

Slingsby Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121322
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380209
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Martin Pye

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	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nikki Thomson
Headteacher	Karen Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Martin Pye

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons taught by four teachers, attended a school assembly and a concert rehearsal, observed break times and listened to pupils reading. He held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and talked with parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's plans for improvement, assessment information, teachers' planning, monitoring of teaching records, attendance and safeguarding information. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 29 questionnaires from parents and carers together with questionnaires from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Slingsby Community Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and all the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes; one class contains Reception children and pupils from Year 1 and 2, and the other class has pupils from Years 3 to 6. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has achieved Healthy School status and the Sports Activemark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school because teaching is good and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. All pupils are cared for and nurtured exceptionally well. The school's overall effectiveness is not outstanding because the school's use of assessment information, particularly in mathematics, is not fully developed.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. In recent years, attainment in mathematics has not as been as high as that seen in English. However, progress seen in lessons and in the school's tracking data, shows that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is accelerating for all groups of pupils.
- Teaching is good. Respectful relationships between staff and pupils promote a calm, purposeful atmosphere for learning. In most lessons, the activities have a clear learning purpose and pupils of all abilities receive an appropriate level of challenge and support. The school keeps careful records of how well pupils are doing and uses this information well to identify pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. These pupils are then provided with extra help and support. However, the use of on-going assessment to help teachers plan for next steps in learning, and to give feedback to pupils about what they need to do next to improve their work, is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and report that bullying, 'Just does not happen here because everyone is kind and helpful'. Procedures for managing risk are effective.
- The headteacher leads teaching effectively and manages teachers' performance well. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Good teamwork at all levels helps to drive forward school improvement and ensures that all in the school community feel valued.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of ongoing assessment so that:
 - teaching is always sharply focused on the next steps in learning
 - pupils receive more detailed feedback about how well they are doing, and clearer guidance about what they need to do next to improve their work.

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics so that, by the end of Year 6, it matches the above-average standards in reading and writing.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Since the previous inspection, the school has taken action to improve the quality of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as result, children's progress in all areas of learning has accelerated and attainment by the time they start in Year 1 is now above average. The youngest children receive plenty of support, praise and encouragement from adults and the school keeps detailed records which help staff to plan for next steps in learning. In addition, the inclusion of the Reception children in a Key Stage 1 class means that their transition in to Year 1, and subsequently into Year 2, is very smooth.

The small number of pupils in each year group means that attainment at the end of each key stage can vary significantly from year to year. In 2011, for instance, there was a dip in attainment at the end of both key stages. However, over time, attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been above average, with pupils' attainment in reading being the strongest. This is because the school rightly places a high priority on the development of reading skills. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn the sounds that letters make and begin to blend these together confidently to make simple words. In Key Stage 1, short, sharp, lively sessions with lots of fun actions create an excitement for learning about letters and sounds. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can read books appropriate to their age and have a good understanding of the content. Many pupils can predict what might happen in a story and talk in an informed way about authors and fictional characters and settings.

In recent years, attainment in mathematics has not been as high as that seen in English. The school's current data together with lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics is now faster than it used to be. This is because the school has implemented improved tracking systems so that pupils at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and extra support put in place. In lessons, pupils are given imaginative challenges and this helps them to develop and exercise independence and resilience in their learning. In one mathematics lesson, for example, a group of more-able pupils readily engaged in a lively and thought provoking discussion as they worked together to test out their

ideas about probability. The task helped to build on their existing knowledge and they made good progress as a result of the good teaching.

Pupils take a lead in whole-school activities and celebrations, demonstrating an interest in each other and well developed speaking and listening skills. During this inspection, a strong sense of teamwork and shared purpose was very clearly seen as pupils and adults worked together to prepare food and activities, for a VE Day party to mark the end of a topic about the Second World War.

Parents and carers hold the school in very high regard. The overwhelming majority say that school staff nurture their children's talents and help them to become confident and successful learners. They particularly praise the close attention given to every individual, which enables all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to achieve equally well. Inspection findings endorse this view.

