

Alverton Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121368
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292091
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Keeler 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	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	126
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Josh Southwell
Headteacher	Mrs L Gorecki
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2002
School address	Mount Road Northallerton North Yorkshire DL6 1RB
Telephone number	01609 773524
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Age group	3-7
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a small infant and nursery school with specialist provision for pre-school children with speech and communication disorders. All of the pupils come from the immediate locality which has a higher proportion of social disadvantage than is seen in most other areas of the country. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above 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 all pupils achieve well and where staff realise that pupils' personal development, together with the quality of care and support they can provide, are key to their success. This is recognised by the community who appreciate the welcoming and friendly atmosphere and, in particular, staff that place the needs and welfare of the pupils above everything else.

Pupils start school with skills that are significantly below that typical for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery because of good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with speech and communication difficulties, make good progress as a consequence of very effective provision that caters well for their needs. While pupils continue to make progress during Reception, it is not as rapid as it should be because expectations are not as high. By the time pupils start Year 1, many reach the nationally expected learning goals. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make very good progress as a result of good and often outstanding teaching. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are currently just below the national averages. This is influenced by the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some erratic attendance which inhibits opportunities for pupils to catch up.

The quality of teaching is good overall and this is why, given their starting points, pupils achieve so well by the time they leave the school. In all classes the relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are excellent and this fosters a productive learning environment. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching is not as well developed as it could be. The curriculum is regularly reviewed as the school strives, successfully, to meet the needs of all learners. A good programme of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and help to sustain pupils' interests. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily.

The quality of care and support is outstanding and is the hallmark of this school. The school places considerable value on the part played by parents and carers in the education of their children. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. They enjoy school and like their teachers; this is reflected in their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' behaviour is good and they respond positively to their teachers. Good systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school and this is supported by regular assessment. Targets are set in order to help pupils improve but they are not as closely linked to the marking of current work as they could be.

The driving force behind this school is the headteacher. Through good leadership and management, her positive influence can be seen in every aspect of school life. Her commitment to providing the best possible education for all pupils is readily acknowledged by governors, staff and parents. A strong sense of teamwork, which includes the governing body, enables the aims of the school to be realised. The school has good capacity to improve and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of pupils in Reception.
- Use interactive whiteboards more effectively to support teaching.
- Ensure that day-to-day assessment is more closely linked to the setting of individual pupils' targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with knowledge and skills that are very much below those typical for their age. Poor communication skills, coupled with low levels of social and emotional development, make it difficult for many pupils to reach the expected learning goals by the time they commence Year 1. However, many do, while others are still striving to reach the skills required. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make very good progress. Until recently, standards at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2006, however, standards fell to just below national averages. This was due to the combined effect of an unusually high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small cohort of pupils. The school has set realistic targets regarding attainment at the end of Year 2 for the current academic year. If they are realised, and pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that this is likely, then standards will be about in line with national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of early intervention. A noticeable feature is the good progress that pupils make with regard to communication and social skills during their time at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Every pupil is valued by all staff at this school. The caring and supportive atmosphere enables pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. This impacts positively on their learning and is reflected in their enthusiasm to engage in classroom activities. Standards of behaviour are good both in lessons and while at play. This is because the school has high expectations and communicates these clearly to all pupils. It is also influenced by the good role models presented by all adults working in the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They talk with authority on the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables as well as taking regular exercise. The emphasis placed on the acquisition of basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepares them well for their future. Levels of attendance are below the national average. However, the school makes a great effort to monitor attendance and, in partnership with the school welfare officer, encourages parents to ensure that their child benefits from regular schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall because of the impact it makes on pupils achievement. Attention is focused on creating a stimulating environment where pupils want to learn. A significant element of the teaching is the way that teachers quickly identify individual needs and provide activities that enhance progress. A good example of this is in the Nursery where emphasis is put on developing pupils' speech and communication skills in a variety of interesting and exciting ways. As a result, pupils are increasingly able to access new learning.

The quality of teaching in Reception ranges from satisfactory to good. On occasions, expectations are too low and this restricts progress. Pupils are insufficiently challenged and require increased opportunities to practise and apply their writing and numeracy skills on a regular basis. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is never less than good and often outstanding. It is

characterised by very good subject knowledge, high expectations, good use of assessment and lessons that involve pupils in their learning through practical and interesting activities. The use of interactive whiteboards to support teaching is underdeveloped because teachers lack the necessary confidence and skills. Good support from teaching assistants helps to reassure pupils and gives them the confidence to tackle their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is under constant review and, as a result, the school succeeds in meeting the needs of pupils. It is broad and balanced and offers pupils of all abilities a good range of learning opportunities. Emphasis is placed in equal measure on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills as well as nurturing their social and emotional growth. This is a successful strategy as it fosters good working habits and teachers are particularly adept at promoting it within the classroom. Good links are made between subjects at an early age. A range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and help to stimulate and inspire pupils as they acquire new knowledge and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A strength of this school is the outstanding level of care and support given to all pupils and their families. The headteacher and staff understand the complex needs of the community and their pupils extremely well and work tirelessly to meet them. Pupils, therefore, feel safe and secure and this allows them to focus on their learning. The high level of care provided underpins pupils' achievement. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that all staff are properly checked and appropriately qualified. Good procedures exist with regard to child protection. Effective links with external agencies ensure that pupils receive the support they need in order to prosper. Tracking systems have been established to monitor pupils' progress over time and these are supported by regular teacher assessment. Pupils are set targets to help them improve but they do not closely reflect their immediate learning needs as identified through teachers' marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. She demonstrates a clear educational vision borne out of a determination to do the very best for every pupil. This conviction is successfully communicated to all staff and, as a consequence, a strong sense of teamwork is evident where everyone has a common purpose and pulls together to good effect. The outcome can be seen in pupils' achievement which is why, for a number of years, the school has been recognised by the local authority as being highly effective. Good self-evaluation procedures are in place and this has enabled the headteacher to gain an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The senior leadership team and those staff with subject responsibilities effectively monitor standards of teaching and learning and are constantly looking to improve provision. Governors are very supportive of the school and monitor developments closely.

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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	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	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	3
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

You may remember that I came to visit you recently to find out how well you are learning. You all made me feel very welcome. I really enjoyed talking to many of you, particularly at playtime, during lessons and when you were eating your lunch. Many of you told me how much you enjoy school and how you like your teachers. After spending the day at your school I can see why you think like this.

These are things I liked.

- Mrs Gorecki, your headteacher, is determined that you enjoy your time at school and have lots of interesting things to do.
- The teachers and all the adults do a good job to help you with reading, writing and mathematics.
- All the teachers and other adults at school look after you very well and are always there for you to turn to when you are worried about something.
- You behave well during lessons and in the playground.
- You know why it is important to eat healthy food and take regular exercise.

I have asked your headteacher to:

- give the pupils in Reception more opportunities to do writing and number work
- make sure that teachers use their computers more often to help you learn
- give you targets that will help you to learn as quickly as you can.