



Dringhouses Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121276
LEA York
Inspection number 280970
Inspection dates 10 November 2005 to 11 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Margot D'Arcy CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Helen's Road
School category	Community		York
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		North Yorkshire YO24 1HW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01904 706 493
Number on roll	338	Fax number	01904 706 493
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Clayton
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2005	Headteacher	Ms Juila Elliott

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 November 2005 - 11 November 2005	Inspection number 280970
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school is situated in the Dringhouses district of York. Whilst the area is fairly favourable in socio-economic terms, a significant minority of children are drawn from less advantaged areas. Most children are of white British heritage, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. Of these, a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children start school their standards are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. Most remain at the school for their entire primary education. Since the school's last inspection, there has been a considerable turnover of staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Standards achieved by the children at the end of Year 6 are generally above average, although they have fluctuated since the last inspection and overall are not as high as they were or should be. Most children make satisfactory progress and receive a satisfactory curriculum that is enhanced well by a good range of additional activities and good links with the wider community. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but not enough use is made of assessment to ensure work is matched to all children's needs. More able children underachieve because they are not challenged enough. Provision for children in the Reception is inadequate, because the curriculum is not planned or organised sufficiently well.

There are strengths in the provision for care, guidance and support of children and in what is done to promote their personal development. This is evident in children's good standards of behaviour and their understanding of issues, such as how to live a healthy lifestyle and stay safe. The school enjoys good relationships with parents, most of whom have positive views about the school.

The school is being led and managed satisfactorily and provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher's and governors' evaluation of many aspects of the school's work are accurate, but in some key areas their views are too positive. Some improvement has occurred since the school was last inspected but a number of aspects are not as good. Attempts to move the school forward have been hindered by staffing issues, for example, the high turnover of staff and budget cuts resulting in reduction in staffing. There is clear recognition of where improvements are needed and the capacity to achieve these.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by using assessment more effectively to ensure that all children, and particularly the more able, are appropriately challenged in lessons.
- Ensure that the planning and organisation of work for Reception children reflects the curriculum requirements for their age and allows them to achieve in line with their capabilities in all areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of the Reception year, children attain the expected standards. However, their progress across the different areas of learning is inconsistent. Too often, learning is insufficiently structured or extended to meet the range of children's needs.

Consequently, many do not build well enough on earlier learning. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. During Years 1 and 2, progress in these areas is mostly satisfactory, but more able children do not

attain high enough standards. This year's test results have fallen considerably, although they reflect a generally lower attainment profile than usual for the year group.

Since 2000, the standards attained by children at the end of Year 6 have generally been above average in English and mathematics. In science standards generally have been close to the national average. Based on their attainment at the end of Year 2, children have generally made mostly good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Progress in science has varied, but has generally been satisfactory.

The 2004 test results in English were above average but highlighted some significant underachievement, particularly in writing. The school's action in response to this has been successful in enabling more children to attain the expected level in this year's English tests. The percentage attaining the higher level is not quite as good, however, and there is significant underperformance at this level in the 2005 mathematics tests. Science results this year are also lower than in 2004. However, the proportion of pupils gaining a Level 4 or higher in science remains above that in English and mathematics. The appropriately challenging targets set by the school are generally met at the expected level of attainment for pupils of that age, but not always at the higher level.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, as do the minority who are at an early stage of learning English. Children are making good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) in response to improvements made to the provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal achievements, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Most enjoy coming to school, behave well and have a good understanding and respect for people's differences. Children's enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and punctuality. One child stated, 'I like the school. Everything is really cool about it!' Others explained how much they enjoyed the extra-curricular activities, visits and practical lessons, but disliked lessons where they had to listen to the teacher for long periods. Children understand and adhere well to the school's rules and think that they are treated fairly. They are pleased about the good opportunities they have to make a contribution to school and the wider community, for example, by fund raising for good causes and through the school council. This group influenced decisions about playtimes and equipment and were closely involved in the 'Travel Plan' that encourages children to walk to school. Children have gained a good awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They value the healthy snacks and eating options at lunchtime and the 'Bike to School' weeks. Children readily take on responsibilities at playtime and during the lunch break. Older children enjoy helping younger ones, particularly with their reading.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, expectations of what more able children can achieve are generally not high enough; too often there is limited challenge for this group in lessons. The use of assessment to support teaching and learning is a school priority and some useful improvements are beginning to occur. At this stage, however, it is not being used consistently well to provide challenging work for all ability levels. In discussion, a number of more able children said they often found the work easy.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new learning well. During the inspection, some good use of questioning and involving children through discussion was seen, but in too many lessons children were not actively involved in this way. Teachers have good relationships with children and overall manage them well. Very occasionally they could be firmer in relation to explaining their expectations of behaviour.

