



Skipton Parish Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121591
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281051
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Margaret Lewis CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brougham Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Skipton
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		North Yorkshire BD23 2ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01756 793314
Number on roll	319	Fax number	01756 797221
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Oldham
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Miss Fiona Jackson

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	Inspection number 281051
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a Church of England voluntary controlled school in the centre of Skipton. It is larger than the average primary school with 319 pupils.

Pupils come from mostly white British backgrounds with a small proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils have English as their first language and none is in the early stages of learning English.

The school is housed in a Victorian building with no sports field. It serves an average socio-economic urban area, although an increasing number of pupils choose to attend the school from more disadvantaged areas close by. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a few looked after pupils.

The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Six pupils currently have a statement of special educational need. This is similar to the national picture.

The school gained the Healthy Schools Award in July 2005.

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 and rapidly improving school with many good features. The school has improved considerably during the last two years under the good leadership and management of the headteacher. However, inspectors do not agree with the school's view of itself that its overall effectiveness is good. This is because disruptions in teaching three years ago led to inconsistent progress for some groups of pupils. Some of these pupils still have significant ground to make up. However, good teaching is now leading to better progress for all pupils and standards are rising as a result. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

In 2004, results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 dropped to lower than the national average in mathematics and science. Unpublished results for 2005 show that standards rose to be above average in mathematics, science and reading although pupils did not achieve as highly in writing. This upward trend reflects the many effective measures taken by the school. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are judged to be good. This, together with the sharply focused leadership and management, gives the school a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour and attitudes to school are good, reflecting the good standard of care and guidance and very productive relationships between pupils and with staff. Parents and pupils like the school. Pupils find it an enjoyable and interesting place for learning.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and the pupils settle well, are happy and quickly gain in confidence with their work so that they reach the standards expected of them for their ages by the time they begin Year 1.

Leadership and management are good. Senior managers are keen for the school to do better and know where there is room for improvement. Self-evaluation has the rigour to reveal the reasons for weaknesses in pupils' progress, and action to raise standards is purposeful and successful.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to tackle areas of underachievement already identified.
- raise standards in pupils' writing, by pursuing the existing range of good strategies

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation states that pupils' achievement is good. Inspectors judge it as satisfactory.

The latest results for pupils in Year 6, not yet validated, show standards are rising rapidly in mathematics, science and reading which are now above average. This represents a significant improvement, although results in writing have not risen as much.

Standards dropped in 2004 for a variety of reasons identified correctly by the school. This showed that in their time in Key Stage 2 the school had not helped the pupils in Year 6 make sufficient progress. The school has carefully analysed this drop in standards and successfully implemented strategies of intensive support that have resulted in reversing standards in 2005.

The school can show convincingly that it now adds value to pupils' achievements, although rates of progress vary from year group to year group and there are still some pockets of underachievement. Pupils start in Reception with below average attainment for their ages. Most make good progress and by the end of Reception reach the goals expected of them. In 2005, pupils performed well in achieving their predicted targets at both the nationally expected levels and the higher levels for mathematics and science but in English fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Personal development and well-being underpin the school's ethos. Pupils are happy to take on responsibilities and there is a strong sense of teamwork amongst them. They say they enjoy coming to school because lessons are fun and there is always plenty of help for them when they need it. Pupils behave very well. They work hard in lessons and the work displayed around the school shows that they take pride in what they do. They are polite and friendly and show respect for others. These good attitudes are reflected in the high rate of attendance, which has risen dramatically over the course of the last year. Pupils fully understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They appreciate the designated area for ball games but said they 'would like to have a grassy area'. They enjoy all of the opportunities they have to take part in sports and relish the inter-school tournaments in cross-country and swimming. The importance of personal fitness is emphasised in lessons such as physical education and science, for example, when pupils learn how exercise affects their heart rate. Pupils feel safe in school because they are alerted to possible dangers. A Healthy Living week takes place each year, which heightens pupils' awareness of diet and fitness.

