



Pickering Community Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 121363
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292088
Inspection date 24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Tony Painter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ruffa Lane
School category	Community		Pickering
Age range of pupils	3-7		North Yorkshire YO18 7AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01751 472620
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	01751 477653
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Bowley
		Headteacher	Mrs Lynette Duggleby
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a bit smaller than average and set in pleasant grounds in a rural market town. Most pupils are White British and come from a wide range of backgrounds in the town and the villages around. Many pupils come to school in buses and around a fifth come from very small villages or isolated farms. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There have been many staff changes and the school has had unsettled leadership over recent years. The new headteacher took post in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

There are many well-established strengths to this caring and nurturing school that are apparent from the moment one arrives. Great importance is placed on pupils' health, safety and welfare and very strong relationships have been established at all levels. As a result, pupils gain confidence and maturity through the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The new headteacher has quickly but very effectively built on this foundation to improve important aspects of the school's work. For example, the school has now successfully established a clear behaviour code for pupils and behaviour is now exemplary. The headteacher's balanced but accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses has allowed her to set out a clear vision of what needs to be done. Arriving after a period of change, insecurity and disjointed leadership, she has set high aspirations for staff and pupils that all are keen to reach. Increased focus on the ways that teachers can help pupils to learn has led to a substantial revision of the curriculum. There are stronger links between learning in different subjects, particularly in the ways that pupils' language development helps their overall learning. Teachers work together well to plan pupils' work with a consistent approach. This is clearly seen in the closer links and greater coherence of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes, which ensure these children's good progress. Throughout the school, lesson plans identify what will be learned and teachers make this clear to pupils. Teachers use targets and common marking systems to help pupils to understand how well they are doing. There are stronger and more accurate systems to check how well pupils are doing, but teachers do not consistently use all of the information from these to refine and support their lesson planning. Nonetheless, the improvements are accelerating pupils' progress and ensuring good overall achievement. Past underachievement has had an impact, most obviously seen in the school's results in the 2006 national assessments for Year 2 pupils. These were significantly below average and lower than the general level of the school's results over time. Some of this weakness can be attributed to the high proportion of these pupils with additional learning needs. However, it is also clear that disruptions to the continuity of their education have had an impact. The school's response to the identified concern was very positive and therefore most of these pupils made above average progress in Year 2. This good level of progress is now being maintained throughout the school. The current group of Year 2 pupils are likely to reach average overall standards by the end of the year with some doing better still. The headteacher has established very clear and methodical approaches to school development which help all staff to understand and share responsibilities for improvements. The development plan is precise and detailed, outlining well how the school needs to improve. The range of management roles is being systematically widened and staff are being supported with appropriate and successful training. This means that staff feel very involved with the improvements that are being tackled. Their action plans are detailed and derive directly from the observations and evaluations of lessons and other provision. Governors have good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All parties are clear on how the success of further improvements will be monitored and their roles in the processes. Self-evaluation has been too modest because the school does not

