

INSPECTION REPORT

ARKENGARTHDALE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Arkengarthdale, Richmond

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121476

Headteacher: Mrs P A Bumby

Reporting inspector: Mr D Clegg
4341

Dates of inspection: 3rd April 2000

Inspection number: 183255

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arkengarthdale Richmond North Yorkshire
Postcode:	DL11 6EN
Telephone number:	01748 884335
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D N Williams
Date of previous inspection:	17 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mr D Clegg	Registered inspector
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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Arkengarthdale C of E Primary School is a very small school catering for 24 pupils, aged between four and eleven years. Pupils are organised into two classes, one with four to seven year olds and the other with seven to eleven year olds. The school serves an isolated rural community and is regarded as an important focal point for the community. The majority of pupils live in the immediate village although several live on outlying farms. A small number of pupils travel to the school from outside the catchment area. All the pupils are white. One pupil has special educational needs but there are no pupils with statements, this is well below average. No pupils receive free school meals, again well below average.

Children entering the school are generally attaining above average standards in literacy and numeracy and some, but not all, have had some pre-school experience. Recently, the school has begun to admit children who would not otherwise have any pre-school opportunities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Arkengarthdale is a good school that consistently attains good standards, particularly in basic skills in English and mathematics. These are achieved through good teaching and effective management. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of education. Despite the relatively high costs the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Consistently good teaching results in pupils making good progress and attaining good standards
- Pupils consistently attain good standards in literacy and numeracy
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their personal development is very good
- The school works very effectively in partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology
- The use of data to set challenging targets for attainment and tracking progress
- The poor quality cloakroom and toilet facilities.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last report has been satisfactory. Following the inspection in June 1996, the good standards, particularly in the basic skills, have been maintained and there has been improvement in the progress of under-fives. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and there is some improvement in the range of tasks and activities for children of different ages, especially at Key Stage 1. The procedures for special needs are appropriate. Standards in information technology remain weak.

All the health and safety issues outlined in the last report have been addressed.

STANDARDS

The results of National Curriculum tests are not published because the number of pupils taking the tests is less than ten. In 1999 there were no pupils eligible for the end of Key Stage 2 tests.

The inspection indicates that current standards at the ends of both key stages vary between at or above the national average in English and mathematics. There are currently no pupils below the average. Standards in information technology are below those expected at the end of Key Stage 2. The under-fives make good progress and are currently achieving standards above those usually expected for children of their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils are very positive about school, work hard and maintain a good level of concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent, relationships throughout the school are very strong. The older pupils are mature, sensible and self-confident and are well equipped to benefit from the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Very good, above the national average.

This aspect is a strength of the school. The ethos is extremely positive and constructive in promoting pupils' personal development. The opportunities for pupils of different ages to mix comfortably together are particularly effective in building and sustaining close friendships.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All the teaching is good or very good. Teaching of English and mathematics is effective and the school is successfully taking advantage of the teaching approaches outlined in the new national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Lessons are well planned and in most the full range of abilities and ages are taken into account. The younger pupils in each class particularly benefit from the high expectations of the teachers. Occasionally, the older, higher attaining pupils are not challenged throughout a lesson. Resources are well used and teaching assistants make a full contribution to the teaching and learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes all subjects, but some aspects of information technology are not taught. The curriculum for the under-fives is generally appropriate, although there are limitations in the opportunities for physical development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for special needs is effective and children receive a significant amount of individual support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for spiritual and cultural development, very good for moral development and excellent opportunities for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A high level of individual care and attention is given to pupils of all ages. Some aspects of the health and safety policy are not systematically implemented, such as the annual risk assessment. Toilet accommodation and facilities are poor.

The school provides a good curriculum, enriched by some specialist input in music and physical education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is effectively led and managed. All staff play a part in managing the school; teamwork is particularly effective and is a key ingredient in the school's success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors take their responsibilities very seriously and fulfil most of their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is some informal evaluation of performance but not enough use is made of data to guide the developments and set sufficiently challenging targets for individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used appropriately with due regard to the principles of best value.

The leadership is effective in promoting a strong sense of teamwork amongst all those involved with the school. There is a very strong sense of community in the school with everyone contributing to its smooth day-to-day running. The governing body applies the principles of best value and is beginning to take account of benchmark information to guide the allocation of the budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoy coming to school• Pupils' behaviour is very good• They are well informed about how their children are progressing• They feel comfortable about approaching the school• Children are expected to work hard• The school is effectively led and managed• The school encourages their children to mature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities provided by the school.

