

Wheatcroft Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121349
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292087
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Swift
Headteacher	Mr K Baines
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001
School address	Holbeck Hill Scarborough North Yorkshire YO11 3BW
Telephone number	01723 375704
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is an average sized school, situated on the outskirts of Scarborough in North Yorkshire. The area served by the school is of mixed housing and is socially and economically similar to the national picture. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. Five children are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children start school their attainment is broadly typical with that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wheatcroft is a good school and has the potential to be even better. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and provides good value for money.

Pupils reach above average standards, achieve well, and make good strides in their personal development. This is because of good teaching, a strong curriculum and high levels of care and support. This is a school with a strong family feel and a caring, nurturing ethos, where every child is given every opportunity to take part in what is offered. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe, behave well and get on well with each other. They have a good awareness of keeping fit and eating healthily, through a wide range of opportunities and activities.

The high quality relationships between staff, pupils and parents are the hallmark of the school. A warm welcome is extended to everyone who walks through the door. Great emphasis is placed on developing a positive, friendly environment where every child is valued and encouraged to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' achievements are celebrated with care and pride. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and recognise the high standards of care it provides. They have great respect for the headteacher and the commitment and dedication of staff. One parent expressed the views of many when she said, 'Each child is known by all the teachers and everyone is looked upon as an individual.' The school is well thought of in the community and there are good partnerships with other schools and agencies.

The success of the school is underpinned by the strong leadership of the headteacher and the commitment and teamwork of staff. Together they have sustained previous strengths and successfully put in place measures to secure further improvement and raise achievement. Children make good progress from the moment they enter the Reception classes. This is because curriculum experiences are well planned to engage their interest and enthusiasm. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are consistently above average. While progress in learning is good overall, the school is aware that pupils have the potential to make more rapid progress in mathematics.

Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. In the best lessons, activities are challenging and capture the interest of all learners. Tasks are well chosen and teachers manage pupils well through praise and encouragement. Skilful questioning keeps pupils on their toes. Learning outside lessons is enriched by the many clubs and activities which enhance the good curriculum and contribute to pupils' enjoyment. In some of the less successful lessons, some of the higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

The school is not complacent. The good leadership team, including governors, are fully committed to improvement. Despite strengths in leadership they are aware of inconsistencies in the effectiveness of how the school checks on the quality of teaching and learning and that strategies to promote and share good practice lack clarity and agreement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make more rapid progress in mathematics.
- Improve the way teaching and learning are checked and make efficient use of the resulting information.
- Use data from assessments more rigorously to plan consistently challenging activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and the standards they attain are above the national average by the end of Year 6. Children join school with a wide range of abilities which are broadly typical for their age. They get off to a really good start in the Reception classes and make great strides in their learning. As a result, by the beginning of Year 1 many reach and often exceed the nationally expected levels for their age. Although in previous years standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, there was a dip in 2006 to below average. This was because a number of factors came into play, including changes in staffing and the children's abilities being less strong than other year groups. The school's data indicates that most Year 2 pupils are now working at the level expected for their age.

Work in lessons and pupils' books confirms that progress is generally good as pupils move through the school to Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are swiftly identified and they receive good individual support. The work to encourage pupils to use and apply their knowledge in solving problems is having a positive impact on raising achievement in mathematics. As a consequence, standards are starting to rise.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and supports their learning well. The school has a strong ethos exemplified in the code of conduct that encourages care and consideration. As a result, pupils are thoughtful and display strong attitudes to their learning. Their attendance is satisfactory. Good foundations for personal and social development are laid down in the Reception classes, where children settle rapidly into school routines and conform well to the school's high expectations. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A rich range of experiences develops pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in the world. As a consequence, behaviour is good and pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and participate eagerly in an extensive range of sport and physical activities. They are also aware of the importance of a balanced diet. The school provides plenty of good opportunities for pupils to assume responsibility, express opinions and make decisions. For example, pupils were able to have their say in the current plans to improve the playground with additional equipment and new facilities. In general, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. At present, however, opportunities for pupils to explore emotions and learn about important issues such as drugs awareness and sex education are just beginning to emerge across the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn and achieve well. Common strengths lie in the warm relationships staff have with their pupils and the efficient manner in which lessons are planned and managed. Interactive whiteboards are effectively used to engage learners and keep them on task. Tasks are invariably imaginative with a good emphasis on practical work and first hand experience. There is often a good emphasis on group work that helps to promote social skills.

