

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NUN MONKTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Nun Monkton, York

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121721

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Ashby

Reporting inspector: Dr Brian Male  
14906

Dates of inspection: 17 - 18 January 2001

Inspection number: 192578

Short 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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Green  
Nun Monkton  
Nr York  
North Yorkshire  
Postcode: YO26 8ER

Telephone number: 01423 330313

Fax number: 01423 330313

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Armitage

Date of previous inspection: 4 March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This foundation primary school takes pupils from four to 11 years old and is maintained by the North Yorkshire Local Education Authority. The school still occupies its 1902 buildings on the green in this rural village. At the time of the inspection there were 31 pupils on roll in two classes. Most pupils start school with standards of attainment above those usually expected. There is no pupil eligible for free school meals which is well below the national average. Ten per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register which is also well below the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very popular small village school with a caring ethos and a supportive family atmosphere. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school is well supported by its governors and the community. Pupils make good progress across the school, and there has been a trend of well above average standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well. The quality teaching is good overall, and often very good at Key Stage 2. The school receives an income much higher than it needs, mainly as a result of the transition arrangements from grant maintained status, and so, although it provides a good quality of education, it cannot provide effective value for money during this transition period.

#### **What the school does well**

- There is a trend of well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in English.
- The quality teaching is good overall, and often very good at Key Stage 2.
- There is a good family atmosphere where pupils feel secure, are confident learners, and behave very well.
- There are some very good opportunities for pupils' personal and spiritual development.
- The addition of the 'upper deck' has greatly enhanced the space available.

#### **What could be improved**

- The school needs to clarify its financial planning to show how the present very large budget surplus will be used to further the school's educational objectives.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in March 1997, and has maintained its high standards since then. The school's scores in national tests for seven and 11 year olds remain well above average. The quality of teaching is still good overall. Pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes to their work are very good. The headteacher continues to give strong leadership. The school has addressed all of the key issues raised by the last report: standards have been improved in information technology, the quality of provision for children under five has been enhanced, opportunities for personal study have been extended, agreed admissions criteria have been published, and the building of the upper deck proved to be a particularly realistic development. The school is well placed to maintain these high standards.

## STANDARDS

The numbers of pupils in each year group is very small, and so it is not appropriate to publish the usual table of standards in national tests, as this would be statistically invalid. In general, the school's scores in national tests for seven and 11 year olds have been well above average in English, mathematics and science in the four years to 2000. The 2000 scores for 11 year olds were well above the average of similar schools in mathematics and science, and in the top five per cent nationally in English. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 this year are not so high as in previous years, but are still above average in English, mathematics and science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are confident learners, often keen and interested in their work, and want to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally very good across the school, and older pupils behave particularly well. Pupils are generally polite and thoughtful of others.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships across the school. Pupils work and play very well together. There some very good opportunities for personal development, particularly at Key Stage 2.
Attendance	There is a well above average level of attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 4 to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	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.*

In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall, and often very good at Key Stage 2. Of the lessons seen almost a quarter were very good, over a quarter good, and the rest satisfactory. The very good lessons were at Key Stage 2. Teachers work hard to provide for the wide age ranges in each class, and cope well with the somewhat restricted space within the classrooms. The best lessons challenge the range of pupils well and stimulate their interest. In these lessons, pupils are given opportunities to think for themselves and to develop their ideas. The learning objectives are clear, and the work set builds well on what individuals have already learned.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a good focus on the basic literacy and numeracy skills, together with good provision for the arts and humanities. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are supported within the classroom, and as classes are small, appropriate support can be given. Individual education plans do not always specify sufficiently clearly the short-term targets. Support needs to be focused very clearly on these targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for spiritual and moral development with a strong emphasis on pupils' awareness of values and their appreciation of the wider world. There are some good opportunities for social and cultural development through activities such as dance and the school's extensive drama productions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a caring ethos and a supportive family atmosphere. The arrangements for child protection are generally sound, although the responsible person has not had training and this needs to be arranged.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school and has created a positive ethos and high standards of attainment. Other staff do not have specific responsibilities, but work together well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are strongly supportive of the school and have led it effectively through the various transitions to and from grant maintained status.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is taking many effective steps to evaluate its performance through the analysis of assessment, test and other data. There is an outline school development plan, but this is not related to the budget, nor does it have targets that would readily assist evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	The school is receiving a very high level of funding, partly because of the transition arrangements from grant maintained status. It has built up a very high budget surplus of 35 per cent of its income, but does not have a detailed plan, linked to its educational objectives, of how this will be spent. As it can pay for its current provision without the extra funding, it cannot provide

	effective value for money during the transition phase.
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The school building has been well developed with its upper deck providing very valuable space, but the classrooms remain small. There is very little land attached to the school for recreational use, much of this is taken up by storage buildings, and so playground space is very restricted indeed. When the weather allows, the school compensates for this by making use of the village green. The level of staffing is high, but there are several areas where the range of teaching and learning resources is limited. The number of computers could be increased, the range of reading and library books needs extending particularly for younger pupils, and more equipment is needed for mathematics. There is ample money in the budget for such purchases.

**PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards attained in the school.</li> <li>• The standards of behaviour and attitudes of the pupils.</li> <li>• The ‘family atmosphere’ of the school.</li> <li>• The school’s very caring approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited.</li> </ul>

The school has a very good partnership with parents which impacts positively on the education of the pupils. Parents were very supportive indeed of the school in the questionnaire and in their comments. The inspection agrees with the parents’ positive feelings, and that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**There is a trend of well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in English**

1. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds have been well above average in English, mathematics and science in the four years to 2000. The 2000 scores were well above the average of similar schools in mathematics and science, and in the top five per cent nationally in English. Compared to schools of similar background, where standards are generally much higher than the national average, the scores have also tended to be well above average.
2. As there are fewer than ten pupils in each year group, comparisons with other schools are always difficult and one or two pupils can make a large difference. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year at the end of both key stages are somewhat lower than in previous years, but this is within the expected range of fluctuations.
3. Standards in English have been particularly high. Skills in both speaking and listening are well developed, and even the youngest reception children are able to explain what they are doing clearly and respond well to questions. For instance, some very young children were able to talk about the model robots they were making and use complex sentences to describe what they were doing, "I'm going to stick on these arms, but first I'm going to have to cut them smaller and then hold them for a long time whilst they stick". Older children are able to take account of other people's views and put forward their own ideas clearly. The way in which the older children are listened to in such a thoughtful and valuing way by their teacher has set a good example for them to listen and respond to others.
4. Standards in reading are high across the school. Most pupils read fluently and accurately, and many read extensively for pleasure. Older pupils are able to find information from a range of sources, such as reference books or written information on the Internet, and can select the main points that they need. When responding to fiction they are able to understand the literary devices used by the author. For example, older pupils were able to recognise examples of personification in Olive Dove's poem 'Winter is here'. They are also able to look for meaning beyond the literal and use skills such as inference and deduction to establish meaning.
5. Many older pupils are able to use in their writing the devices they have learned through their reading. The school has been particularly successful in encouraging some very good poetry writing which is both well expressed and sensitive. Some poems about their own village illustrated this well in such lines as:

'Nun Monkton, green village where the light dapples on the ground,  
The leaves shielding the sun ...'
6. Some poems catch a tone of pleasant humour particularly well, and this is not always easy for children to do. For example a Year 6 poem entitled "Er, Mum - can I have a party?" traced a mother's unintentional acquiescence to a series of her daughter's requests until the reality of the concessions is recognised. There is also good prose writing with some particularly good structures that gradually build up understanding

and meaning. For example, in writing a story about the floods, one older pupil imagined a child asking her mother if the floods would reach their house:

“Never,” she said, reassuring me. I wasn’t convinced. She had move all her things upstairs.

7. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average. Older pupils are now able to use word-processing packages with some confidence and can combine graphics with text. They have begun to explore the possibilities of measurement and control facilities such as programs for traffic lights. They are able to access the Internet to find out information such as current temperatures around the world from the BBC Weather website in a geography lesson. They have also just started to work with data handling facilities and some are able to produce graphs from data in a spreadsheet.

