

Cowick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118025
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	291000
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Hibbs
Headteacher	Mrs Tracey Hawkyard
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	Snaith Road East Cowick Goole DN14 9DG
Telephone number	01405 860417
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This popular school is smaller than the average sized primary school. It is situated in a small village and pupils come from a wide area. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. A low proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion with a statement of special need is also below average. The school is part of the Snaith Cluster of schools and a Learning Network of nine rural schools. The cluster has appointed an Extended Schools Coordinator to develop provision. The school gained Healthy School status in 2006.

When children start school in Reception levels of development in writing and mathematical calculation are below average and above average in personal development. Other areas of learning are broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which children thrive and achieve well. Parents are highly supportive of the work of the school. They rightly recognise the value to their children of a family atmosphere underpinned by a strong Christian ethos. Caring and supportive staff create a secure environment in which pupils feel safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils enjoy school, work hard and behave very well. Pupils take responsibility for each other and are thoughtful and considerate towards each other. They contribute well to their own community through the effective work of the school council. These positive attributes and their secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare pupils well for their futures. Pupils are developing a good understanding of how to stay healthy and many enjoy the extra sporting activities.

Teaching is good and teachers make lessons interesting and challenging. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting point in Reception. By the time they leave school in Year 6 they reach above average standards overall. However, not enough pupils reach above average standards in writing by Year 2 and Year 6. The school is starting to take appropriate action to improve writing skills. This includes reviewing the consistency of marking pupils' work. Pupils now have very helpful individual targets that set out what they need to improve in their writing. A well structured approach to learning basic writing skills is being piloted. The school is looking for ways to make writing more enjoyable and exciting for pupils.

Children make good progress in Reception. They settle into school quickly and are well taught and cared for. A good balance between structured learning and play supports their personal and academic progress well. The outdoor space is limited in size and is not very stimulating despite the work of the Reception class staff to provide good learning activities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets high expectations and provides clear guidance on improvements based on rigorous monitoring. These, together with her warm support of staff and pupils, ensure that they are challenged and enabled to do their best. The headteacher, staff and governors work effectively as a team and much has been achieved in recent years. Pupils' progress is now assessed and tracked rigorously helping to identify areas for improvement. Standards in reading have risen considerably as a result of the school's focus on this. Resources for, and the teaching of ICT, have improved significantly. The accommodation, including classrooms and some outdoor play areas, has been improved greatly. Pupils can now have their say through the school and class councils. The school has made the most of its partnerships with local schools to ensure that staff benefit from high quality professional development and training. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, improving achievement and tackling the issues identified for improvement successfully. It is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Find ways for pupils to practise and improve their writing in the context of stimulating and challenging learning in more subjects.
- Bring a greater consistency to the way teachers mark pupils' written work to ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the quality of the outdoor area for the youngest children in order to provide more opportunities for learning when outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Each year-group is small in number and standards fluctuate from year to year, reflecting the differences between the ability of each group. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because teaching is good and they are very well cared for and supported.

Children start school in Reception with average levels of development in most areas of learning but with relatively weaker writing skills and elements of mathematics. Children make good progress in Reception and a greater than average proportion of children reach the expected level of development. The focus on learning through phonics is helping to improve standards in literacy.

Standards have been significantly above average in Key Stage 1 national assessments in three of the past five years. In 2006, results dipped but were still average, though no pupils reached above average levels. The school's data shows that almost all Year 2 pupils are making the progress expected of them with around one third making better progress than expected. Reading is the strongest element and has improved as a result of the school's recent focus on this.

Key Stage 2 national test results in English, mathematics and science have been above average in three of the past four years. The progress pupils make from Year 2 to Year 6, when compared to similar pupils, has improved over the past 3 years, and is good. The school has successfully focused on raising standards in reading. A dip in results in 2006 meant that the school did not meet its challenging targets. This was related to a small group of pupils with severe behavioural difficulties who did not achieve well despite the best efforts of the school to support them. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach above average standards overall but not enough are likely to reach above average levels in their writing. The school has recognised this, and is focusing on raising standards in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by class teachers and support staff and make good progress. No group of pupils is underachieving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The positive family atmosphere and strong Christian values of this small school underpin pupils' good personal development, and their good spiritual, social and moral awareness. Pupils take part in school assemblies enthusiastically. They provide very good opportunities for personal reflection. Very positive relationships between pupils and staff help pupils to feel secure. Pupils behave very well, enjoy school and their attendance is good. They enjoy helping each other and older pupils often play with younger children. The small amount of bullying reported by pupils is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils understand the need to stay healthy and enjoy healthy food at lunch and break times. They all take part in at least two hours of physical education each week and a good proportion enjoys extra sporting activities. School and class councils take their responsibilities seriously. They have made a really good job of smartening up the toilet areas and deciding on class rules for conduct.

