

Carr Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121272
Local authority	York
Inspection number	380199
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Jones

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 of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	C Cox
Headteacher	C Ryder
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Jones
Pauline Pitman

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by six teachers or teaching assistants, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and four members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including behaviour and records of incidents of bullying, documents relating to the school's self-evaluation and safeguarding records. They also listened to pupils reading, looked at the work pupils were doing in their books and examined the tracking systems used to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the 48 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as others from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Fewer pupils than average belong to minority ethnic groups and a below average proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. The school meets the current floor standard.

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. It has strengths in the way that gaps in the attainment of different groups of pupils have been narrowed, and in improved assessment systems. It is not good, principally because the quality of teaching is too variable to secure consistently good achievement for pupils. Moreover, the curriculum, while satisfactory, does not enable pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills fully across all subject areas.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Although pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points, their progress is variable. In some classes, pupils make good progress while in others, progress is satisfactory. This means that the quality of learning and the progress pupils make is uneven during their time in the school.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. While there are examples of good and outstanding practice, too much teaching is no better than satisfactory. In some classes, pupils of different abilities are not challenged sufficiently or tasks are mundane and repetitive. Furthermore, the school has not capitalised on sharing the examples of good practice evident in the school.
- Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils feel generally safe from threats of bullying or harassment. In lessons, behaviour is best when pupils are engaged and challenged fully. Where tasks are repetitive and do not challenge or motivate, pupils can become restless and their learning slows.
- Leaders and managers have generally identified the correct areas for improvement. The achievement of different groups of pupils is monitored carefully and out-of-class support targets any underachievement. Leadership and management of teaching and the management of teachers' performance are satisfactory but have been less successful in ensuring the overall quality of teaching rises above satisfactory.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better by:
 - giving pupils sufficient opportunities to work independently by solving problems collaboratively and working in groups
 - increasing the challenge for higher-attaining pupils
 - ensuring the learning needs of all abilities is better met in the classroom rather than relying on support outside the classroom in small groups or on a one-to-one basis
 - increasing the opportunities for staff to share their expertise.
- Enhance the curriculum so that:
 - pupils are given increased opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - information and communication technology is used effectively in all classes to enhance learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is in line with the national average, having made satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 3. Pupils' attainment in reading in the 2011 national tests was below that of mathematics and writing. However, observations of pupils' reading during the inspection indicate that pupils are now making better progress with linking letters to their corresponding sounds. This is because there has been focused staff training on phonics (the sounds that letters make) and this has had a positive effect on helping lower-attaining readers to make increased progress. Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 6.

In lessons, while pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, it is variable. This is because teaching does not always challenge the full range of pupils' abilities. Higher-attaining pupils are sometimes left waiting for teachers to explain work when they are quite capable of moving on and tackling more challenging tasks. Sometimes, they finish the work quickly and are left waiting for others to catch up. When this happens their progress slows. In other classes, however, the teacher skilfully moves pupils on with their learning and provides additional 'challenges' that excite and motivate those of higher ability. Some parents and carers make comments about the lack of challenge for pupils. Pupils, too, say that they sometimes find work too easy; views which are endorsed by the inspection team.

In response to girls not making as much progress as boys in mathematics, the school has devised a 'ladies who lunch' club to help girls develop their mathematical skills more rapidly. Inspection evidence from lessons and other activities indicates that this strategy is helping to close the attainment gap between the genders in mathematics successfully.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress, although the support they receive for learning is heavily reliant on withdrawal from the classroom into small group or individual support. This means that these pupils do not benefit fully from learning alongside and interacting with all their peers.

Quality of teaching

Where teaching is most effective, pupils of all abilities receive work that precisely meets their needs. Teachers skilfully intervene at key points in the lesson to explain succinctly any common misconceptions, and move learning on. Assessment information ensures pupils receive good feedback on their learning. In one lesson on subordinate clauses, the teacher gathered three pupils together who had made similar errors and helped them to understand precisely what they needed to do to improve. In the best lessons, pupils are involved fully in their learning with teacher explanations kept to a minimum. In a history lesson, pupils discussed images of the Tudors using their skills of deduction to annotate the images or record their voices on mini-recorders as they preferred; the teacher skilfully questioning pupils to ensure learning was of a high quality. In the best lessons, such highly collaborative activities develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.

When teaching is less effective, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently or solve problems collaboratively. Teachers give over-long explanations that lack precision and sometimes confuse pupils. Tasks are sometimes worksheet based, being repetitive and mundane, which fails to capture pupils' enthusiasm or spark their interest.

