



# Topcliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 121522  
**LEA** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 281032  
**Inspection dates** 29 March 2006 to 30 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Rosemary Rodger CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	School Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Topcliffe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 3RG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01845 577 412
<b>Number on roll</b>	100	<b>Fax number</b>	01845 577 412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs J Hook
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Chatwin

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This small school serves a socially and economically advantaged rural area and a Forces' barracks. Pupil mobility is high. A very small number of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. All pupils are white British. There are a number of vulnerable pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, although an above average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. At the time of the inspection there were two temporary teachers in Key Stage 2. There is a part time pre-school on site.

## **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 in the 2005 national tests by Year 2 pupils were significantly above average. When children start school, their standards are above average. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, but very good progress in Years 1 and 2 because of outstanding teaching. This good progress has not been maintained in Key Stage 2 in the past three years when achievement was not good enough. This was because of low self esteem and inadequate progress in Years 3 and 4, and underachievement in science by higher attaining pupils in Year 6. Both of these issues are being tackled. Current progress in Key Stage 2 is good in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The school is inclusive and gives a high priority to supporting vulnerable pupils, who make good progress. Personal development and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The school is modest in judging personal development, the curriculum, and leadership and management: they are all good. The school's self-evaluation is good. The actions to improve self esteem and behaviour by introducing a personal, social and health education (PHSE) scheme are good and the reorganisation of the curriculum is helping pupils enjoy lessons more. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are weaknesses in teaching and learning for the Foundation Stage children. Assessment procedures are good. Pupil and parent views are gathered and responded to well. Parents are very happy with all that the school provides. The school has the capacity to improve and improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Value for money is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for the youngest children in school by providing them with more purposeful activities.
- Make sure the improved teaching in Years 3 and 4 leads to better achievement.
- Continue to provide additional challenges for higher attaining pupils so that they realise their full potential, especially in science.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Standards on entry to the school are above average in all areas of learning. Currently, the children in the mixed age Reception and Year 1 class make satisfactory progress. Good progress is made in Year 2. Standards in the 2005 national tests in Year 2 were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys and girls achieved equally well. In past years this good progress has not been maintained as pupils move up the school and standards have not been high enough, especially for higher attaining pupils in science and pupils generally in mathematics. Satisfactory achievement was reflected in the Year 6 test results in 2005 but the school did not meet its targets. The recently appointed headteacher has tackled this situation rigorously by putting in place an assessment system that identifies

pockets of underachievement. These are being dealt with, especially in Years 3 and 4. Currently, achievement and progress throughout Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the skilled and effective support provided by teaching assistants. Year 6 pupils are on task to meet the standards they are capable of in the 2006 national tests. This is reflected in the challenging targets set in English and mathematics. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is good and much improved since the last inspection.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils appreciate teachers' efforts to help them feel safe and to stay healthy. They understand the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit. Physical education, swimming and after school sports events are all well attended. Above average attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The assembly for younger pupils during the inspection fostered a strong sense of community, empathy with others, concern and compassion. Pupils develop a good understanding of the influences that have shaped their own cultural heritage, for example through visits to the world of Herriott, and an appreciation of cultural diversity through subjects such as music and geography. Behaviour throughout the school is good, but in some lessons attitudes to learning are only satisfactory because pupils are unused to taking responsibility for learning or cooperating with others. Steps to improve this have been introduced through PHSE lessons, for example Year 1 and 2 pupils were encouraged to reflect on their personal goals and discuss how they behaved towards each other when outside. Children in the Foundation Stage develop their personal, social and emotional skills satisfactorily. They need time to develop their independent skills and to take responsibility for learning in activities that they initiate themselves. Minor misbehaviour arises when the children are expected to sit listening for too long.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It ranges widely from outstanding to inadequate. Teaching is consistently good in Years 5 and 6 and Years 1 and 2, where there is some outstanding teaching. Features of the best teaching include the effective support and encouragement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by a team of highly skilled teaching assistants. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because of the clear explanations and demonstrations. Marking helps pupils know what to do next and they sometimes record their progress on target sheets. However, this is inconsistent. Relationships are good. Weaker aspects of teaching include planning that takes too little account of the range of abilities in each class so that higher attaining pupils are not always challenged and expectations are too low. The youngest children are expected to listen for too long in a large group

and do not have sufficient practical activities. In such lessons children get bored and restless and do not learn well enough. Pupils are not always given as much responsibility for their learning as they could be because they complete easy work sheets. All of which slows the progress of pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4 where pupils have made too little progress in the past.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The recently introduced 'Schemes and themes' are beginning to make learning more exciting. As a result pupils have opportunities to apply basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills into well planned themes such as the 'Rain forest'. The curriculum is further enhanced by the good use of the local environment, for example, through visiting a building site to help develop an understanding of health and safety issues. A range of popular clubs, including cookery and gardening are held at lunchtime and after school. Pupils get good opportunities to link with the wider community and take on responsibilities through sporting fixtures and musical events. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory but has the potential to be more effective by providing the children with more well planned and purposeful learning both indoors and outdoors.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The pupils say they are safe in school and gave many examples of how this is achieved. The arrangements to support and provide for vulnerable pupils are exemplary and much appreciated by parents and carers. Risk assessments are completed very thoroughly in line with the local authority guidelines. Responses to actions identified for improvement following the regular health and safety audit are equally well dealt with. All staff are aware of Child Protection guidelines as a result of very recent training. Assessment procedures have been improved very recently so that individual pupils' progress is tracked each half term in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are provided with specific targets to help them improve their work and to help them take responsibility for their learning. This practice is inconsistently applied by teachers and would benefit from a review. Links with the pre-school ensure an effective and smooth transition into the Foundation Stage.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher is committed to providing the best for all pupils by improving teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation is good. A thorough analysis of test results for all year groups has identified the reasons for past underachievement. Prompt action has been taken to improve this situation by, for example, staff training, visits to other schools and support from the local authority. The checking of the quality of teaching and learning has been

very rigorous. It has identified weaknesses that are being tackled, the result being improving progress in Years 3 and 4. Much effort is given to providing the best for vulnerable pupils, and they achieve well as a result. Work remains to be done in seeing that some more able older pupils get the kind of work which they can rise to. Governors work well in partnership with the headteacher and show a strong level of commitment to the work of the school. The school is adequately resourced with good improvements in resources for ICT since the previous inspection. Parents are very appreciative of information they are provided with and the training they have received to enable them to support their children. The school improvement plan provides a clear statement of intent and is well supported by the three year strategic plan. The accommodation is used well. The school makes formal approaches to parents to ensure their views are incorporated into school decision-making. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Value for money is satisfactory.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

I am writing to thank you for your help during the inspection. I am writing to tell you about my findings. I enjoyed talking to you and watching your lessons and activities around school.

What I liked about your school

- Most of you work hard and enjoy school.
- You say that your teachers are the most important people to help you feel safe.
- Your teachers plan some very interesting lessons, especially the work on the Rain Forest.
- Your parents are very pleased with all the information they get about school.
- Many of you are getting a lot of extra help to improve your learning.

What needs to be improved

- Those of you in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to learn more because you are working hard. You must try and keep this up and tell your teacher if you do not understand what you are doing.
- When you first start school you like to be able to learn through playing and not sit on the carpet for so long. I have asked your teacher to give you more play activities.
- Some of you need to be more challenged in your work, so I have asked your teachers to give you harder work to do.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy time at Topcliffe School and hope you all continue to enjoy your time there.