

Helmsley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121364
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	358998
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Brenda Clarke

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Patterson
Headteacher	Tim Hiley
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
School address	Carlton Lane Helmsley, York North Yorkshire YO62 5HB
Telephone number	01439 770783
Fax number	01439 771963
Email address	headteacher@helmsley.n-yorks.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Inspection number	358998

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons and eight teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including pupils' books, lesson planning, safeguarding arrangements, plans for future development and the school's data. Questionnaires returned by pupils, staff, and the 53 returned from parents and carers, were scrutinised.

- The achievement of pupils, with a key focus on their attainment and progress in writing.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and whether this ensures that pupils make good or better progress.
- Pupils' understanding and appreciation of communities different to their own.
- Whether leaders at all levels are equipped and skilled to implement sustained improvement.
- Whether the good outcomes for the curriculum, pupils' personal development, care, guidance and support reported at the last inspection have been at least maintained.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average in size. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has received the Activemark, Artsmark and International Schools Award. It is an Investor in People and has gained Healthy Schools status.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the 'caring and stimulating environment'. In this supportive, secure atmosphere pupils feel extremely safe and this underpins their good behaviour. Good quality care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are valued and that the needs of the most vulnerable are effectively met. Pupils are eager to learn because the interesting and relevant curriculum provides enrichment and variety. Good partnerships with other schools and agencies enrich and extend provision. The school is highly regarded in the local community and has developed effective links with other countries. However, pupils have limited understanding of cultural diversity in Britain.

Most children enter the Nursery Year with skills broadly typical for their age. At this stage progress is satisfactory. Most pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average overall. Since the last inspection, the school has concentrated appropriately on developing pupils' reading, comprehension and skills in mathematical calculation. This has been effective, enabling pupils to make good progress in these aspects. Pupils do not achieve as well in writing where their attainment is broadly average. From the Nursery onwards, opportunities are missed for pupils to systematically develop and reinforce their skills in writing. Pupils do not consistently develop quality in their writing, so that written work of older pupils frequently lacks interesting and varied sentences.

Good quality teaching and learning overall contribute significantly to pupils' good progress. In the good and outstanding lessons observed, teachers planned relevant and interesting lessons that held pupils' attention. The management of pupils' behaviour was very strong, so that lessons were orderly and pupils worked hard. In lessons judged to be satisfactory, teachers spent too much time talking with the whole class leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete work independently. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, opportunities were sometimes missed to ensure a good balance between teacher-led and carefully planned independent learning activities to reinforce children's learning.

The school is well led and managed. Since the last inspection, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of provision and effective intervention has led to the good outcomes in the curriculum; pupils' personal development; care, guidance and support; being maintained and significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. This, together with rigorous evaluation and tracking of pupils' progress has enabled leaders to systematically raise pupils' attainment and achievement, especially in reading and mathematics. This indicates a good capacity to improve provision further.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing across the school, by:
 - planning opportunities for children to develop writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - using drama and other first-hand experiences as a stimulus for extended writing
 - developing strategies to extend pupils' use of a variety of sentence structures
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to apply writing in a range of subjects.
- Improve the consistency of teaching to that of the best, by:
 - providing a good balance of adult-focused and child-led activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children make good or better progress
 - ensuring that all lessons across the school maintain a good pace and accelerate pupils' learning
 - ensuring that lessons in Years 1 to 6 allow sufficient time for pupils to complete their work.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to interact with children whose backgrounds are different to their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils listen well to their teacher and others. Most are enthusiastic learners who concentrate and persevere well. Good relationships in lessons promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to thrive and enjoy their learning. They use and share resources responsibly. From starting points that are mostly typical for their age on entry to Year 1, pupils make good progress. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average other than in writing. The school is beginning to develop strategies to address some boys' lack of enthusiasm as writers, for example, devising topics such as the Romans and Celts, or providing more active learning through role play and drama. This new initiative has yet to impact positively on pupils' attainment in writing overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress because they receive extra carefully targeted support from effective, well-trained teaching assistants.

Pupils' good enjoyment and achievement result in good attendance and punctuality. Pupils have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles and many take part in the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, as evidenced in the school's external accreditations. However, a small minority of pupils do not make healthy choices in their playtime snacks. Pupils are very proud of and committed to their school. They willingly take on extra responsibilities, such as training as sports' leaders and enjoying contributing to community events, such as Helmsley in Bloom. Pupils develop into mature, articulate young people able to reflect deeply about their actions. This together, with overall good basic skills, equips them well for the next stage of education.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There are many strengths in the good quality teaching. These effectively promote pupils' good achievement. Teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding and was of the highest quality in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan relevant, purposeful work that engages pupils, for example, writing letters to pupils who have recently left the class. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to provide good support and challenge for pupils. Where teachers spend too much time on the whole-class introduction, the pace of learning slows and pupils lose concentration. It means also that pupils have insufficient time to reinforce and consolidate new learning. Assessment information is used well to inform next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils are taught to responsibly assess their learning, and effective marking by teachers ensures that most pupils know how to improve their work.