### **The quality teaching is good overall, and often very good at Key Stage 2**

8. In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall, and often very good at Key Stage 2. Of the lessons seen, almost a quarter were very good, over a quarter good, and the rest satisfactory. The very good lessons were at Key Stage 2. Teachers work hard to provide for the wide age ranges in each class, and cope well with the somewhat restricted space within the classrooms.
9. The best lessons challenge the range of pupils well and stimulate their interest. In these lessons, pupils are given opportunities to think for themselves and to develop their ideas. The learning objectives are clear, and the work set builds well on what individuals have already learned. For example, in a very good Key Stage 2 English lesson, the teacher built well on what pupils had learned in their reading of poems about winter by Kit Wright and Olive Dove. The pupils were challenged to use the descriptive techniques and devices such as personification in their own poems. The lesson was very well structured with examples, and even a video of a writer talking about the structure of a poem, to enable the pupils to set about their own work in a structured way. Pupils were expected to write notes before they started, and the teacher’s very effective questioning enabled pupils to appraise and improve their work. For instance, the teacher asked one pupil who had written, “The trees reach out and try to grab me..” to consider what colour the trees might seem in the pale winter light. After discussion, the pupil wrote, “The stark trees reach out ...” thus capturing both the darkness and the bareness of the trees against the sky.
10. In a very good Key Stage 2 geography lesson there was a particularly good structure and a high degree of challenge. The lesson used information about world temperatures obtained from the Internet to explore patterns of distribution and the reasons for those patterns. The structure enabled pupils to pool the information they had obtained individually to put the pattern together. Even the younger pupils were able to work at Level 5 of the National Curriculum which is a high level for 11 year olds. A Key Stage 2 art lesson was very good because of the way it enabled pupils to understand and appreciate the range of techniques employed by two different artists. The examples and materials had been very well prepared by the teacher and her own very good subject knowledge and very clear explanations enabled the pupils to identify and appreciate the techniques. Some very good questioning of pupils about their responses to the paintings raised the levels of the perceptions and their sensitivity to the colours, tones and mood.

11. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally sound but does not always have the focus and structure of the best lessons at Key Stage 2. Activities are appropriate, but not always closely focused on what individuals and groups have already learned and need to learn next. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are always difficult to implement in a mixed age range class, especially one containing reception aged children. It is therefore important to maximise the time when one year group is working with a teaching assistant, and to follow closely the structure of the two strategies so that introductions are challenging as well as informative, and the plenary sessions evaluate what has been learned.

**There is a good family atmosphere where pupils feel secure, are confident learners, and behave well**

12. The school's popularity with parents is partly because of the special ethos of this small school set on the edge of the village green. The atmosphere inside the school reflects the tranquillity of the school's setting. The classes are very small and this contributes to the pupils' feeling of security in a setting where they are well known and listened to well. Pupils in the mixed-age classes get on very well and work and play very well with each other. The adults who work in the school all contribute to this approach and work well together to ensure that the ethos is so positive.
13. A feature of the school is the confidence with which the pupils approach their learning. Even the youngest pupils tackle new work with confidence and are willing to explain and discuss their work and show initiative in moving around the room to obtain the equipment they use. Their confidence is illustrated by one reception pupil who, seeing a classmate failing to select the correct option when using a computer program, suggested to the teacher that he should help him. Older pupils show confidence in their writing and in the way they tackle new techniques in art. They are also confident in finding their way around the Internet and in using new computer programs and techniques.
14. Behaviour is generally very good in class and around the school, although Key Stage 1 pupils can lose concentration when lessons fail to stimulate their interest. Pupils play particularly well together in the very restricted space in the playground. Although the playground is very small indeed, the pupils use bicycles and other large toys with good regard for the safety of others. It is this concern for others that is a feature of the pupils' behaviour and the way in which they get on with each other so well. Also a feature is their sense of responsibility and the way in which they can be allowed to use the village green at breaks and lunchtime, and do so sensibly and safely.
15. The school has created a very positive ethos where pupils grow in confidence and develop concern for other and a sense of responsibility for themselves.

**There are good opportunities for pupils' personal and spiritual development**

16. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the ethos described above, and also by the school's programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE). In a very good Key Stage 2 PSHE lesson looking at reactions to bullying there was good structure with discussion based on a very helpful video, but it was the way the teacher involved all of the pupils in some very high quality discussion of the issues that gave the lesson its quality. The teacher always listens to the pupils very closely and this encourages the pupils to respond, and to think carefully about their responses. The

valuing ethos of the school enables pupils to talk about their feelings in these situations in the confidence that they will be respected. This is a very important feature of the school's success in this area.

17. The school has been very successful in encouraging the pupils to respect the environment and to have a real feeling for the village in which they live. It could be pointed out that the village is particularly wonderful and so this feeling might come easily, but what the school has done is to prevent the pupils becoming complacent about their surroundings and constantly aware of their beauty and their fragility. On one day of the inspection, swans landed on the village pond and there was a real sense of excitement in the pupils as they clustered to see them. The Key Stage 1 pupils visited the pond, which was partly frozen, and this developed into a discussion of the need to feed birds with appropriate food during the cold weather.
18. The school has many links with the community that enhance the pupils' personal development. In particular is the school's presentation of dramatic productions to the village and other visitors. The scope and scale of these productions are out of all proportion to the size of school, and provide very good opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility, appear in public and work as part of a team.
19. School assemblies make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development, both in the religious aspect, but also in the wider sense of being aware of values beyond the functional. In one particularly good assembly the headteacher held the pupils' interest extremely well with a story of an American Indian chief explaining that land could not be sold because each stone was an object of spirit and of beauty. The teacher used the very effective device of each pupil holding sea shell to create an atmosphere in which the beauty of even small things became apparent and prized. This was a very special moment, created by the headteacher's own sensitivity and ability to communicate this to the pupils.