The planned curriculum is undergoing improvements to better enable pupils to make connections between different subjects. However, the opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are less well developed. Information and communication technology is used very effectively in some classes, such as the excellent award-winning film making in Year 6. In other classes, ICT is not used as well to enhance learning.

The school has worked effectively to ensure the quality of marking gives pupils good advice on how to improve their work. In all classes, teachers highlight what is good in green and what needs to be improved in pink. Pupils say they understand this system well, adding that it helps them understand what they need to do to improve. Some, but not all teachers, have taken this to the next logical step and ensured there is time put aside in each lesson for pupils to comment and reflect on teachers' highlighted marking. Parents' and carers' views on the quality of teaching echo those of the inspection team. Some say they are satisfied but others make comments about the lack of challenge.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In response to the concerns of a small minority of parents and carers, inspectors gave particular focus to pupils' behaviour in lessons. While behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, it does vary depending on how well teachers enthuse and motivate pupils. Where pupils are involved fully in learning, they respond with good and sometimes outstanding behaviour. They concentrate well, help each other to solve problems and remain completely on-task for long periods of time without any necessary correction from the teacher. Where lessons rely on over-long explanations by teachers, rather than pupils being actively involved in their own learning, pupils become restless or passive and simply stop listening. When this happens, they have to be corrected by the teacher for losing concentration.

Records of bullying indicate that it is rare. Pupils say that when it does occur, it is dealt with efficiently and quickly by staff. Pupils say trained peer mediators are always available should pupils need someone to talk to. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including that associated with the internet and mobile devices.

At lunchtimes and around the school, pupils' behaviour is best when they are given play equipment to use and when adults facilitate play. In one playground, pupils displayed boisterous behaviour while in the other, pupils played team games sensibly and safely. The inspection team pointed this out to school leaders who, in response, ensured both playgrounds had sufficient support and equipment for play. This resulted in a noticeable improvement in behaviour.

Leadership and management

The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Members of the governing body are a frequent presence in the school, ensuring they evaluate the school's performance at first-hand. The progress of different groups of pupils is monitored well and teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils. Some classroom-based approaches have been consistently well applied, such as high-quality marking. The school has improved the way assessment information is used in Year 3 to ensure accurate information is available against which to measure pupils' progress. This enables the school to target areas of underperformance with increased precision. As a result, attainment in writing and mathematics rose between 2010 and 2011. The school, therefore, is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good because not enough has been done to improve the overall quality of teaching to be consistently good or better. Increasingly, the nurturing of staff skills through more focused professional development is helping to improve teaching. However, while there is good and outstanding practice in the school, this is not always shared effectively enough to ensure the quality of teaching is good.

The school has been successful in ensuring those pupils who fall behind or have additional learning needs receive support; consequently, their attainment is rising. However, much of this support takes place outside the classroom, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, which is not always allowing these pupils to learn alongside their peers.

The curriculum is satisfactory and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to an appropriate level. There are good links with a school which is more culturally diverse than Carr Junior and there are emerging links with a school in Malaysia. These links are helping pupils to understand cultures and religions different to their own. While ICT is used effectively by some teachers, there is insufficient training for others to know how they can use it effectively to enhance learning. The support provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs does not always fully meet their needs.

Discrimination is tackled decisively whenever and wherever it exists and the school is narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of pupils. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Safeguarding meets all current statutory requirements.

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.



21 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carr Junior School, York, YO26 5QA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and that your teachers and peer mediators help you to feel safe and secure. You have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including how to stay safe on the internet. We were impressed by the film making work in Year 6 and enjoyed looking at the pictures of you attending the 'Yoscars' ceremony when your films were shown. We found that teaching in your school is satisfactory overall although there are examples of good practice as well.

To improve your school, I have asked your headteacher and staff to do a number of things. First, to improve teaching by making sure it is always good or better. This can be done by teachers sharing tips and visiting each other's classrooms, by making sure that you are stretched fully in lessons and ensuring that you are involved in learning rather than listening to long instructions. Second, I have asked that you develop your numeracy and literacy skills in all subjects, not only in mathematics and English lessons. Third, I have asked that you are given plenty of opportunities to use computers in all your classes. Lastly, that those of you who need extra support with your work receive it more often in your class rather than in small groups or on your own with an adult.

You can help by informing your teacher if you are finding work too easy and by continuing to play sensibly and safely outside.

Yours sincerely

Robert Jones
Lead inspector