Quality of teaching

The inspection findings concur with the views of parents and carers that teaching is good. In all lessons, teachers manage behaviour and relationships extremely well, taking every opportunity to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The strong attention, through the curriculum and day-to-day activities, given to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. Classroom activities and routines help younger pupils learn to take turns and share with each other, while older pupils act as good role models. All efforts are valued and, as a result, all pupils are keen and willing to take a full and active part in lessons and respect each other's views.

Teaching in all areas of the curriculum is well organised with imaginative topics linking subjects together in meaningful ways. Pupils are interested in learning and approach all tasks with focused enthusiasm. Teachers' high expectations help pupils to develop mature levels of independence so that, whether they are working on their own or with others, they do their best. In one very effective lesson, for example, Key Stage 1 pupils displayed good levels of independence as they worked in a small group to create a board game. This activity required them to discuss their decisions and explain their choices while applying their literacy and numeracy skills in order to complete the task. As a result, they made good progress.

All work is marked regularly. Older pupils can explain how feedback from teachers and the termly assessment tasks, inform them about the standard they have reached, particularly in writing. However, in many cases, day-to-day marking does not help pupils to understand what they need to next in order to improve their work. This lack of diagnostic marking – which is most evident in mathematics – means that teachers are missing opportunities to assess current understanding and to give guidance to pupils that will help them to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Nearly all parents and carers report correctly that there is a good standard of behaviour in the school and their children feel safe. Scrutiny of behavioural records

confirms that this is the case over time, too. Pupils are happy at school and, while most attend regularly and are punctual, a small number of pupils do not attend school often enough or on time.

Pupils cannot recall any instances of bullying and display a very reflective and mature understanding of the causes and effects of different types of behaviour. They manage their own behaviour very well and can explain how and why occasional playground disagreements or upsets do happen from time to time. They are confident that older pupils or adults will always provide help whenever it is needed.

Pupils are polite and courteous and many display a strong sense of empathy. All pupils play happily together and willingly support each other during lessons, if required. The school council regularly considers pupils' suggestions about school improvement and all pupils make a good contribution to school and community life. The sense of togetherness and ethos of care that permeates every aspect of school life means that pupils know that everyone's efforts are noticed and valued.

Leadership and management

Regular monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and clear feedback to teachers have helped to improve teaching. Pupils' progress is checked at frequent intervals and actions to improve pupils' achievement – training for staff or extra support for pupils, for example – are taken. School leaders are aware that more needs to be done to sharpen the quality of feedback given to pupils about their work. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and links well with development planning and the performance management cycle for staff. The strong teamwork and clear communication across the school means that there is a sense of common purpose and all are committed to doing their best.

The curriculum is good because it provides creative and interesting opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways. It is designed well to provide continuity in learning in the mixed-age classes as pupils move through the school. A number of trips and visitors to schools help to enrich learning. Links with schools further afield – in York and Australia – help pupils to learn about the wider world.

The school is proud of its inclusive nature. The good pastoral care, coupled with teachers' attention to the individual needs of every pupil, means that it is successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. One parent described the school as 'a happy place where pupils feel safe, secure and grow in confidence'. The many comments made to inspectors during the inspection, and on questionnaires, show that parents and carers feel a strong partnership with the school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Members of the governing body have effective systems for receiving and evaluating information about the school's work and make regular visits to the school, with individual governors and committees taking a special interest in particular aspects of the school's work. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff have received appropriate training.

Improvements made since the previous inspection, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the well-informed development planning by school leaders, demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slingsby Community Primary School, York, YO62 4AA

Thank you for your welcome when I inspected your school. I very much enjoyed my visit. Thank you for telling me about your work and all the other things you do at school.

During my visit, I was very impressed by your good manners and behaviour and the way that you help and care for each other.

You are taught and looked after well and this means you enjoy lessons and feel safe. You make good progress in your work, grow in confidence and take many opportunities to get involved in school and local life.

Your headteacher and staff know how well your school is doing and how to improve it in the future. It is a good school and, with your help, it can become even better.

I noticed that some of you make faster progress in reading and writing than you do in mathematics. In order to make sure you do as well as you can in all lessons, your teachers are now planning to give you more information about the progress you are making. Marking in books, especially in mathematics, is also going to include more advice about what you need to do next in order to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to behave so well in school, being punctual and by always doing your best in every lesson.

Thank you again and my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Lead inspector

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