

St Oswald's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121535
Local authority	York
Inspection number	380262
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Yvonne Mills-Clare

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Ingleton
Headteacher	Rupert Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare

Katharine Halifax

Jennifer Firth

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 12 teachers teaching 16 lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body, parents and carers, and school staff, including senior managers. In addition, an inspector and headteacher toured all the classrooms looking at how displays promote cross-curricular learning. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of the governing body, and heard pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read. They analysed questionnaires submitted by 72 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff. In addition, the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) was accessed; however, there were no responses to aid inspection planning.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-size primary school. The majority of pupils are White British, with an increasing number of pupils from Asian, mixed race and other White backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average overall. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. A small proportion of pupils attend from families attached to Her Majesty's Forces. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school partway through the year is higher than usual. The school has a small special unit for pupils with dyslexia. The school meets the government's current floor standards. The school has achieved the Local Authority Inclusion Certificate, Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Artsmark Gold award and Healthy School status. The pre-school provision on site is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Recently implemented strategies for improvement, however, are beginning to demonstrate a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children's skills on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage are typical for their age. Children get a sound start to their education in the Reception class. Satisfactory progress is maintained through the rest of Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is average. A successful school focus in English has taken the number of pupils on track to achieve the higher Level 3 in reading in Key Stage 1 closer to the national average. It has also closed the gap in attainment between boys' and girls' performance in this subject across the school.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Overall pupils feel safe and happy in school and their above average attendance reflects this.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Although there is some good teaching, almost two thirds of the lessons observed were no better than satisfactory, resulting in pupils' inconsistent progress across the school. Pupils respond well to staff. Skilled support assistants make a considerable contribution to the progress of those pupils who learn more slowly, those with a disability and those with special educational needs, including those within the unit for pupils with dyslexia.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Extended leadership, in which all staff and the governing body are encouraged to play an increasing role, is leading to a clear understanding of whole school improvement and the part all can play in improving pupils' overall performance. Opportunities for teachers across year groups and classes to plan together is effectively promoting teamwork and ensuring better consistency of provision.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement for all pupils by providing tasks and activities that consistently enthuse and challenge all abilities.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - using targets and teachers' marking more effectively to inform pupils how well they are doing and how to improve
 - informing pupils clearly about what they are expected to learn
 - ensuring that afternoon activities provided for pupils from the special unit, more closely match their needs and better promotes their learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school further by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels set short term targets and milestones against which to rigorously monitor planned action on pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that the most senior leaders formalise existing systems to develop a sharper strategic overview of whole-school improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils behave well and are keen and active learners when they are enthused and motivated by engaging tasks. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, representing satisfactory progress and achievement from pupils' starting points. Parents and carers feel that their children are making adequate progress.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typical for their age. Planned tasks, particularly those indoors, ensure that the majority of children are currently making satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 working comfortably within the early learning goals. After peaking in 2009, in Key Stage 1, attainment has fallen to below average, particularly in reading at Level 3 in 2011. A swift response from the school has seen a marked uplift in the numbers of pupils already on track to achieve the higher Level 3 in reading in Year 2. In lessons, inspectors found most pupils to be working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. From Reception onwards, pupils begin to acquire a bank of strategies to make progress in their reading. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is average with pupils reading and understanding a variety of simple fiction and non-fiction texts. Progress continues through Key Stage 2, with pupils consolidating their skills to research class topics and their own interests. The appropriate emphasis on reading, writing and numeracy ensures the vast majority of pupils across the school attain average standards and are increasingly able to apply these basic skills in other subjects, by the time they leave Year 6..

There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of pupils of different minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who join and leave the school at different times during the school year. From pupils' individual starting points, the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special

educational needs, including those pupils in the special unit, is similar to that of their classmates.

Quality of teaching

The majority of parents and carers feel that teaching in the school is good. Inspectors found, however, that while there is some good teaching, the overall quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory. Recently introduced opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively across year groups are encouraging greater consistency and closer teamwork among staff.

Where the quality of teaching is good well-planned activities enable teachers to use knowledge of the pupils to provide activities that are exciting and challenging and expectations are high. They focus on, and evaluate learning outcomes and adapt future tasks so that pupils' skills and knowledge are built upon well. Probing questions are targeted to pupils' abilities and effectively develop their learning. Pupils are involved in their learning through self- and peer-assessment and group and paired discussion. This was the case in a lively debate, 'conscience alley' about the merits of closing burger bars. However, these elements of good practice are not consistent throughout the school. In less successful lessons, teachers' expectations are sometimes insufficiently high and teacher assessments are not always used effectively enough to provide pupils with work that provides enough challenge. While most teachers routinely share lesson objectives with their pupils,, where teaching is satisfactory, these can at times be too complex, meaning that pupils are not always sure of what they are expected to learn. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly and praise their efforts, in subjects other than writing, very little indication is given as to how pupils might improve their work, or reach the next stage of their learning. Consequently, pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing or how to improve.

