

Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Staxton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121534
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	363940
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Scott

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	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Archer
Headteacher	Mrs Trina Price
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning and made visits to 10 part-lessons, seeing all five teachers, including several accompanied by the headteacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, a member of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans and school policies. They analysed questionnaires from 57 pupils, nine staff and 28 parents and carers. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the school's actions to raise attainment at Key Stage 2 in all subjects and to eliminate any significant variations between them.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment data to ensure that all pupils make equal progress, including the more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of actions to overcome weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and to confirm that the school has a good or better capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Hertford Vale Church of England Primary School is much-smaller-in-size than most primary schools. The largest group of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are from minority-ethnic groups is well-below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. There are more girls than boys. A well below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils that join the school at times other than the usual starting points is much higher than that found nationally. The school runs its own breakfast club and hosts a privately run children's play group on the school site. The school has gained the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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

Hertford Vale is a happy school where pupils behave extremely well, and mature into polite, thoughtful, and considerate young people. It provides a good standard of education and is improving steadily under the positive leadership of the headteacher. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks, they are hardworking and respond very positively to teachers' requests. The school instils in its pupils a clear sense of Christian values, self-belief and, above all, a joy of learning; as one of a group of pupils commented, 'We get to do a lot of fun things because all the teachers really care about you.'

The school's motto 'We are all one team' is seen in all of its work and supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils feel safe and secure and have a well-developed understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Partnership with parents and carers, and other agencies is good and underpins and supports the school's excellent levels of care, guidance and support.

Pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. Achievement is good because staff have very high expectations of pupils and work effectively to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of pupils. This success indicates how effectively the school welcomes and supports pupils who start school at different times during the year.

A good curriculum and effective teaching contribute to pupils' good progress. Teachers make learning enjoyable by including a variety of approaches and imaginative resources. The quality of questioning in lessons, although well considered, does not always probe pupils' understanding of issues deeply enough. This, in turn, prevents pupils making consistently fast progress, particularly in the case of the more able. Assessment is good and work is set at the correct level but teachers do not always provide specific targets to help pupils improve. Good partnerships with the local community, particularly with its partner secondary school and sports service providers, extend the richness of pupils' experiences.

Senior staff have been successful in driving up pupils' academic performance and sustaining effective practice in supporting their personal development. Currently, the balance of responsibilities is uneven and there is insufficient delegation of roles to ensure that the school's priorities receive as much attention as possible. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is accurate and concerted action given to findings by all staff. As a result, since the last inspection, the school has raised attainment, improved teaching and learning, and has broadened the curriculum. These actions demonstrate good capacity to make further improvements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to accelerate progress in lessons and raise attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by:
 - using more effective questioning to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially for the more-able pupils
 - reviewing targets more systematically and regularly with pupils so they clearly understand how to improve.
- Sharpen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - delegating responsibilities more evenly and ensuring roles are clarified and focused on the school's priorities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is good. This was very evident in a mixed Year 4 and 5 class, where pupils thoroughly enjoyed their literacy lesson when they acted as a travel agent and planned an itinerary for a trip to Scarborough that would appeal to younger children. Pupils were well motivated and skilled at suggesting fun activities and interesting places of interest to visit. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils working in small teams demonstrated excellent problem-solving skills in their numeracy lesson, where they used an algebraic formula to work out any triangle number within a seven point 'Mystic Rose'.

Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Despite this success, leaders are anything but complacent. National test results suggested girls were doing better than boys in reading and writing and this gap has been closed by helping boys to improve their analysis of their writing skills. Overall, from average starting points on entry to Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and their achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is as a result of good teaching, highly effective guidance and one-to-one support.

Pupils' contribution to their own and other communities is well developed. They cheerfully take on a range of roles in school. For example, the school council is an important part of school life and the elected representatives work well as a team and reflect maturely on how they can bring about improvements, for example, the purchase of playground equipment. Pupils make a good contribution to their local community, for example, by fund-raising for the Christmas Shoe Box appeal with the local church. They contribute more widely through partnerships with charities overseas in Eastern Europe and Japan.

Pupils have developed a strong sense of fairness which has improved their self-confidence and self-esteem and, as a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their school careers. The school has worked effectively with pupils, parents and carers in raising pupils' attendance, which has improved markedly over the past year and is above average. The number of persistent absentees has reduced significantly. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and regularly participate in many sporting and physical pursuits.

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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	1
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?

Teaching is good as a result of rigorous monitoring and support. Classrooms are delightful, both indoors and out, with imaginative activities and attractive displays to capture and respond to pupils' interests and enthusiasm. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Pupils become effective and confident communicators but in a few lessons progress in this area is restricted by the length of time the teacher talks in relation to the opportunities that the pupils have to speak and explain their ideas. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong so explanations are well structured and confident. Pupils who find learning difficult or who have particular learning barriers are supported well because staff focus sharply on their needs. However, marking and target-setting do not always 'signpost' clearly how pupils can improve their work, and questions are not always sufficiently probing, particularly for the more-able pupils.

