

High Bentham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121380
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380226
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Pat Kime HMI

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	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Taylor
Headteacher	Catherine Boocock
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed five lessons and made short visits to a further six lessons. They saw all the teachers at work. They held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' attainment and progress, the planning for improvement and curricular plans. The inspectors also took account of responses to the inspection questionnaires that were received from pupils and staff and from 61 parents and carers.

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

- How safe are pupils and how good is their behaviour?
- How successful has the school been in raising pupils' attainment and reducing underachievement?
- How effective has the school been in improving the quality of teaching?
- To what extent has the school developed the capacity to drive its own improvement?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school in England. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little below the national average. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average for the size of school and includes an increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the part-time Nursery and in a class for Reception children and Year 1 pupils. All the other classes cater for two year groups. From September 2012, the school will take Year 6 pupils.

Two teachers have left since the previous inspection when the school was given a notice to improve. In September 2011, a teacher returned from a secondment and a newly-qualified teacher was appointed. The school holds several awards including the International School award, the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Sing Up Gold award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Since the inspection in 2010, some key areas of the school's work have improved and progress has been made on all the key issues. Consequently, the school now provides a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of teaching is good and staff have a much clearer picture of how well pupils are doing. Pupils' progress in their learning has improved and is now satisfactory overall. Few pupils are underachieving. Attainment has risen and is now broadly average. Pupils' attendance has improved a lot and is now above average. Children continue to do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' personal development is at least satisfactory in all aspects. Their adoption of healthy lifestyles is good and they are well-involved in the life of the local community. Behaviour is good in lessons but several pupils say that they have a degree of concern about safety during the lunchtime break. This is because they believe a few pupils are too boisterous with the newly acquired additional play equipment.

There are good features in the curriculum and much is covered through well-integrated units of work that appeal to pupils and link several subjects. However, while the teachers provide suitable work for their classes, whole-school curricular planning is limited as the recent emphasis has been on raising achievement in English and mathematics.

The school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. This is evident from:

- the improvement seen in the last year
- the determination and enthusiasm of staff
- the recently improved capacity of the governing body to support and challenge the school.

However, though senior staff have responded to the issues from the last inspection, the approach has generally been reactive. There is a sound understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses but plans for further improvement lack a sharp focus on longer-term priorities.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Ensure that all pupils play sensibly during lunchtime breaks so that none have any anxiety about their safety by:
 - providing further training for midday supervisors to develop their confidence, particularly in the management of pupils' behaviour and the active promotion of appropriate play
 - ensuring that all pupils understand, and keep to, the boundaries for their behaviour outside.
- Strengthen the leadership of the school so there is a clear vision for further improvement backed by clearly focused plans to achieve it.
- Tighten the planning of the curriculum at whole-school level to assure year-on-year progression in all aspects of pupils' learning across subjects and to provide for Year 6 pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment has risen as a result of better teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1. Last year's Year 2 pupils reached broadly average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's tracking shows that, with very few exceptions, a healthy proportion of pupils are achieving the standard expected for their age and more capable pupils are working at a higher level. This attainment represents improvement in all year groups. There are few instances of underachievement. Well-judged support enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make equally good progress, given their starting points, as their classmates.

In the lessons observed, pupils worked well. They enjoyed their learning and were keen to succeed. The older pupils showed a good degree of independence in their learning. For instance, when they were marshalling arguments for letters to persuade the relevant authorities to introduce road safety measures, they referred, without prompting, to graphs they had made of traffic speeds.

Pupils' personal development has strengths. They adopt healthy lifestyles, not least because they are aware of national guidance for diet and exercise. They know why some foods are not good for the heart, if eaten in excess. They participate in events organised in the local community and they respond positively to consultations about school life. School councillors take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties, are courteous and behave well in lessons. Some, however, do not recognise the boundaries of acceptable play at lunchtimes and this causes anxiety for some other pupils.

Pupils' attendance has improved considerably and is now above average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. All the parents and carers who responded to the

inspection questionnaire said their children enjoy school, and this was confirmed by the large majority of pupil questionnaires.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved and is now good. In part this is due to staff changes and reallocation of teachers to classes so they are working to their strengths. Staff have also benefited from in-house work and support from the local authority to improve teaching quality. The improvement is recent so has yet to lead to sustained improvement in pupils' achievement, although the current picture of attainment and progress across the school is promising.

Typically, teachers have positive relationships with pupils and maintain a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. They plan interesting work that takes appropriate account of pupils' varied levels of attainment in mixed-age classes. Pupils' work is marked helpfully so they know what to do to improve. Displays in classrooms provide good support for learning.

The most effective lessons were characterised by: high expectations of what pupils could achieve; very effective on-going assessment of pupils' learning; skilful questioning, adjusted for pupils' different abilities; good use of well-briefed teaching assistants; and concluding sessions that successfully consolidated new learning and took the brighter pupils on further.

Some lessons, though good overall, were marred somewhat by a slower pace, at times, or more teacher talk than was necessary so pupils did not get down to work as soon as they might have.

Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress has improved so teachers and the school's leaders have a much clearer picture of how well pupils are doing. The

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

information gleaned is used effectively to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and to underpin decisions about interventions to raise achievement.

The school's curriculum covers all the required subjects and gives appropriate attention to promoting pupils' personal development and teaching them how to keep safe. It is enriched with opportunities for making music, performing and sports, and by a range of visits and visitors. Tailored programmes of work are provided for pupils with particular learning needs. Teachers plan work that meets the learning needs of their pupils and is often linked to topics that enthuse pupils. For example, pupils used their historical knowledge about the Tudors to inform art work in a range of media. Planning of the curriculum at whole-school level is less developed. However, time is already set aside to tackle this and to develop planning that encompasses provision for Year 6 pupils.

Sound pastoral care, guidance and support are evident. For example, the school mobilises effective support from external agencies and specialist staff from the local authority for pupils with particular needs and their families. Good attention is paid to smoothing pupils' transition to the next stage of schooling.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The improvement in the school shows that staff's commitment and enthusiasm has been harnessed. They are keen for the school to do well by its pupils and make a strong contribution as subject leaders. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching has been strengthened and staff receive helpful feedback on their work. Some planning for the school's future development is in place but it lacks a sharp focus on key priorities. There is an acknowledgment that the leadership has tended to be reactive and now is the time to move to a more proactive approach.

Members of the governing body have developed a good knowledge of the school. They make every effort to consult all the school's stakeholders. They recognise that the governing body can do more to support and challenge the school and are now well-placed to do so. They have benefited from training and recent appointees bring strong relevant skills to their work.

The support provided for pupils with any difficulties and the provision for pupils to learn about people from different traditions from them, in Britain and further afield, ensure that the promotion of equal opportunity and of community cohesion are satisfactory.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. The school makes proper checks on all adults who are in contact with pupils. Staff are

suitably trained in first aid and child protection. The policies for child protection and health and safety are sound. However, review dates for some policies have been allowed to slip. Steps have been taken to ensure that pupils always play sensibly at breaks. For example, training has begun for midday supervisors and additional play equipment has been purchased very recently. Nonetheless, more needs to be done on this front.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Nursery their attainment is a bit lower than expected for their age. They settle to school life quickly. They benefit from consistently good teaching in Nursery and Reception and they enjoy a rich range of learning activities in a calm, supportive atmosphere. The needs of Reception children are met well in the mixed-age class. As a result of this good provision, children make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception Year, their attainment has caught up to the national average and they are well-placed to benefit from the improved provision in Key Stage 1. Staff in this key stage are knowledgeable about the needs of young children and how they learn best. They are skilled at helping children to learn through play and at developing their social skills and their language and communication skills in informal situations.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The table below shows that, on most counts, the large majority of parents and carers have a positive view of the school. However, a small minority has concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and the leadership and management, including the account taken of their suggestions and concerns. The inspectors found that:

- though behaviour is usually good in lessons, there are times when some pupils' behaviour on the playground should be better
- leadership needs to become more proactive.

These matters have been raised elsewhere in this report as areas that the school needs to tackle in order to improve further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Bentham 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 inspector received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	56	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	48	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	30	38	62	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	26	38	62	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	33	34	56	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	26	38	62	4	7	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	33	36	59	4	7	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)	15	25	33	54	10	16	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	33	34	56	6	10	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	8	32	52	16	26	7	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	18	36	59	11	18	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	8	13	34	56	16	26	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	31	36	59	6	10	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Bentham Community Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 7JU

You may remember that Mrs Murphy and I inspected your school recently. I am writing to tell you what we found out during the inspection. First of all, thank you for making us welcome and talking to us in classes, around the school and in meetings. These conversations with you helped us to reach our judgements.

The school has improved since it was inspected in September 2010 and it now gives you a satisfactory education. Attainment in English and mathematics has risen and, all through school, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age, with some doing better than that. Teaching is now good in all the classes and I was pleased to discover how much you enjoy learning. So you are well set to do even better in future. Nursery and Reception are still good and children make good progress in these years.

We were pleased to see how much you know about healthy living and how much you are involved in the local community. Your behaviour in lessons is good. However, some of you are bothered about how some pupils play at the lunchtime break. The staff already knew this and have done some things to improve matters but we have asked them to do more so that all pupils know what is acceptable and the lunchtime supervisors can help everyone to play safely and happily together.

The school will want to improve even more. I am sure that you will have some good ideas about how it can do so and I expect you will be able to make your suggestions through the school council. Mrs Boocock and I talked about what needs to be done next to make High Bentham an even better school. As well as the points already mentioned, we agreed on the following things:

- make sure the school is led well so that everyone knows what the priorities are for the future and there is a clear plan to realise them
- improve the planning of work in all subjects so that, as well as each teacher planning, there is a whole-school plan to make sure that you all make good progress and that the school is ready for when it has Year 6 pupils.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector

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