.

You attend a good school. Some of the school's work is outstanding. You told me that the staff care for you extremely well, and I agree with you. You know that the staff want the very best for you, and that you are always being encouraged to be kind, considerate and well-behaved young learners. I can see that this is working well - your behaviour is absolutely excellent, and I was delighted to see the way in which you cared for each other. I was also very impressed with your knowledge of healthy lifestyles, especially as some of the youngest children knew all about the effects of diet and exercise! I can see what you meant by school being a friendly place where everyone gets on well. I think your understanding of other faiths and cultures could be a little better, and I've suggested that the school thinks about how they can help with this.

The standards that you reach at Lightcliffe, in English, mathematics and science, are well above the national average. You must be very proud of this! You also make good progress throughout your time at the school. This is due mainly to the good teaching that you receive. You told me that lessons are often 'more fun than fun', and that you love practical work. You also enjoy marking your own work, and each other's. This is really good as, together with the feedback from your teachers, it helps you to understand exactly what you need to do to achieve even more. You make good progress, but some of you are capable of being stretched even further, and I've suggested that your teachers look out for those of you who would benefit from doing even more challenging work. You can help by letting your teachers know if the work is ever too easy for you!

Your headteacher and all the staff want each one of you to achieve your full potential at Lightcliffe. I am really pleased that you are proud of your school, and I wish you well for the future.