



Fishergate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121277
Local Authority York
Inspection number 292068
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Wendy Ripley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fishergate
School category	Community		York
Age range of pupils	3–11		North Yorkshire YO10 4AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01904 623511
Number on roll (school)	202	Fax number	01904 674873
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Duncan
		Headteacher	Mr Andrew Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006	Inspection number 292068
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Fishergate is an average sized primary school situated in a large Victorian building just to the east of York city centre. Most pupils live close to the school and come from broadly average socio-economic backgrounds. The school is ethnically diverse. Children's attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range, but is average overall. Nearly 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below average. The majority of children are of White British heritage, although 34 pupils currently speak English as an additional language. This is only slightly above the average for most primary schools, but these 34 children speak some 14 different languages. There are 29 pupils who are considered as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities which is a lower proportion than found nationally. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the start of the school year is high, mainly as a result of parents' employment arrangements. The headteacher joined the school in January 2005. There has been a reduction in the number of teachers and significant staff turnover in the last two years. Twelve teachers left the school in this period and seven teachers were appointed.

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 which is well led and managed. It has a justifiably high reputation within the local community because of its warm welcoming approach. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and value its 'inclusive ethos that celebrates difference and values and develops each child's skills and talents'. The school provides good care and support for pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language and prepares them well for the future.

The school has made full use of the local community and the many different nationalities of the pupils to develop a rich and exciting curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good. Lessons are stimulating and creative. Classrooms and displays around the school are lively and vibrant, providing a good learning environment.

Significant improvements have been made to the Early Years Unit during the past 18 months. Provision in the Foundation Stage is now good and children make good progress. However, opportunities to use the outdoor play area purposefully to promote learning are missed. Pupils' attain broadly average standards as they move through the school although not all pupils make enough progress, particularly in mathematics and writing. The school is fully aware of this and has implemented a range of appropriate strategies. Assessment data are robust and used effectively to track individual progress. Older pupils in particular are successfully involved in monitoring their own progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are a particular strength at Fishergate and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are confident and polite. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This is because of the excellent relationships between the pupils themselves and between the staff and pupils, so that all groups of pupils feel secure. The pupils report that the best thing about the school is the teachers and all of the staff. They like coming to school because teachers make learning fun and give them work they feel able to do but which 'stretches them most of the time'.

The school has satisfactorily addressed the areas for improvement which were made at the last inspection, although standards in writing remain an issue. Resources are effectively deployed and financial management is secure. Over the last two years strong leadership with a clear sense of purpose and vision and a good staff team has re-energised the school after a period of turbulence. This is now beginning to have an impact on raising standards and the quality of provision so that the school provides good value for money and is very well positioned to improve further. The contribution of the governing body to the work of the school is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for those pupils identified as underachieving.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school.

- Maximise the potential of the Foundation Stage outdoor play area so that it provides more learning opportunities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Trends in standards and achievement vary over time because of the number of students who join and leave the school part way through a key stage. The most recent data shows pupils' attainment in national tests when they leave school at age 11 is broadly average. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress against the targets set for them.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Teaching for this age group encourages good social skills and a love for learning. As a result, most children reach expected levels or above, by the time they start in Year 1. Achievement during Years 1 and 2 is good and standards are rising at the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics. Strategies are in place to raise attainment in writing, which continues to be a focus for school improvement.

Most pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily throughout Years 3 to 6 although there are some pockets of underachievement in mathematics and writing. The school recognises that not enough pupils are making the progress expected in these areas. However, as a result of more rigorous assessment procedures and innovative learning experiences such as the recent 'Mathematics Enrichment Day', standards are improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. Parents of pupils in the Early Years Unit and Key Stage 1 classes are welcomed into classes for the first 15 minutes of each day and are actively encouraged to participate, for example hearing their child read. Parents regard this as a positive feature of the school which settles their children in the school well and helps transition from the Foundation Stage.

Across the school all adults ensure tasks support personal development as well as focusing on standards. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the way in which the school fully embraces children of different nationalities and is concerned to ensure that pupils engage with their world community as well as their local area. This is reflected in the many excellent displays around the school and in activities such as the global fortnight which takes place annually.

Pupils' self-esteem is high. They are confident, courteous and friendly when talking to adults and each other. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and attendance is in line with national expectations. Pupils and the school council report that their views are taken into account by the school on a range of issues.

