

Harrogate, Bilton Grange Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121394
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292101
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Melanaphy
Headteacher	Mr Stef Puchalka
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002
School address	Bilton Lane Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 3BA
Telephone number	01423 502375
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bilton Grange is a larger than average primary school, situated on the northern side of Harrogate. It serves a mixed community representing a wide variety of social circumstances. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award and other awards that mark its contribution to teaching basic skills and to providing for pupils with special needs. The school has achieved the Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bilton Grange is a good school and gives good value for money. It makes a real impact upon pupils' all-round development. Care, guidance and support are strong with good arrangements for transferring into and from the school. The school provides a safe and happy environment where pupils flourish; the vast majority enjoy coming to school and learn to take responsibility well. This is seen in the good behaviour in and out of the classrooms and the open and welcoming approach to visitors to the school. Pupils behave well towards each other and relationships are good. Pupils make very informed choices about healthy lifestyles, and by Year 6 are sensible, mature young people. Parents are pleased with the school and praise the dedication and commitment of the teachers. However, the school has not yet persuaded all parents of the value of good attendance and a very small number of pupils have poor attendance records. The school is tackling this problem and starting to make headway.

The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on improving pupils' learning. The clear direction given by the school's leaders and the effective steps taken to emphasise basic skills in literacy and numeracy have been successful in raising standards. Other subjects such as science and information and communication technology (ICT) are also taught successfully and the school provides very well for pupils to enrich their experiences in art, music, drama and sport. Teachers are confident and are given good guidance on how well they are doing because their work is monitored well and they share best practice. Teachers make increasingly good use of assessment to set targets for individual pupils that help to motivate them and keep their progress on track. The school has recently undertaken to track pupils' progress more systematically in order to identify and tackle any underachievement. The methods used are sound, but further work is needed to gain more from the information collected about pupils' learning over time.

Most children enter the Reception classes with levels of maturity and attainment that are broadly average and achieve well in this phase. These children make good progress because planning, teaching and assessment are linked well. By the time pupils leave Year 6 most attain above average standards. This is because they receive generally good teaching that focuses well on their needs as individual pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good provision and make good and sometimes better progress. However, the highest-attaining pupils are capable of achieving more. Pupils' results in the most recent national tests in Year 6 continued an upward trend of improvement, reflecting good achievement.

Leaders at all levels throughout the school are effective and know very well the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is good, is mainly accurate and ensures that challenging targets are set as a good basis for raising standards further. As a result, the school has moved on well since the last inspection in 2002 and the school has good capacity to improve further. Staff and governors share a common vision for the school. This includes being an integral part of the community the school serves and helping all pupils to achieve as well as they can.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by the higher-attaining pupils;
- Check the progress of pupils more closely to support and guide their learning more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Teachers in the Foundation Stage work together to plan activities that meet the needs of all children and ensure that they enjoy their learning. As a result, children make good progress in the Reception classes and their skills in communication are developed particularly well. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the vast majority of pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities and their starting points. Results in 2006 were significantly above the national average, reflecting good achievement for those pupils. However, the highest attainers are capable of more and this had an impact on the proportion of higher grades obtained in recent national tests for Year 6 pupils. Current standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are also above average in other subjects and there are particular strengths in art, drama, music and physical education. The school sets challenging targets which are largely met. There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, along with good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, give them a head start when they transfer to secondary schools. Attendance is average because there are a few pupils with persistently poor attendance records. However, the vast majority come to school regularly because they thoroughly enjoy school life and are keen to take part in the many activities on offer to them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, enjoy being 'playleaders' during breaks and lunchtime. Staff say how seriously pupils take this responsibility and how much the care shown nurtures and supports younger pupils. Likewise, the school council has a genuine voice in how the school is run. As a result, pupils become mature, sensible and thoughtful learners who can make decisions for themselves. Their outstanding knowledge of how to stay healthy is recognised by the recent Healthy Schools award. Pupils have a good understanding of safe practices, such as the safety rules in physical education and science and moving around the school carefully so as not to hurt other pupils. They make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community, for example by their extensive charitable fundraising. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills, along with increasingly good ICT skills, stand them in good stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage children are offered an interesting range of both structured activities and those in which they are encouraged to make choices. In this warm and friendly environment, which includes very effective use of a wide range of outdoor resources, children make good progress. This was very apparent in a joint mathematics-based lesson in conjunction with Year 1. Here, the Foundation Stage children clearly enjoyed an outdoor structured play activity linked to counting and recording a number of colourful objects.

