

Dringhouses Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121276
Local authority	York
Inspection number	380201
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2011
Reporting inspector	James Kilner 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Hanby
Headteacher	Julia Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons taught by 10 teachers as well as conducting shorter observations in various classes. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, the Chair and the vice-chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 95 parents and carers, 96 pupils and 16 staff.

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

- The rates of progress for all, particularly higher ability pupils to ascertain if all achieve as well as they could.
- The effectiveness of arrangements in the mixed key stage classes in meeting pupils' needs.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in securing 'good and outstanding teaching' throughout the school.
- The impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about the school

Dringhouses is a larger than average-sized primary school with an increasing proportion of pupils attending from outside the catchment area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few from the other groups represented speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is low. Pupil mobility has increased over recent years and is now higher than average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Quality Mark 4, Global Schools Award (level 2) and 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

Dringhouses Primary is a good school. A number of areas are outstanding and pupils' attendance has been consistently high for a number of years. The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent ensuring children thrive in a caring, stimulating environment and make accelerated progress. Of particular note is the Reception class' open session on Saturday mornings enabling parents and carers who have work commitments during the week to attend and discuss their children's progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their adoption of healthy lifestyles are exemplary. Pupils have an excellent understanding as to what constitutes healthy lifestyles because they are so actively involved in the decisions to promote healthy eating and emotional well-being.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and, together with an effective and dedicated leadership team, has secured significant improvements since the last inspection. She has established international links, most recently in Africa, and pupils are excited about the prospect of discovering more about their new friends in Namibia. A planned link to a school with a wider mix of cultures and beliefs in a neighbouring local authority is now back on track and will commence in the spring term. Partnerships with a large number of organisations and groups such as theatres, museums and universities provide a wealth of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning and well-being. The school includes all in its community regardless of their needs and is particularly skilled in the inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The progress of all pupils is tracked accurately and appropriate action taken should any underperformance be detected. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers are confident and accurate in their use of assessment, ensuring that work is matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils make good progress, achieve well and levels of attainment, while broadly average, show a rising trend of improvement. This trend is not yet fully embedded across the school as, in some areas, teachers' planning requires a stronger focus on precisely what pupils must do to achieve the next level in their learning. A wide variety of stimulating curriculum activities ensures pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and try hard to achieve well. A dedicated group of parents and carers work as volunteers in the school providing support in a range of areas from assisting in classrooms to maintaining and overseeing the garden and wildlife areas. While relationships with parents and carers are good, a small minority would like clearer information on

current initiatives and would appreciate the school seeking their views more regularly. For example, a recent anti-bullying initiative has been successful in raising pupils' awareness of how to tackle problems should they arise. However, a very small minority of parents and carers would welcome more details on the strategies employed in combating bullying.

As a result of strategic deployment of governors to appropriate roles on committees, the governing body effectively guides school leaders in all aspects of their work. Governors are knowledgeable about all key elements of the school's work and are particularly astute in understanding nationally produced data relating to the performance of pupils. While they have a secure understanding of the needs of the community, they are not regularly canvassing parents' and carers' views of the school. As the school moves forward with new initiatives and developments, it recognises the importance of seeking these views more systematically. As a result of good outcomes, strong and embedded leadership, management and governance, the school demonstrates good value for money and has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment further by ensuring that teachers more regularly make use of the high-quality information about pupils' progress to plan activities which focus more directly on pupils' precise learning needs.
- Increase the governing body's engagement with parents and carers to ensure it is well informed about users' views of the school and that parents and carers are informed of all actions and decisions taken as a result of the feedback.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills which are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and problem solving. Excellent provision through this key stage ensures that children make outstanding progress in all their areas of learning. Progress through Key Stage 1 is good and almost all pupils achieve national expectations, with indications that more are now reaching the higher Level 3. Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 where pupils of all abilities achieve well. As a result of good quality additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, they make the same rates of progress as their peers. While attainment is now broadly average, there is a distinct rising trend of improvement, especially in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are increasingly adept at dealing with more challenging mathematical concepts and are able to use and apply their knowledge with confidence and accuracy. Pupils respond well to opportunities for practical activities and collaborate effectively. For example, a mathematics lesson for the mixed Year 1 and Reception Year was brought to life through the link to their pirates' topic. The teacher, in role as a pirate counting out gold coins, harnessed the enthusiasm of the pupils ensuring that the majority achieved the target of counting on, and counting back, from 1 to 50.

Pupils show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe both around school and when using the internet and mobile phones. An array of extra-curricular activities is popular and, together with a strong awareness of healthy eating, ensures pupils have an exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy. Tending and harvesting the crops and eggs from the school's market garden provide pupils with real-life experiences of the world of work and business. Opportunities to take on roles as members of the school council, assembly or playground monitors or as members of the eco-council are undertaken conscientiously and with great pride. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Not only do they show a heightened insight when considering moral dilemmas but they thrive in sharing their many talents for the enjoyment and benefit of others in the community. A recent innovation for pupils to consider the rights and responsibilities of children through the 'Rights Respecting Schools' initiative ensures they are able to speak knowledgeably and passionately about the challenges and opportunities facing children throughout the world. A group of pupils recently attended an international conference in Prague where they spoke of their work on school travel plans. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and the good behaviour of the vast majority contributes much to their successful learning experiences.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	3
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	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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:	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is predominantly good throughout the school with examples of outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work collaboratively in the mixed-age and mixed key stage classes to provide a consistent, calm and stimulating learning environment. Teachers' use of assessment is effective, often leading to adaptations to lessons over the course of the week in order to better meet the needs of their pupils. In general, the marking of pupils' work is effective and assists them in knowing exactly where they are in their learning and how to improve further. Lesson planning caters for pupils of all abilities in the class. However, there is not yet a consistent use of the high-quality information on pupils' achievements to target precise learning needs in order to raise attainment further. Teaching assistants are deployed to great effect in ensuring good

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

progress for pupils in their care. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson a teaching assistant working with a high-ability group successfully challenged pupils to design a classroom workspace taking into account the average size of a Year 6 pupil.