The school council contributes well to school life by seeking others' views on matters such as school rules and charity fund raising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges that teaching and learning are good and inspectors agree. Following a period of instability for some groups of pupils, teaching has now improved significantly and this is helping to raise standards and pupils' progress across the school. Assessments and targets are used effectively by teachers to plan suitably

challenging work for all groups of pupils. Extra help is given to those identified as most in need of boosting their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are confident about trying out different approaches. They ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn during lessons. As a result, lessons are always interesting and pupils say that learning is fun. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils worked in pairs to play a number game in which they had to use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary to describe a number without actually giving it away. This provided a good test of pupils' understanding and mental agility. Pupils who have additional learning needs are supported very well, often by highly skilled teaching assistants, who are sensitive to their particular needs. Behaviour in lessons is managed well, largely due to very good relationships established by teachers. Pupils know that their contributions to lessons are valued; consequently, they respect their teachers and become willing, enthusiastic learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is planned and organised well. This helps all children to build their skills and knowledge step by step. A strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science resulted in improved standards in 2005. New approaches to integrating other subjects are strengthening the range of activities. Very good provision for the performing arts leads to high standards and contributes well to pupils' personal development. Activities outside lessons are outstanding in range and quality, such as the residential visits for older children in Years 4 and 6. The personal, social and health education programme is effective in terms of the good skills children have by Year 6, but the school knows it needs to be developed across all classes.

The curriculum successfully meets the needs of children with learning difficulties. Clear plans for these children's learning and skilled support from staff contribute to the good progress they make. Some plans are not updated frequently enough, even though teachers set new targets informally. The school identifies children with particular gifts and talents and suitable programmes of work are being developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that the school provides a good level of care for all pupils. It places great emphasis on preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are valued as individuals and the trusting relationships within the school mean that there is always someone for them to turn to. Every effort is made to raise self-esteem by celebrating pupils' achievements. The weekly 'Star Pupil' awards are a good example of this, as well as the ways in which teachers praise pupils for their good work in lessons.

Pupils know their targets for improvement and older pupils agree that marking helps them to see what they need to do to improve their work further.

The school's day-to-day practices regarding health and safety were recently judged by the local authority to be exemplary. Risk assessments are routinely carried out and all essential measures are in place. Child protection arrangements are secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school says that leadership and management are good and inspectors agree.

The school is well led and managed. Members of the senior leadership team have high expectations of staff, governors, parents and pupils, successfully

involving them all in helping the school to improve. As a result, morale is high.

The headteacher has worked hard, in a short time, to establish leadership teams in all phases of the school. Leadership of all subjects has been effectively re-established following a period of uncertainty. Managers at different

levels are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. The recent changes that have taken place have resulted in a more stable staff, who show a strong commitment to the school and to raising standards. This is helping to promote pupils' progress more consistently. Self-evaluation procedures are good and shared with staff and governors. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are very thorough and ensure that every member of staff is properly focused on school improvement and raising pupils' standards and achievement.

Governors are developing their involvement in and evaluation of the school's work. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. Established committees are beginning to play an increasing part in questioning school developments. All pupils are valued highly and great efforts are made by staff to help them all to succeed. Most parents are very pleased with the school and the progress that their children make. A very small number would like to have more opportunity to give their views to the school and have their suggestions and concerns considered. The school's leaders have been successful in tackling a drop in standards. This has been achieved within a tight, very well managed budget. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed. The school is well placed to improve further.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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

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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You made us very welcome. A special thanks to those who talked with us about life in school.

We think that there are many good things happening in your school and it is getting better all the time.

You told us that you enjoy going to school each day. We think that your behaviour is good. Your attendance has improved over the last school year and is better than in many schools. You said that you learn something new everyday and get enough homework which increases as you get older.

We noticed you are proud of your school and make many friends. You say that the playground 'buddies' are always there to help and that, although there is sometimes falling out between friends, there is no bullying. Teachers listen to you and hear both sides of a problem. We think that all the staff are very kind and work very hard to take care of you and help you to learn. They try to make lessons fun and try to get you to do your best. You learn many good things, especially about how to treat others and stay fit and healthy.

We were very pleased to see the outstanding range of activities and opportunities that you have during and after the school day. A large number of you go to after-school activities and say how much you enjoy them.

We have asked the teachers to make sure that you all become good writers by the time you leave school and that you continue to make better and better progress.