Overall, teaching assistants make a satisfactory contribution to teaching and learning. Where they are deployed to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities their impact is best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Work is planned so children in parallel, mixed age classes follow the same programme. Relevant links between subjects are created to make learning more meaningful. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities work towards appropriate targets in individual education plans. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, with suitable opportunities for children to use these skills in other subjects. The curriculum supports children's economic well-being effectively through good provision for ICT and opportunities for children to suggest and carry out fund-raising activities. A good range of additional opportunities ensures children's enjoyment of school. These include a new venture to teach children Italian, residential experiences and extra-curricular clubs that include, ICT, chess, sport and the arts.

The curriculum for Reception children is not planned or organised closely enough to the areas of learning specified for this age group. At times the work is too formal, limiting exploration and the development of children's independence. Whilst opportunities for play are regular, activities are insufficiently structured to challenge the children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support for children. Child protection procedures follow requirements. Steps are taken to ensure children remain safe on school trips and there is an annual risk assessment of the premises. The use of risk assessments in some other areas, including outdoor provision for Reception children, could usefully be extended. There are good links with outside agencies, for example, to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has also sought and acted upon advice to help the small number of children at an early stage of learning English. Children say that they have good relationships with staff and are confident in adults' ability to swiftly sort out any problems. Initiatives, such as the anti-bullying campaign, also help children to feel safe. The lunchtime nurture group is proving very effective in boosting some children's self-esteem.

New target setting initiatives and the marking of children's work in relation to these are beginning to help children understand their strengths and how they can improve. Overall, parents feel that their children are well cared for. The school is aware that a significant number of parents dislike the mixed age classes and some have justifiable concerns about the effect of staffing disruptions on their children's education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and generally understands the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is recognition of the need to raise standards, improve achievement and the quality of teaching. There is also an action plan to improve provision for Reception children. However, despite acknowledging these weaknesses, the school feels that its effectiveness and the quality of leadership and management are good.

Since her appointment, four years ago, she has striven to make improvements but success has been slower than expected. Staff turnover and absences have been fairly high and budget cuts have also necessitated a reduction in staffing. These factors have thwarted efforts to embed new initiatives. However, recent re-organisation of the leadership team has been well thought through; many coordinators have new responsibilities and are eager to make an impact on improving provision and standards. School development planning is thorough. The views of teachers, governors, parents and children are sought in this process. The number of teaching assistants is adequate but given the large classes, is somewhat stretched.

Teamwork between the headteacher and recently appointed deputy is good. The deputy has taken a strong lead in promoting consistency in systems, such as planning and assessment, and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Staff morale has risen and there is generally good support for the head and her aims for the school. As such, the school is judged to have the capacity to improve. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities. They support the school effectively and are steadfastly behind the

headteacher. Whilst overall they have a satisfactory understanding of the school's work, their view of standards and achievement is not comprehensive and their role in challenging the school to account for its performance could be stronger. Finances are managed well.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	4	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you all so much for your help with the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and found you very helpful and friendly.

These are the things we thought were good about the school:

- the school helps you to reach good standards in ICT
- you enjoy school, try hard in lessons and participate well in extra clubs and activities
- your behaviour is good. You are friendly and kind to each other and happily take on jobs and responsibilities
- your attendance and punctuality are good
- your school looks after you well and teaches you how to keep healthy, stay safe and help others.

These are the things we thought could be better:

- we think that you could achieve higher standards, particularly those of you who are quite quick at learning new things
- we think that sometimes the work you are given is too easy so we want teachers to challenge you more
- we think the Reception children need more opportunities to explore and find things out through exciting and challenging experiences, including play.

We hope that you will carry on enjoying school and all do your best to help your headteacher and the staff make Dringhouses school a good place to learn.