The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to explore their learning through many exciting opportunities afforded by the city's museums, art galleries, theatres and university. The curriculum is also enhanced by the school's extensive international links so that pupils have a full understanding of current issues surrounding children in the modern world. Provision across the curriculum for literacy and numeracy is effective and events such as 'maths week' and 'my money week' further consolidate this practice. A consistent approach to the school's social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) curriculum and the 'Rights Respecting Schools' initiative ensures pupils increasingly take responsibility for their own actions and consider the effect these have on the feelings of others. Pupils whose circumstances may potentially make them vulnerable are assisted greatly through the effective use of nurture groups where they can socialise and learn with their peers in less formal settings. The school effectively coordinates the services of the local authority to ensure pupils' academic and pastoral needs are fully met.

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?

The headteacher communicates her vision for the school passionately so that all are committed to achieving the aim for pupils to 'enjoy excellent education.' Leadership and management of the school are effectively distributed among the highly committed and dedicated leadership team. Self-evaluation is rigorous, systematic and accurate, leading to carefully devised school improvement plans. All leaders in school have the opportunity, where identified, to work on specific initiatives, disseminating their findings to the rest of the school. For example, recent improvements to pupils' achievement in writing across Key Stage 2 and behaviour management strategies have been led by these 'implementation groups'. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively and teachers are held to good account for the progress and achievement of pupils in their care. An efficient assessment tracking system is scrutinised each half term by senior leaders so that any emerging gaps in pupils' progress are spotted early. Governance is good, providing particularly effective challenge as well as support to the school. Governors' varying skills and experiences are galvanised well to ensure that the school operates successfully and efficiently. The school promotes safeguarding well and effective policies and procedures are followed meticulously. National and local links ensure strong community cohesion and the school is poised to renew its links with a more diverse community in a neighbouring authority. The school's commitment to the 'Rights Respecting Schools' charter ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted well.

These are the grades for the 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 start in the Reception class with levels of skills which are below those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress as a result of excellent teaching which fully engages children's imagination and lights the spirit of adventure in their learning. Highly effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures outstanding levels of care and a consistent approach to daily routines, record keeping and links with parents and carers across both classes. Staff ensure that planning for the majority of learning emanates from the children's own interests, often from spontaneous activities devised by the children themselves. For example, when designing and building a pirate ship from cardboard boxes the children displayed high levels of interest, collaboration and problem-solving skills. Planning and assessment systems are accurate, effective and kept up to date using photographic and video evidence to demonstrate children's outstanding progress. Parents and carers fully appreciate opportunities to view this evidence with their children in order to acknowledge and celebrate each individual's success. Staff have created a stimulating and exciting outdoor learning area which is enhanced through use of the school's wildlife and garden area. Welfare and safety requirements are fully met allowing children to explore boundaries in a safe and secure learning environment. For example, a child hammering nails into a log had a genuine understanding of how be careful with the tools in order to keep safe. The teaching of phonics is embedded in daily practice ensuring that children make outstanding progress in acquiring and developing their reading skills. Adults are trained successfully in Early Years practice and deployed efficiently ensuring all contribute effectively to the team's strong sense of purpose and commitment to excellence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers support the work of the school and many took the opportunity to praise the work of individual teachers and the headteacher. Some concerns were raised about the behaviour of a very small minority of pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school and found it to be good and well managed by all adults. The school recognises the importance of parents and carers being able to discuss any concerns they have regarding behaviour, and leaders are open to following up any such situations as they arise. Inspectors agree with the view that a more systematic approach to seeking the views of parents and carers is required, particularly as new initiatives such as anti-bullying and the new curriculum are put into place. Specific responses from a few parents and carers were raised in confidence with the headteacher. Inspectors are satisfied that these matters are to be dealt with by the governing body of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dringhouses 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 307 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	61	35	37	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	48	38	40	6	6	4	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	34	54	57	7	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	40	50	53	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	47	47	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	43	48	51	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	37	52	55	4	4	1	1
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)	35	37	43	45	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	33	59	62	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	29	49	52	4	4	11	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	25	47	49	10	11	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	36	38	46	48	5	5	6	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	46	44	46	4	4	1	1

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.



25 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dringhouses Primary School, York – YO24 1HW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We particularly enjoyed meeting and talking to you during lessons, in the playground, at lunchtime and in our meetings with you. We found you to be really helpful and courteous at all times.

We found that Dringhouses is a good school and that the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as your adoption of healthy lifestyles, is excellent. You behave well and your attendance is high; you obviously enjoy going to such a good school. Your school is well led by your headteacher who has established some really meaningful links for you in other parts of the world. You are taught well so that you are now making good progress.

We think that your attainment could be even better if teachers' lesson plans focused more precisely on what you need to do to reach the higher levels.

There are lots of opportunities for your parents and carers to find out how well you are doing at school. Some of your parents and carers would welcome more opportunities to let the school know their views on what is happening. We think that the school governors would be in a strong position to take on this responsibility.

Thank you once again, we wish all of you every success in the future

Yours sincerely

James Kilner
Her Majesty's Inspector

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