### **The addition of the 'upper deck' has greatly enhanced the space available**

20. The previous inspection report cast some doubt on the viability of the financing of the project to build the extra floor. The presence now of the rather splendid 'upper deck' (together with a surplus in the budget!) shows that the school's faith was well placed. The school has functioned since it was built in 1902 in its single room with some small extensions for kitchen and toilets. The upper deck provides spacious accommodation for an office and staff room as well as a large teaching space, and has almost doubled the space available in the school. This has provided space for the role-play area for the reception children called for by the last inspection report, and has allowed the development of a computer suite.
21. The main classrooms are still downstairs and are still very small and separated by only a low screen. Although the number of pupils is very low and neither class is crowded, the space is still restricted, and voices do carry from one class to the other. This can be disruptive at times. The school is working out the best ways of sharing the upper deck, and when one class is upstairs and the other downstairs the school operates most effectively. At these times, there is ample space for each class and neither impinges upon the other.
22. The installation of the computers in the upper deck have greatly enhanced the pupils' learning in information technology where standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection. The computers, and the quality of the design of the upper deck

have also had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and the feeling of being part of a successful and developing institution.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### **The school needs to clarify its financial planning to show how the present very large budget surplus will be used to further the school's educational objectives**

23. Since the previous inspection, the government has altered the system of grant maintained status for school. This will eventually mean a lower rate of funding. In the meantime, transitional funding arrangements are in place that give the former grant maintained schools some interim protection. The scope and duration of these transitional arrangements are uncertain, and it was not until near the end of the last financial year that it was confirmed that the transitional funding was still available. The arrangements for this financial year have yet to be confirmed.
24. In these circumstances, it is difficult to set the budget accurately. The extra, transitional, funding amounted to £27,000 last year, over 20 per cent of the previous year's budget, so the extra sums are significant, yet it is difficult to allocate them when their receipt is uncertain. The governors are aware that the school's funding will be reduced, and are naturally anxious to preserve the present level of provision for as long as possible. They have, therefore, built up a budget surplus to protect the level of provision during the 'lean years' they expect to face.
25. However, the transition from grant maintained status has coincided with a general increase in the funding of all schools and in particular of very small schools. Because of this, the school has been able to maintain all of its present provision without having to use any of the transitional protection. Strictly speaking, the transition funding is not needed by this school. The projection of the budget over the next two years indicates that this state of affairs will continue. In the meantime, the school's surplus is projected to be over £50,000 by the end of this financial year, which is over 35 per cent of the school's annual budget. If the transitional funding continues for a further year, the surplus will be over £75,000 and so over 50 per cent of the budget. The government's guidelines require schools to keep reserves of no more than five per cent except in exceptional circumstances.
26. At the moment, the school has drawn up no plan of how to use this very large surplus. The school's development plan covers only the present academic year, and is not costed. The two-year budget projection assumes no change to the present provision and so is not a development plan. The school now needs to put these two documents together and consider how best to use its surplus in projects to enhance the education of the children. There are several areas of resources that need increasing. The computer suite would function most effectively with at least one computer for each two pupils in a teaching group. This would require at least eight computers. The range of learning materials for mathematics needs enhancing, as does the quality and range of reading materials, especially for the younger pupils. The present budget surplus would allow all these needs to be met and still leave the school much scope to consider future projects.
27. The school's budget and projected pupil numbers are very healthy, and the school can look forward with confidence to the future.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?



28. In order to ensure that the budget surplus is used most effectively the governors should agree a financial plan that takes account of the projected income and expenditure and fits in with the school's development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	24	29	47	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)	n/a	29
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	3

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### 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.

## Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2

Information about the results of the national tests has been omitted because there were fewer than ten pupils in the cohort.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	26
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*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)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9.7
Average class size	14.5

#### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	6

#### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

### Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	118,863
Total expenditure	115,119
Expenditure per pupil	3,386
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,644
Balance carried forward to next year	30,388

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	31
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	33	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	67	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	88	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	46	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	33	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	92	8	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	33	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	33	25	4	4