Pupils follow a good curriculum that is enriched by visits to interesting places, such as Eden Camp. Effective links with the secondary school broaden provision further enabling pupils to access French and creative elements, such as dance and drama. Curricular themes are very successfully planned to ensure a stimulating range of topics that meet pupils' differing interests. This ensures a good balance of subjects, but planned opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to systematically apply their writing skills across a range of subjects. Enrichment weeks such as 'The World of Work' add enjoyment and breadth to pupils' learning.

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

Responses to questionnaires from pupils, parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that children are safe in school. An inclusive ethos provides pupils with good guidance and support to ensure they work and play well together. Pupils say that any bullying is quickly resolved. Effective inter-agency work supports vulnerable pupils well. Good links with parents and carers and the secondary school ensure that pupils have a smooth transition to the next phase of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, senior leaders have securely embedded a vision for improvement through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Vigorous tracking of pupils' progress year-on-year, together with the provision of effective interventions, has ensured a consistent trend of improving attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 over the last three years. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully created a united team strongly focused on improving provision further. Staff work cohesively to ensure that new initiatives are consistently applied across the school to give continuity to pupils' learning. Statutory duties are met and although many members of the governing body are new to the role, they are becoming more proactive in monitoring and evaluating provision.

Good relationships with parents and carers benefit pupils' sense of security. The school is welcoming and has developed a range of ways for parents and carers to help with their children's learning. There are outstanding aspects to the school's partnerships with others, for example, greatly enhanced sporting opportunities or developing citizenship through participation in community initiatives, such as the Walled Garden or National Trust signage work. Good arrangements to promote equal opportunities ensure that there is no discrimination and that the progress of different groups is very carefully checked and appropriate action taken as required.

Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements and safeguarding is well embedded in the personal and social education curriculum. The headteacher and governing body regularly monitor all aspects to minimise risk and enhance provision. Community cohesion is promoted well on a local and international level, but there is more to be done to extend pupils' understanding of cultural and religious diversity.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress. Good progress is made in their social and emotional development. Mostly, children's skills in early writing, whilst broadly in line with expectations for their age, are less well developed. Children are taught to listen carefully. They behave well, develop very good levels of independence and are interested and enthusiastic learners. Children play safely and are encouraged to eat healthily.

Good links with parents and carers ensure that children feel safe and secure. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning, for example, using 'Story Sacks' to promote reading and writing. Teachers use their assessments and observations well to capture and expand on children's interests so that learning is fun. Children make independent choices as they explore the broad range of activities both indoors and outside. There are more limited opportunities for children to work with an adult on well-focused, carefully planned tasks appropriate to their age and ability. Some independent activities lack a clear learning purpose. Children enjoy learning the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge well in early reading. Opportunities to develop early writing skills for a variety of purpose are limited.

The staff team is strongly committed to improving all aspects of provision. Leadership is satisfactory. The leader is new in post and has developed an appropriate plan to develop provision further. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Effective transition arrangements have enabled children to settle quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

About 40% of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Responses were very positive. Particularly positive views were expressed about children's enjoyment of school, the extent to which children are kept safe, the quality of teaching, and how well the school prepares children for the future. The inspectors agree. A few felt that they did not receive enough information about their children's progress or how to help their children at home. Inspectors during this inspection found that the school promote these aspects satisfactorily and in a variety of ways, for example, discussing pupils' progress at consultation evenings and willingly discussing progress with parents and carers at other times on request. The school also uses a variety of ways, such as reading logs to promote communication. A small minority of parents and carers did not feel that the school took account of their suggestions and concerns and did not agree that the school was well led and managed. Inspectors during this inspection found the school to have an 'open door' and to be proactive in addressing parents' and carers' concerns. Staff questionnaires indicated 100% agreement that the school is well led and managed and that the governing body does an effective job.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Helmsley Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	60	21	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	62	20	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	45	24	45	5	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	45	24	45	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	49	25	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	45	23	43	6	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	47	25	47	3	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	53	24	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	40	27	51	4	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	40	24	45	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	38	24	45	7	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	36	22	42	5	9	4	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	57	22	42	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Helmsley Community Primary School, York, YO62 5HB

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your work and the ways you help around the school.

Yours is a good school and I understand why you enjoy it so much. Teaching is good in most lessons and you told us that your teachers make learning fun. Leaders, other staff and members of the governing body take good care of you and you told us that you enjoy the exciting activities in your curriculum and clubs. You behave well in lessons and around the school. This shows how polite and sensible you are. You tell us that you feel very safe and you learn a lot in lessons. Well done!

I have asked your headteacher, other staff and the governing body to do three things to make your school even better for you.

- To make sure that your attainment in writing is as good as that in reading.
- Make sure that you are taught consistently well.
- Provide opportunities for you to meet with children from other cultures and faiths.

We know that you will do your best to help! Thank you once again for two very enjoyable days in your school and very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Clarke

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.