Pupils are well prepared for their futures. They learn to work co-operatively and develop problem solving skills through the increasingly varied approaches to learning and through enterprise activities organised by the local specialist high school.

The school recognises the need to develop pupils' awareness of a culturally diverse society. Many activities are planned, including a visit to a multi-faith centre in Bradford and links through the internet with pupils in other countries.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and result in pupils making good progress academically and in their personal development. Lessons are well planned and include a good range of activities that pupils enjoy. Pupils especially enjoy lessons in which they are more actively involved; for example, drama-type activities. Teachers work very effectively with their teaching assistants to ensure that lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported.

The headteacher has brought about significant improvements in the systems used to assess and track pupils' progress. These have helped teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning, match learning activities more closely to pupils' different needs and to give pupils individual targets to guide improvements in their writing skills. Pupils find these targets very helpful because they know what they need to concentrate on in order to improve. Pupils are increasingly taking part in assessing their own and each others' work, strengthening their own knowledge and understanding. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent across the school so that pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve a piece of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school is developing activities that result in pupils' increased enjoyment and excitement about learning. Themes are planned that involve exciting visits or visitors and some opportunities for writing. The school is planning to develop this approach more broadly across the school. Though the teaching of literacy and numeracy is well structured and taught in discrete lessons, there are not yet enough opportunities for writing beyond structured literacy lessons.

Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities that includes a gardening club for Key Stage 1 pupils. Older pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities and the school recognises the need for more out of hours physical activity for Key Stage 1 pupils. A well planned programme of personal, social and health education helps develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and ensures that children experience a good balance of structured learning and play. The limited nature of the outdoor area restricts opportunities for learning and play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, support and guidance is good. Arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place and regular checks on the safety of the school site are carried out by governors and the local authority. Staff are informed of child protection procedures and training to update all staff is imminent. Safeguarding checks on staff, governors and parents more than fulfil current requirements.

In a strong supportive family atmosphere staff know the children very well and take good care of their personal and emotional welfare. The school makes good use of the support offered by external agencies to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support.

Pupils' academic progress is tracked closely throughout the school enabling children in danger of underachieving to be identified and supported. Pupils do not always know how best to improve their work because the quality of marking of their work is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is well supported by governors and staff. In the past three years, she has brought about significant improvements that are helping to increase pupils' achievement. These include the identification of a common purpose across the staff and a team approach to raising standards and the quality of provision. Governors are more closely involved in monitoring and supporting developments. New systems to assess and track pupils' progress in literacy and mathematics are helping to identify underperformance, gaps in knowledge and understanding, and provide children with effective individual targets for literacy. Subject leaders are developing their role and taking a more active lead in improving their subject areas. There has been a successful focus on improving support for reading that has led to improved standards across the school. The headteacher has worked in close partnership with local schools to provide high quality professional development that is well focused on the school's priorities. She has overseen significant improvements to the building and resources, especially ICT.

Self-evaluation is accurate and informed by secure systems of monitoring and evaluation that involve governors as well as the headteacher. An effective and highly supportive governing body fulfils its role as a critical friend and has given much support to the improvement in the buildings.

Issues identified at the previous inspection have been tackled and improved and pupils' achievement is improving. Value for money is good and the school has a good capacity to improve further. An above average amount of funds have not yet been spent. These are strategically accounted for and much of this is due to the headteacher's successful efforts to obtain extra funding.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 April 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Cowick C E Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Goole, DN14 9DG

Thank you so much for making me feel welcome in your school. It was delightful to meet and talk to so many of you and see you at work in lessons. It is important that you know what the inspection found out about your school.

You have a good school. Your headteacher, staff, and the governors work very hard to help you to do your best. They have created a school that feels like a big family where everybody cares for each other. You thrive and do well in this positive Christian atmosphere. It is good to see that you enjoy school and learning, especially when you get actively involved in lessons that include drama activities. You behave very well indeed and the school council deserves much praise for the improvements it is making, especially the imaginative decorating in the toilets. You make good progress in your work and achieve good standards, though not enough of you reach the highest levels in your writing.

I have asked the school to help you to improve your writing. We want to see you practise your writing in different ways, especially if you are excited about what you have found out about during a visit or as a result of special visitors to school. I have also asked the school to make sure that you know how to improve your work. In addition, I have asked the school to see what it can do to make the outdoor area used by the very youngest children more interesting and helpful to their learning.

I do hope that you enjoy the rest of your time at school and make the most of all the opportunities the school and the staff can give to you. I wish you good luck and good fortune for the future.

Best wishes,

Mrs G. Salter-Smith

Lead inspector