The parents are fiercely loyal and supportive of the school and their confidence is fully justified. The concern about the range of activities is a recognition of the difficulty the school has in providing extra-curricular activities due to the difficulties in transport. The school makes reasonable efforts to provide a range of activities in the taught curriculum and is taking steps to provide more extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Consistently good teaching results in pupils making good progress and attaining good standards

1. Teachers are very experienced in teaching classes made up of different age groups and plan their work carefully taking full account of the range of ages and abilities. The younger pupils in each class particularly benefit from the high expectations and demands made of them and are making very good progress. Although the progress slows for the older pupils, overall, pupils make good progress across each key stage.
2. Teachers use resources effectively to involve all pupils and make sure that children are constantly being made to think. For instance, in the infant class during a numeracy lesson, the very youngest children used number fans to give the answer to questions. These children were already using their number fans to work out 'one less than' and 'one more than', they confidently counted well beyond 20, ordering numbers, recognising some basic number patterns and joining in with the older ones to count in twos. The older children used small whiteboards to write the answers to more challenging questions. Questions are inventive and challenge pupils to think carefully and use what they know in different ways. For example the teacher asked the Year 2 pupils 'what is 56, 6 more than?'. As they struggled to work out the answer she gave other examples using smaller numbers that enabled them to identify what they had to do and solve the problem.
3. As the lesson progressed, children broke into groups, the teaching became more focused and the classroom assistant was well used to work specifically with the reception children. Well prepared material at the right level extended children's understanding of mathematical vocabulary and they had great fun following the instructions on their sheets to go 'under', 'across', 'behind' or 'past' particular items in the classroom.
4. In the junior class, questions about translating fractions into decimals challenged the Year 3 and 4 pupils to think carefully and apply what they had previously learned to working out solutions. Their progress was particularly impressive with both the Year 3 pupils working at well above average levels. The questions gradually became more difficult so that the older pupils were also challenged to multiply and divide decimals by 10 and translate a range of fractions into decimals. However, the demands made on the higher attaining older pupils in the first part of the lesson were limited.
5. During literacy lessons the older pupils in the junior class were stretched by the task of inventing an ending to a story that was the focus of the lesson. This followed some sharp questioning about the meaning of certain phrases and words that ensured pupils paid attention to what they were reading and this helped them when they had to consider how the story was to end.
6. Literacy lessons with the infant class are particularly effective. Very high expectations, coupled with plenty of individual support, ensure that pupils move on in their learning; this is particularly evident in the good progress of the youngest children. The teacher has a very good grasp of how to teach important skills, to ensure, for instance, that children have a good knowledge of letter sounds and the importance of reading with expression by using the punctuation. Questions are again used effectively to promote thinking, for example, after pointing out that 'shell' starts with 's' children were asked

'what letter goes with 's' to make the sound of 'sh'?. The teacher has a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of each child and the teacher, or the assistant gives them carefully targeted individual help. This well focused individual support is a key element in promoting the good progress of the under-fives.

Pupils consistently attain good standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy

7. The numbers in each year group are well below ten so the results of National Curriculum tests are not published and comparisons with the national averages and the results of similar schools are not possible. However, over the past four years most pupils have reached at least the national average in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages many pupils have reached higher levels.
8. By the time children reach the end of Key Stage 1 they read fluently and with understanding and enjoy reading stories and using books to find things out. Written work is well presented and writing is joined, clear and legible. Children have a good grasp of using full stops and capital letters are beginning to use speech marks accurately. Accounts are well ordered, coherent and the use of vocabulary is increasingly sophisticated; this is evident in some of the written work in religious education, history and geography where literacy skills are being used to good effect. Children have a good understanding of number and use what they know to solve problems. They use counting on and back to work out simple addition and subtraction problems. They are familiar with simple number patterns such as odd and even numbers and know, for instance, that it is the last digit that will indicate whether any number is odd or even. They rapidly recall doubles but sometimes struggle to use this knowledge when asked to make calculations. For instance, they knew that double 8 is 16 but could not use that to quickly calculate $8 + 9$. They are beginning to extend their understanding of number operations and have an early knowledge of multiplication tables.
9. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have continued to extend their reading habits; they read a range of fiction, ranging from traditional to very modern, and have some clear preferences, although their knowledge of different authors is a little limited. They also enjoy reading non-fiction and are very familiar with how to use books to research information. Written work is lively and neatly written and punctuation and grammar are accurately used. The best writing is evident in straightforward accounts such as re-telling stories from different points of view. This is particularly effective in religious education. Good clear writing supports work in subjects such as geography, where pupils have clearly described their trip to discover the source of the Arkle River.
10. Pupils have good numeracy skills that they use effectively across the curriculum. On their field trip, for instance, they calculated the speed of flow of the river. This involved careful measuring, basic calculations and an understanding of averages. Pupils also took a series of measurements of the depth of the water and from these plotted, to scale, the profile of the riverbed over a particular distance. Pupils have a good working knowledge of how numbers work, calculating, for instance, the price of goods following a 20 per cent reduction. They quickly recall number facts and are very secure in their understanding of the relationship between, for instance, multiplication and division. Pupils have a very good sense of place value, working confidently with five figure numbers. They are weaker on some aspects of shape and measurements, particularly using formulae to calculate the area and volume of shapes.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their personal development is very good