Questioning is often lively and well focused, the best examples providing good opportunities for pupils to respond to open ended questions and to share their thoughts and ideas. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher successfully developed pupils' understanding of a good performance poem by encouraging stimulating and interesting debate. When teaching is outstanding it is because the pace of the lesson is brisk, lively and varied to maintain the interest of the pupils. Tasks are carefully matched to learning needs. By contrast, in a small number of lessons, tasks are not always geared sufficiently well to the needs of individual pupils and in this respect, some higher attaining pupils have the potential to achieve more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well organised and children make strong progress as a result of a good balance of teacher- and child-led activities. Pupils with additional needs are well catered for in all classes. While there is an emphasis on the skills of literacy and numeracy, other subjects are given due prominence, with an emphasis on practical activities that promote enjoyment in learning. Since the last inspection the school has made great strides in developing and improving the provision for information and communication technology. As a result, pupils show increasing confidence in using and applying their skills in other subjects. The curriculum is broadened and enhanced by the provision of additional features such as French, educational visits and a wide range of good quality extra-curricular opportunities in music and in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of the pupils, who say they feel safe and valued. Pupils said they would be confident to discuss any problems with their teachers, knowing that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. Pupils say there is very little bullying in the school. Any isolated incidents are dealt with promptly and pupils appreciate this swift action. The school gives careful attention to the needs of its vulnerable children and provides them with good personal support. Good communication with parents ensures that children settle quickly and are well supported from the moment they start school. Strong links with local high schools underpin the good arrangements to support the pupils' transition to secondary school.

The progress of pupils is tracked carefully especially in literacy and numeracy, taking into account the outcomes of regular assessment. A new system to track the academic progress of the pupils in foundation subjects has been introduced. At present, information is not always put to best use to plan challenging and demanding tasks, especially for the higher ability pupils. The pupils know their learning targets and the thorough marking of their work shows them how to improve.

All required procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils in school and on educational visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and works with energy and determination to drive the school forward. He is responsible for the warm,

caring environment that prevails where every child is encouraged to grow in confidence and self-esteem. He provides a clear vision and sense of direction to all aspects of school life. He is well supported by an equally committed team of staff and governors who share his purpose and enthusiasm. As a result, there is a strong sense of shared leadership, staff are open and receptive to new ideas and morale is high.

Although systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, they do not have a sharp enough emphasis on identifying strengths to share and aspects to improve. As a result, formal checks on lessons and pupils' work lack focus, and at present do not involve all members of the leadership team.

Nevertheless, leaders are not complacent. For example, senior staff have correctly identified that the achievement of more able pupils in mathematics requires some improvement. Plans to raise achievement are beginning to bear fruit, with increasing numbers of pupils achieving more highly across the school.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is based on information from all of the school's stakeholders, including parents. This ensures that priorities to improve are well chosen and that appropriate action is well thought out.

The governing body plays an important part in shaping the school's direction and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Its members are very committed and provide good levels of support and challenge. They are involved in evaluating the school's performance and have a good understanding of the agenda for improvement. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and has good capacity to improve still further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

The inspection of Wheatcroft Community Primary School, Scarborough, YO11 3BW

As you know, Mrs Walker and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We enjoyed our two days with you, and thank you for being so polite and friendly. It was wonderful to see what a happy time you have at school. We were made to feel very welcome. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Firstly, and most importantly, you need to know that you go to a good school. You work hard, behave well and get on well with each other. You feel safe, are well cared for, and show concern for others less fortunate than yourselves through your fundraising. You have a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy.

It was pleasing to see that so many of you enjoy music. I was very happy to hear the school choir sing.

We were pleased to see that you are taught well and make good progress in your learning. Mr Baines and all the staff and governors work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and we are sure that it will continue to improve.

We have asked if they can make sure you make faster progress in mathematics and make some lessons even more challenging. We have also asked if they can check more closely on how well you are learning.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard. Thank you for helping us with the inspection.