Teachers have a clear focus on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, while providing appropriate opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. This was particularly evident in a well-structured lesson offering the opportunity for pupils to reflect on the moral dilemma of 'Raising the Titanic'. Teaching assistants are often effectively deployed to support the learning of pupils with a disability, those with special educational needs and pupils in the special unit. This ensures that these groups of pupils makes similar progress to their classmates. Pupils from the unit receive specialist teaching in the morning but their afternoon activities do not always match their needs nor promote their effective learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in the school is typically satisfactory. The school has implemented new behaviour and anti-bullying policies in response to pupils', parents' and carers' concerns about the way the school deals with disruptive and bullying behaviour. These policies are effective and pupils are confident in adults' ability to respond to any problems, including all types of bullying, that they may have. The school is proactive in responding to parents' and carers' perceptions and has created a Parent Forum to improve communications with parents and carers. Inspectors found that while the school generally provides an orderly environment, some pupils', parents' and carers' concerns are justified on occasion. Observations confirm that when lessons are exciting and motivate pupils, behaviour is good and pupils engage well in their learning, but when the quality of teaching lacks pace and challenge, pupils'

attention can waver. As a result, the subsequent distraction sometimes interrupts their own and others' learning.

Pupils respond positively to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand the 'right thing to do' and older pupils happily undertake a number of responsibilities. Theme days, assemblies, involvement in the 'rights respecting schools' award and religious education lessons seek to develop a growing awareness of cultural diversity.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team has successfully extended leadership, providing an opportunity for staff to play an increasing role in whole-school improvement through opportunities to monitor, evaluate and report half termly on their subject areas. Together with pupils' progress meetings, extensive work on assessment, and a more thorough tracking system, this is beginning to contribute to an improvement in the quality of teaching and an increasingly accurate picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Many of these initiatives are recent and are not, therefore, yet sufficiently embedded to demonstrate significant improvement on pupils' achievement. However longer-term strategies for improving the attainment and achievement of all pupils are beginning to impact on any disparities in attainment between different groups and are effectively closing the gap between pupils' performance in different subjects. All these features, together with a shared commitment to improvement mean the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Self-evaluation is accurate, but improvement and action plans currently lack milestones and targets against which to measure the improvements made. Monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders are regular but often informal, limiting the formulation of an overall strategic view of whole-school improvement.

Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are involved in the school through clearly structured committees. They offer both support and challenge, are well informed through representations from staff and pupils through the year, but few outside of those employed by the school are involved in systematic, 'hands-on' monitoring of the school's performance.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure adults have a secure understanding of safeguarding pupils. Effective links with a wide range of health and other professionals ensure the well-being of those pupils who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. Leaders satisfactorily promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity. The introduction of themes and enrichment days has ensured a more creative and relevant curriculum. A choice of 'boy-friendly' topics is making a difference to the achievement of boys, especially in writing. The curriculum provides effective opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through programmes to promote their emotional well-being. Although the curriculum is not always well matched to all pupils' needs, the school's work to improve mathematics and more recently English has resulted in a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Glossary

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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, York, YO10 4LX

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you, talking to you and hearing what you had to say.

You enjoy coming to school and make the most of it. The school provides you with a satisfactory education. You make satisfactory progress and leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are average. We were pleased to see how you enjoy your reading and how much you have improved. This is because teaching is satisfactory. You told us you enjoy your lessons and feel safe in school, but you were concerned that at times other pupils do not always behave as well as they could and so on occasions interrupt your learning.

To improve your school we have asked the headteacher and teachers to make sure that:

- marking shows you how well you are doing and what to do next to improve your work
- you know what your teachers expect you to learn
- those of you who attend the special unit in the morning are able to do the work set for you in the afternoon.

In addition, we are also asking those who lead the school to:

- set targets for different subjects so they can better measure how much you are improving in those areas and use this information to form a picture as to how well the whole school is improving.

You can help by coming to school, on time, every day and keeping up your good attendance. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Mills-Clare
Lead inspector

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