Key strengths in teaching across the school are to be seen in the many interesting and challenging activities provided and the frequent opportunities for pupils to work constructively in pairs and groups. Advice from teachers and constructive marking of pupils' work help them understand what they need to do next to improve, and motivate them to produce their best

efforts. Occasionally, when the introduction to lessons is a little unclear, pupils' progress is held back due to a lack of understanding of what is expected of them. The challenge to highest-attaining pupils is not always as strong and consistent as it might be. In some classes observed, where teaching assistants were present, they were used effectively to support pupils and help them make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers use creative approaches to stimulate pupils' learning and to help them achieve well. Often, general themes are used to give a good balance to subjects studied as well as reinforcing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT. The linking of these key skills to underpin learning is helping to further promote pupils' enjoyment and safety. The curriculum is utilised very well to support pupils' personal development, for instance, and a special SEAL week (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) is held at the start of each term. This includes a wide range of interesting activities for pupils to enjoy; these enrich their learning and contribute much to their self-confidence and esteem. The curriculum also includes a wealth of extra sport and art, drama and music in addition to the many educational visits and visitors to the school. These all add to pupils' enjoyment, and help to ensure that they have an excellent appreciation of healthy lifestyles. These additional activities help to nourish pupils' learning and are much valued by pupils and their parents, one of whom defined the school as 'one large and happy family'. More could be done, however, to ensure that the curriculum consistently meets the needs of the higher-attaining pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of care, guidance and support that the school gives to its pupils ensures that they are happy, feel safe and receive extra support when it is needed. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are sound. This is a school that aims to put 'Every Child Matters' at the top of its agenda: as staff said, 'because they DO matter!' Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example, including pupils who need help to manage their behaviour, are supported well by caring teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils know what bullying is and why it is unacceptable. They say that staff will always be there to sort out any problems. High priority is given to listening to pupils and this ensures that they are never afraid to discuss their problems. Attendance is starting to improve due to the implementation of strategies to encourage working closely with parents. Although the school has started to consider the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented, there are times when the most capable pupils could achieve even higher standards with greater expectation to do so. Nevertheless, older pupils say how much the marking of their work and talking to teachers helps them to improve their work and reach their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good throughout the school. Every teacher contributes to the leadership of an area or subject and the teachers' commitment to improvement is a key factor in the school's success. The headteacher makes a good contribution to the development of the school through his clear vision, where the raising of standards lies at the centre of the school's

activities. The strong values which are promoted have a marked and positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The senior leadership team is experienced, able and dedicated and these qualities have been pivotal in maintaining good staff morale through a difficult period of reduced pupil numbers and shrinkage in staff levels. Senior and subject managers play a crucial role in monitoring the school's performance and effectively tackle weaknesses. As a result, the school's capacity for further improvement is good. The school is not complacent and is keen to use the views of parents and pupils when evaluating its work and planning for further improvement. The monitoring of teachers' work is regular and increasingly rigorous.

The governing body is both challenging and supportive; it provides a further layer of good leadership. Governors increasingly play their part in holding the school to account for what it achieves and have made significant improvements in their contribution since the last inspection. They play a good part in ensuring that the school makes effective use of its resources and the different skills of teachers so that good value for money is obtained.

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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	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for being so helpful and friendly to me and my inspector colleagues when we visited your school, which we found to be a good school. We enjoyed seeing your work, talking to you and listening to your singing. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters, and for talking to us.

These are the things that are good about your school.

- How well the school helps you to develop into mature young people.
- Your good behaviour and the willingness you show to take responsibility, such as through your school council.
- The many activities and clubs in art, drama, music and sport that you enjoy and that help you to develop your talents.
- The dedication of your teachers and the way they take good care of you and teach you to be safe and healthy so that you feel secure and enjoy coming to school.
- The way you raise funds and care for disadvantaged people.

To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you bring about improvements by:

- checking the progress you make in your work more carefully so that they can get the best from you
- making sure that the most able pupils among you are stretched and challenged to do the best they can.

I wish you all well in the future.