yet have detailed national assessment results for the pupils currently in school. However, the substantial progress made in a relatively short time, backed by the security of the systems, shows that the school is well placed to continue to make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers use all the information they have about how well pupils are doing to promote consistently good progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with attainment that is below that found nationally for their age. In particular, a number have weaknesses in their language development and some have had limited pre-school experiences. All make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. Their strong personal and social development in these classes means they are well prepared for the rest of their schooling. The school's 2006 national assessments for Year 2 pupils were significantly below average, which was lower than most past years. This reflects the high proportion of these pupils with additional learning needs as well as the earlier disruption to schooling that they had received. However, the school's detailed tracking shows that these pupils made good progress in Year 2. Pupils are now achieving well throughout Years 1 and 2 because the school has made substantial improvements. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach or exceed national averages, representing good achievement overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their interest and motivation is clear as they talk with excitement about their lessons. They are proud of their achievements and show increasing levels of independence and self-confidence throughout the school. Pupils learn to cooperate and help each other through practical and imaginative activities which foster extremely strong relationships. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school. They know and understand the 'golden rules' and are keenly aware of how their actions affect others. The new school council makes a good contribution to the sense of community and all pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils develop good awareness of fitness and health, referring to their healthy packed lunches and their enjoyment of physical education lessons. The establishment of a link with another school in South Africa is helping to develop the pupils' understanding of wider global issues.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strong and supportive relationships form a very secure foundation for teaching throughout the school. This gives pupils increasing confidence to try their best in lessons. Recent curriculum improvements placing greater emphasis on practical and relevant experiences are motivating pupils well to succeed. Teachers are improving the consistency of teaching through the school by planning their lessons together. For example, they are successfully developing pupils' language by promoting speaking and listening skills and giving good opportunities in many different types of writing. The school's recent focus on assessing pupils' learning is beginning to have a good impact. Teachers increasingly identify what pupils need to learn, making sure they understand by setting targets and identifying how to improve in their marking. However, this process needs to be more precise to ensure that the pupils consistently make the best possible progress and are challenged. In particular, teachers do not make full use of what long-term tracking tells them about how well individual pupils are doing to amend targets and planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has carefully but substantially revised the curriculum to improve progress by establishing greater links between pupils' learning in different subjects. This has been supported by good moves to make lessons more practical and relevant to pupils' stages of development. Teachers' focus on improving learning has been aided by better assessment and record keeping, with this information increasingly and effectively used when planning lessons. The Nursery and Reception classes work closely together to ensure a successful and systematic approach to children's development. Past strengths in the curriculum, such as the high quality provision for art and design throughout the school, have been successfully maintained. A wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities further enrich pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a very high level of care and support for all pupils. At every level, extremely precise and effective systems ensure pupils' health and safety. There are good levels of adult supervision and the behaviour and bullying policies are well understood by the pupils. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for, with most parents wholeheartedly agreeing. Children are helped to settle quickly and securely into the school and increasingly strong links with the junior school are easing pupils' transition to the next stage of education. Those pupils who need additional help are supported well in classes, and assistants make a good contribution to the school's positive atmosphere. Improved monitoring of academic progress is reflected in pupils'

greater understanding of their own learning. However, assessment information could be used with more precision to set targets and plan work to ensure pupils' very best progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The clear direction and sense of purpose of the headteacher have enabled the school to make substantial improvements since her appointment and ensure good value for money. After a period of unsettled leadership and staff changes, the staff have formed an effective team to tackle the school's weaknesses. They are taking new responsibilities and beginning to carry them out well because they are supported by well targeted training. As a result, there is a shared understanding of how the school is able to improve and a willingness to make necessary changes. Self-evaluation is accurate and well considered, particularly in the awareness of how pupils' learning lies at the heart of the school's purpose. Rigorous systems have been introduced to check the school's performance and this information is incorporated into the clear development plan. Staff take good responsibility for planning action which relates to the overall priorities. This process is now well established and is a firm foundation to ensure that the school continues to make good progress. Governors hold the school to account well and have good understanding of how actions taken are leading to improvements.

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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	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	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	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	1
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.

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

It was a real pleasure to visit your school. We enjoyed watching your lessons and talking with you and your teachers very much. Thank you very much for being so polite and helpful. We were impressed by how well you behaved: you really know and understand the 'golden rules', don't you? Everyone was very friendly. It's clear that all the adults and children get on very well together and this helps you to learn well in your lessons. You told us that you thought your school was good, and we agree. We liked seeing the way your teachers are working together to make sure you all do well in your lessons. They make sure you are safe and well cared for and they are really good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do. You all certainly looked like you were enjoying everything, even those of you who were squashing the peas! The teachers are getting much better at checking how well you are learning. They are helping you to see how well you are doing by getting you to use your targets. We saw how much you all like a good challenge, so we have asked teachers to make sure they use all they know about you to plan work that will really stretch each of you. Your headteacher has really helped everyone to make the school better in quite a short time. We are sure that all the staff will make sure it keeps improving. You can help by continuing to do your very best in everything you do. We wish you and the school the very best for the future.