

Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121602
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380279
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Clegg
Headteacher	Gillian Woods
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons taught by three teachers. The inspector also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, relevant policies and performance data. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector also scrutinised questionnaires from 27 parents and carers, four staff and 33 pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much-smaller-than-average-sized primary school in an isolated rural setting. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. All pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action is average but the number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is an independently managed children's centre on site, which is subject to a separate inspection report. The most recent report for this can be found on the Ofsted website. The school has many awards, including Healthy Schools' status, the Activemark, Special Educational Needs Quality Mark and both International and Eco-School awards. The school has undergone significant staffing changes in the last two years.

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. Askrigg is not yet outstanding as there is insufficient challenge within some aspects of the curriculum; pupils' learning targets are not used consistently across the school and pupils' views about their learning are not taken into account sufficiently by the school. The school's main strengths are its very welcoming and caring ethos, pupils' behaviour and the leadership of the headteacher and governing body.
- Achievement is good. From the typically expected starting points in Reception, children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. This continues throughout the school so that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 their attainment is above average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the high levels of additional care and support they receive for their learning.
- Teaching is good. The best teaching features very good planning that identifies the wide range of pupils' needs within the mixed-age classes and provides challenging and stimulating activities that make learning interesting and fun. The teaching of reading is especially effective across the school. There are inconsistencies in the use of individual learning targets, especially within mathematics, which mean that not all pupils have an accurate understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Levels of challenge within the teaching of topic work are sometimes no better than satisfactory.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is good. Almost all pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. Bullying incidents are extremely rare and very well dealt with. Attendance is above average and improving further.
- Leadership and management are good. The school has a well developed sense of its strengths and weaknesses. There is effective management of teaching and the school's performance so that there is a trend of improving achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve achievement by:
 - bringing a greater level of challenge to the teaching of foundation topics in order that pupils' attainment and progress in these areas matches their achievement in English and mathematics
 - developing a clearer understanding in pupils of their own attainment and progress through a more consistent use of target-setting in Key Stage 2
 - taking greater recognition of pupils' views in order to involve them more fully in their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

A very high percentage of parents and carers rightly consider their child is making good progress at the school. Children enter the combined Reception and Key Stage 1 class with basic skills that are typical for their age. Well planned, interesting activities and effective teaching mean that children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well. The setting is a bright and vibrant learning environment and children particularly enjoy the well-resourced outdoor areas the school provides.

This good progress continues throughout the rest of the school. Pupils enjoy their learning and develop a range of skills well that will ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Attainment overall by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics. Pupils thus develop a good understanding across a range of subjects, especially literacy, leading to their growing confidence in learning. Attainment in Year 6 fell to broadly average in 2010 but this reflected the high proportion of pupils in that year group with special educational needs. Reading is a strength of the school. Attainment in this area at Key Stage 1 is broadly average but rises to well above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils whom the inspector heard read spoke with pleasure about books they had read and used a good range of strategies in confidently and effectively tackling unfamiliar words.

Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that the vast majority of pupils are making better progress than similar pupils nationally, given their starting points. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is because of the high levels of additional support they receive within the very small classes or through targeted learning programmes. Gaps in the performance of girls and in writing were identified last year and have been successfully closed through concentrated support strategies operated by the headteacher, governors and highly skilled teaching assistants.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and learning over time within the school is good, as the vast majority of parents and carers and pupils recognise. The school has a very accurate perspective of its teaching which was confirmed by the close agreement of the school's self-evaluation records and lessons observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching

earlier this year within the Key Stage 2 class was weaker but the school has taken decisive action to support this and school data and inspection evidence indicate that these pupils are back on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set for their performance by the end of the Key Stage.

Nearly all the teaching observed by the inspector was good. Teaching and the planned curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because they draw on a wide range of curriculum activities, such as the philosophy for children programme. In one typical case, the principles of dividing numbers and of proportions were cleverly conveyed to pupils, through animated teacher explanation. This was followed up by a practical biscuit baking activity that involved pupils in measuring, explaining quantities, preparing the dough and then explanation in writing of the number processes involved. High quality learning resulted that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Literacy teaching is especially strong and often makes good use of individual learning targets to help pupils structure their work and operate independently of adult support. This practice is not used consistently across the school, however, especially within Key Stage 2 mathematics. This means that pupils are not always as well-informed as they should be about the levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve their work.