The creative curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils well, which was beautifully summarised by one pupil, 'We kind of do things differently here.' Pupils develop their capacity to be independent learners well. Their good grounding in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is complemented by the wealth of opportunities within the curriculum to develop their creative and problem-solving capabilities. The curriculum is enriched by productions, guest speakers, themed weeks, such as 'Evacuation Day', and clubs ranging from gardening to bikeability. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and children delight in

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being able to study French for the first time. These, together with visits and residential trips for pupils in Years 4 to 6, provide excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden their social, sporting and scholastic skills.

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support. Pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable benefit greatly from the excellent work the school carries out with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping pupils overcome difficult histories and challenging episodes in their lives. Through the work associated with the national awards, the inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to play a full part in school life and is increasingly successful at engaging hard-to-reach families. As one pupil commented, 'Our school is a small nice community – we fit in well together although we are all very different.' The school's pioneering work in developing the 'Child's Voice' has enabled teachers and children to have a more accurate view of their opinions and progress.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's enthusiasm and personal warmth have created a welcoming and harmonious ethos which permeates the school and beyond. Her care and concern for all was evident throughout the inspection. As a result morale is high and team work is a real strength. All work well together and know the strengths of the school and share the vision to improve and sustain achievement for all pupils. This has created a real sense of purpose and all support each other extremely well. Nevertheless, currently the spread and balance of leadership roles is uneven with insufficient delegation of responsibilities, which has sometimes led to only partial coverage of school priorities.

Monitoring of teaching is effective and senior leaders provide and are afforded stimulating professional development. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching as all staff embrace new assessment procedures and creative teaching strategies. Weaker teaching has been tackled well and there is a clear ambition to make sure that all lessons are good or better and that pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. Leaders have formed a particularly successful partnership with the local authority and School Improvement Partner and have received highly effective support in providing accurate and reliable evaluations of its performance.

The school ensures that every pupil has an equal chance to learn. They rigorously tackle any discrimination, as can be seen in the gap between the attainment of boys and girls being closed. The effective governing body is fully supportive of the school's aims.

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Members of the governing body know the school well and have an accurate view of its performance. They challenge the school and hold it to account and are securing more rapid improvement in the quality of learning. Members of the governing body ensure good procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet all government guidelines and include a carefully planned approach to child protection and managing the safety of pupils, which contributes to their mature understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school has evaluated its contribution to community cohesion, which is good. This has been achieved by developing and promoting a detailed understanding of its own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. For example, the school has developed a partnership with a school in France and Kenya, but acknowledges that it needs to help pupils gain a deeper appreciation of what it means to be a citizen in the United Kingdom.

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	2
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 get off to a good start in the Reception class. As a result of the close partnership with the on-site privately funded playgroup, children settle in quickly and are keen and happy to learn. Children play together and are well behaved as a result of high expectations. They enjoy learning in this busy environment. Overall, children start school with a range of skills that are below those expected for their age. By the end of Reception, they attain levels that are expected for their age and make good progress. They make most gains in their language, physical and creative development and reading because of the greater focus on linking letters and sounds and the use of role play. This was demonstrated to great effect when the children, following their work using glove puppets to stimulate language development, dressed-up in costumes depicting characters from

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Cinderella. Children thoroughly enjoyed this activity and were able to recall apt vocabulary to describe this famous fairy story.

Children enjoy a range of stimulating activities, indoors and out, carefully chosen to meet their needs and enthusiasm. They select and choose their own learning activities and respond well to encouragement and praise to explore and widen their choices. Teaching is good with stimulating activities moving at a good pace in a friendly and safe atmosphere. Teachers and helpers are perceptive and note down significant moments of each child's progress in their 'Learning Journey' diaries, including those made by parents and carers, in order to inform 'next steps'. These records are used increasingly well to ensure that each child's learning is moving forward. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed effectively. High levels of care and welfare are provided for the children to ensure their well-being. Support for children whose circumstances have made them vulnerable is of a good standard. Partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies are strong so that specialist help is sought and provided when needed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires, which is lower than usual for primary schools. Almost all respondents were entirely positive about Hertford Vale and felt that it keeps their children safe and enables them to live a healthy life style and to enjoy school. Inspectors also examined the school's own surveys and these too were shown to be positive and highly complimentary. Inspectors endorse these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Staxton 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	64	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	64	9	32	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	57	11	39	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	64	8	29	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	68	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	57	10	36	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	43	15	54	1	4	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)	16	57	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	57	11	39	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	39	11	39	3	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	43	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	46	13	46	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	64	9	32	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



20 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Staxton, Scarborough, YO12 4SS

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and play. We very much valued the discussions we had with you and were particularly impressed with how your attendance has improved markedly over the past year.

You go to a good school. Inspectors were particularly pleased to see the way you get along and treat each other with respect. You, and your parents and carers, told us that Hertford Vale is a caring and happy place where you feel very safe.

Your headteacher and teachers are determined to help you succeed and give you the best possible education. We have asked them to:

- plan work that will challenge and engage you in all lessons, showing you ways to learn by yourselves, particularly the more able amongst you
- give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best
- ensure that leadership responsibilities are spread more evenly to ensure that full attention is given to all of the school's priorities.

You too can play your part in improving the school by working hard to achieve your targets and by following your teachers' advice when your work is marked. Once again, it was very good to meet you all. We wish you and the school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead inspector

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