Pupils have a good awareness of safety issues and understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is important to the pupils. For example, pupils participate in Fair Trade stalls in conjunction with a local church, visit a local farm and are working with the local allotment on a project to grow food there which they will eat in school. The school council explained how they had visited a local organic shop and had tasted a variety of different foods, reported back to their classes about this, and are now working on a project to set up and run their own healthy tuck shop.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall with some outstanding features. Overall pupils make good progress in their learning. The headteacher, senior leadership team and the chair of governors have worked hard to tackle staffing difficulties over the last two years. As a result the quality of teaching has improved, particularly during the last year. In the best lessons the pace is lively, activities challenging and all pupils are actively involved in their own learning. Teachers explain the purpose of the lesson effectively to pupils so that they are clear about what they are learning and what they have to achieve. At the end of the lesson teachers review the progress made with the pupils and use this to plan ahead. The management of the pupils' behaviour is very good and leads to a lively, friendly and enthusiastic working atmosphere where learners make good progress.

Pupils enjoy their learning and report that, 'teachers work really hard to make learning fun here' and to provide many additional activities such as visits to a local university for science, dancing workshops and clubs such as football, art, French and choir. As a result pupils like and respect their teachers.

Lessons are well-planned, matched to pupils' needs and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and think about how to improve.

Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons carefully so that work is well suited to individuals, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Marking is consistent and of a good standard. It is used effectively to guide the pupils to improve their work. Teaching assistants and other support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning because they are well informed and fully involved in planning and assessment. Overall, the good quality of teaching means that standards are improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It is broad, well balanced and supplemented by a wealth of enrichment and

out-of-school activities. Information and communication technology is good and used successfully to support learning across the school. The wide range of opportunities

pupils experience develops their personal and social skills and brings learning to life. In the Foundation Stage children take part in a good range of activities that are well suited to their developmental needs although there is scope to further develop the outside play area to support learning.

Visits and visitors to the school have a real impact on learning. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent visit from a group of Ghanaian Dancers. Excellent links with the local community also makes learning interesting and relevant. For example, pupils used their visit to the Castle Museum as a springboard for developing listening and speaking skills and writing. The listed Victorian school building is used to good effect to support history lessons and Victorian artefacts are used to practice deduction and inference skills.

Innovative teachers link different aspects of the curriculum together well; for example in linking mathematics and music using a specially written song, to develop understanding about the use of the decimal point and numerical units. The school has rightly identified the need to review the curriculum framework regularly in order to develop even more creative cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's good care, guidance and support for pupils have some strong features. Adults carefully monitor the pupils' personal development and academic progress and work well with other agencies. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and effectively supported. Support for children learning English as an additional language (EAL) and their families is strong. The school makes good use of a part-time EAL teacher and an EAL support assistant as well as specialist local authority provision. Pupils say their opinions are valued. They feel safe and know that adults within the school will help them. Whilst bullying rarely occurs, pupils and parents report that when it does, it is dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff. The school makes determined efforts to make sure that every child is safe and really does matter. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and meet required standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since joining the school two years ago the headteacher has worked hard to build strong and effective relationships with parents and links with the local community, to improve the quality of provision, raise standards and to build a strong and stable staff team. As a result, he and all of the current staff team are held in high regard by parents who unanimously acknowledged this through the returned parental questionnaires. The current senior leadership team works well together and includes all staff effectively in school planning and decision making. There is strong morale and effective teamwork across the school as a result.

The school has taken full advantage of the benefits and opportunities afforded by the Primary Leadership Programme. Carefully thought out plans, strategies and staff training have been put in place in order to improve the quality of provision and raise standards. The school's self-evaluation process involves the whole staff and accurately identifies the key areas for improvement. The self- evaluation report is honest, although the inspectors consider that it judges some aspects of its performance and progress too harshly.

The senior leadership team and governors share a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Their knowledge of the school and understanding of educational issues as well as their contribution to, and involvement, in the life of the school is outstanding. Financial management is secure and resources are effectively deployed to meet the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school offers satisfactory value for money and has very good capacity to continue to improve further.

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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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

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.

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	1
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	1
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

As you know we visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. I am writing to say a big thank you to you all for helping us and making us feel so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and were very interested to hear about all the things you do and what you think about your school. You told us that you enjoy learning, you like your teachers and your school and you feel happy and safe when you are there. We want to tell you that we agree with you and your parents because we think Fishergate is a good school too. Mr Herbert, the teachers and all of the staff have worked really hard to develop the school over these last two years so that it is a great place to be with lots of interesting things to learn and do. Here are some of the other things that we found out from our visit.

- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is really good and you try hard to do your best. You all deserve a very big round of applause for that!
- You get on well with the adults and with each other.
- You have a good headteacher and good teachers who think the world of you and take good care of you.

We also found some things that can be better in your school and we have asked the headteacher and staff to sort these out. These are the things they need to do.

- Make sure that you do better in writing and maths and get higher marks in your tests as quickly as possible.
- Improve the play area for the youngest children so that they can learn and do more when they are outside.

You can help too by continuing to behave well and working as hard as you were when we saw you in your school. The main thing is to keep on enjoying going to school, learning as much as you can and being proud of yourselves for working so hard. Thank you again for being so friendly. We liked you and your school a lot.