Good teaching is characterised by good levels of pace and challenge and very good planning that uses the school's accurate assessment data on pupils' performance to structure what goes on in lessons. This ensures that, especially within English and mathematics lessons, activities meet the wide range of pupils' needs present at any time within the mixed-age classes. Levels of challenge, especially for the more able, are less clear within topic lessons in the foundation subjects at Key Stage 2. This means that pupils' progress in these areas is sometimes satisfactory and does not match their levels of achievement in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is good and often excellent in their specialist support programmes.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a calm, well-ordered and harmonious community. Parents and carers are justifiably confident that pupils are safe and well looked after. Many pupils get a healthy start to their day in school through the breakfast club, reflecting the school's award in this area. Pupils act safely in lessons and around school. A good range of planned activities, such as the highly popular Forest School programme, raise pupils' awareness of how to keep safe, how to manage acceptable levels of risk and build their confidence and resilience. Attendance is above average and improving strongly year on year, with current levels well above average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is exemplary.

Virtually all parents and carers are of the view that behaviour in the school is typically good. Pupils have very high expectations of each other's behaviour, which have a very positive impact upon their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the inspection questionnaire, however, a minority of pupils expressed concerns over behaviour. The inspector carried out extensive discussions with over two-thirds of the pupils in the school and ascertained that this concern was very largely connected to behaviour in one class earlier in the year and that since then behaviour has improved. All pupils the inspector talked to recognised that both prior to this and currently, behaviour in the school is good. Investigation of school incident records, racist incident logs, talking to lunchtime supervisors and groups of parents and carers collecting their children at the end of the school day support the judgement that behaviour over time is good. There have been no exclusions for

several years. In very nearly all lessons observed behaviour was at least good, sometimes outstanding and never less than satisfactory. Instances of bullying are extremely rare, as almost all parents and carers recognise. When it is encountered it is dealt with very well, often using a 'circle of friends' strategy that is highly effective. Pupils' awareness of different types of bullying is very well developed, including cyber-bullying, bullying of pupils with special educational needs and bullying by or of minority groups.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and management by the headteacher, well supported by the effective and committed governing body, continue to move the school forward. There is a well developed programme of monitoring of teaching and learning and regular pupil progress meetings that quickly identify any underachievement. Staff training is closely aligned to school priorities. These are accurately reflected within good plans to help the school improve further. The school knows that past good practices in relation to target-setting need to be fully embedded across the school. Recent weaknesses in teaching have been eliminated. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well and, as such, its capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The rich curriculum is well structured, has a good focus upon literacy and numeracy and has strengths in its use of drama and in its promotion of pupils' awareness of and contact with the wider world. This includes links with schools in India, South America and Africa, reflecting its International Schools Award. The impact of the curriculum upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but not outstanding as the delivery of it through the topic sessions is not always as challenging as it should be. The school engages well with parents and carers. It makes effective use of the on-site children's centre to help support family learning and is a central and highly valued part of the local community. The promotion of equal opportunities is effective, with the needs of most groups of learners well met. Instances of discrimination are rare and, if encountered, tackled robustly. The school and eco councils contribute well to the daily running of the school but, as some pupils rightly pointed out in their inspection questionnaires, their views about the school and their learning are not always taken sufficiently into account. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Askrigg Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leyburn, DL8 3BJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently and for sharing your views with me. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you learn.

Askrigg Primary is a good school. You get a good start to your learning in the Reception class and make good progress. This continues throughout the school. By the time you leave the school in Year 6 the attainment of most of you is above average. Those of you who are disabled or who have special educational needs also make good progress, due to the additional support you receive. Teaching across the school is good, as is the range of subjects that you study. The school looks after you very well; your behaviour is good and your attendance above average. Well done! Senior staff are leading the school well and bringing about further improvements.

To make your school better, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make your topic lessons more challenging so that you learn as well in these subjects as you do in English and mathematics
- help you to better understand the progress you are making in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by making better use of the individual learning targets that are so well used in your English lessons
- take your views into account more fully in order to involve you more in the school and in your own learning.

You can help by explaining to your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead inspector

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