11. The small number of pupils, the stability of the staffing and degree of familiarity with the close knit community ensure that there is a degree of intimacy about the school that gives it a very strong family ethos.
12. The older pupils talk sensibly and positively about the 'family atmosphere' of the school. They are enthusiastic about the work that they do and genuinely enjoy learning. They are also very enthusiastic about the events they get involved in such as the recent 'Sing the World', a musical celebration of the millennium in which they joined with several other local schools to rehearse and perform a wide ranging repertoire of songs and music. Pupils are confident and articulate and show a good degree of self-confidence in making and sustaining constructive and comfortable relationships with friends and teachers.
13. During lessons pupils work hard and maintain a good level of concentration. In a successful music lesson, the infant children joined in with great enjoyment, singing their news in response to the teacher's questions. They concentrated and worked very hard at following clapping rhythms even though several found the activity demanding; they played the instruments with gusto. They behaved well, treated the instruments carefully and there was no argument about who chose what.
14. During a history lesson the younger children were very interested in the old implements used on wash day. They thought hard about how the washing is done in their own homes and settled reasonably quickly to completing their worksheets.
15. There is frequent interaction between pupils of different ages and this is very beneficial in developing a sense of belonging and responsibility. The lunchtime arrangements, whereby tables of mixed age pupils meet and talk, make this a very powerful social occasion. Teachers sit with the children and lead by example, encouraging children to talk about what they have been doing and asking about events and occasions outside school. This sense of belonging and community gives the pupils a genuine feeling of being part of a large family. It is very apparent that the older pupils take their responsibility of looking after the younger ones very seriously and do this without any inhibitions or self-consciousness. The younger children respond positively to being with the older ones, following their lead, making sensible conversation and chatting happily to each other.

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents

16. Parents are fiercely loyal and supportive of the school. The responses from the questionnaires indicate an overwhelming degree of satisfaction with the school. All parents who responded consider that the school works very closely with them and they receive good helpful information about how their children are achieving and good advice about how they can help and support learning at home.
17. Parents have a good knowledge of the school and appreciate its many strengths. For instance, they are very clear that the school expects high standards of work, that the school is helping their children to become mature and that behaviour is good.
18. Parents also feel very comfortable in approaching the school with any problems or concerns. They are appreciative of what the school provides and understand that because of difficulties with transport there is a very limited number of extra-curricular activities.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information technology

19. Standards in information technology are below those expected at the ends of both key stages. The main reason for the low standards is the lack of planning a full range of opportunity to learn about all aspects of the subject.
20. The youngest children confidently use computers to support work in other subjects. For instance, they use a mathematics program to help with learning number bonds. They use the mouse efficiently, know their way around the program and understand how to manipulate the game, making it easier or harder. At Key Stage 2 pupils use word processing to improve the appearance of their work, for instance to create illuminated letters at the start of a piece of writing in religious education. They choose fonts to reflect the style of writing and know how to change the size and appearance of text.
21. Pupils are familiar with using computers to research information. In a geography topic they used CD-Roms to find out about aspects of the local environment and supplement their own field studies.
22. The weaknesses in standards are most evident in control technology and the generation, storing and presenting of data. Pupils have either no experience of these aspects or the opportunities to learn are severely limited due to lack of teacher expertise and limited resources.

The use of data to set challenging targets for attainment and tracking progress

23. The targets set for individual pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are rather conservative and do not present sufficient challenge. The targets do not reflect the fact that performance in mathematics is consistently slightly better than that in English and there are no specific targets for higher attaining pupils. Information from baseline assessments is not used to identify performance targets and, whilst pupils are regularly assessed in areas, such as reading, the information is not used in a systematic and structured manner to monitor progress.
24. Information about individual pupils' performance is not used to set realistic but challenging targets and as a result the rate of pupils' progress is not monitored as closely as it could be.

The poor quality cloakroom and toilet facilities

25. The toilet and cloakroom provision is unacceptably poor. Access to the staff toilets is only possible through the girls' toilet and the state of the fittings and decoration in all the toilets is poor. There is no health advice about, for instance, washing hands and there is no soap in the girls' toilets.
26. The governors are very aware of the poor state of the toilets and have plans in hand to completely refurbish them. This should be done as a matter of urgency.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Raise standards in information technology by:

- ensuring that all pupils have a full range of appropriate experiences
 - taking full advantage of the guidance available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to improve teacher expertise;
-
- ❑ Use performance data to set more challenging learning targets for all pupils and to track pupils' progress as they move through the school;

 - ❑ Improve the toilet facilities.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	6
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	83	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	24
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11.4
Average class size	12

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	82,364
Total expenditure	77,770
Expenditure per pupil	3,382
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,160
Balance carried forward to next year	14,754

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	????
Number of questionnaires returned	21

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	19	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	62	29	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	86	5	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	48	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	24	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	43	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	86	14	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	43	33	0	5