

Rufforth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121412
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	292106
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	56
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr Mark McDermid
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Wetherby Road Rufforth York North Yorkshire YO23 3QF
Telephone number	01904 738347
Fax number	01904 738347

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspection number	292106

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural primary school serves the prosperous village of Rufforth to the north west of York. Pupils come from the full range of social and economic backgrounds. About 40% of pupils travel from outside the immediate area to attend this school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion with statements of special educational need or with significant physical or learning needs. Similarly, the proportion of able, talented or gifted pupils is higher than usual. The headteacher has been in post for two and a half years. Currently, a temporary teacher is covering unavoidably intermittent and prolonged staff absence in the Reception/Key Stage 1 class. The school building has been extended radically in the last year with a hall for both school and community use and additional office and teaching spaces. The school gained the Healthy Schools Award in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rufforth Primary School gives pupils an outstanding all-round education and provides excellent value for money. It caters exceptionally well for pupils with a wide range of individual needs, helping them to fulfil their potential and ensuring that learning is a happy and fruitful experience. It fully meets its aim to 'provide an open family atmosphere where children enjoy learning together in an environment where they can thrive.' This is due to the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, who in two years has infused the school with his energy and commitment to providing the best possible learning experiences for all pupils. Parents fully appreciate the excellent education their children receive. Nearly everyone wrote to say so, commenting on the superb range of extra-curricular activities and the many opportunities given to their children to help them develop into responsible young people.

Achievement is outstanding, particularly that of more able pupils or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because provision for their needs is outstanding and teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) extremely well to foster independent learning. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, with almost all pupils reaching nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6 and a good proportion exceeding them. Reading is a notable strength because pupils work with others of similar ability in different year groups. This encourages younger readers in particular. The school has taken effective steps to improve a relative weakness in writing. Teaching is excellent and outstanding support from teaching assistants ensures there is no underachievement because pupils' different learning styles are taken fully into consideration. The school is at an early stage of involving pupils in checking their own learning. Excellent marking and target-setting in the Reception/Key Stage 1 class help pupils to make rapid progress as they know exactly what they need to do next. In the other classes, these systems are less refined. While marking is very encouraging, it gives more guidance to lower achieving pupils than to average or more able learners. This means that average achievers in particular are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work and so they tend to repeat mistakes.

It is easy to see why pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils quite rightly declare, 'This is a brilliant school!' 'We're a healthy school!' 'We do loads of sports!' 'It's a very active school and everyone gets a chance!' Individuals really matter and pupils have a strong say in what goes on. They work hard and play exuberantly at break and lunchtimes. Older pupils make sure that younger ones always have someone to play with, organising energetic games that are fun. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally good and pupils appreciate there is 'always something different happening every day. It's fun.' Their mature independence and awareness of others mean that they act safely and show respect for the world around them. Their enthusiasm for sport and knowledge of how food affects their bodies, help them to live healthily. Working together is valued. From seeing adults planning and teaching lessons together and realising how the new community hall has opened up learning possibilities for everyone, they have a real sense of what it means to contribute to a community.

Outstanding leadership and management have enlivened the curriculum with many additional extra-curricular activities and links with other schools. As a result, the curriculum is now good with outstanding features. Improved assessment procedures have given staff a much clearer handle on achievement and pupils are given outstanding care, support and guidance. The school is outward looking, offering a similarly broad provision to that found in much larger schools. The impact is seen in pupils' vitality, their excellent working habits and their confidence to ask

and answer questions and to put forward well-reasoned arguments publicly. Governance is first rate, tempering support with judicious questioning in order to ensure high standards in all aspects of the school's work. Given the rate and effectiveness of changes in the past two years, capacity for further improvement is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that the marking of pupils' work in all classes gives clear steps for improvement as well as encouragement so that pupils are more involved in checking what they need to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Standards in English, mathematics and science are comfortably above average by the end of Year 6 because teachers set and expect high standards. With very small year groups, results in national tests sometimes fluctuate depending on the mix of pupils. Roughly half exceed nationally expected levels, as reflected in the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 6. Intensive support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that almost all reach close to nationally expected standards by the time they leave school. From a broadly average starting point, children make very good progress in the Reception year, benefiting from working alongside older pupils. This continues in each class. The school sets and meets its challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school as shown by their outstanding attendance and early arrival when they come straight into the classrooms and busy themselves with their tasks. By the time the bell goes they are ready to learn straightaway. They have excellent attitudes to learning and work extremely well together. Year 6 explained that 'the teachers help you to feel more confident because they read out your work.' Older pupils readily take on responsibilities and see it as only right that they should help younger ones. Year 6 'play leaders' organise games on a special part of the field and 'peer mediators' sort out any problems. This is why pupils say there is no bullying: 'We're all friends; we're all one big family.' The school council is democratic and forceful, for example, organising mirrors in the cloakrooms. Currently, Year 6 are preparing for a debate against other schools in the local council chambers hoping to win the prize so they can go ahead with their computer generated designs for a new pond. With their enterprise, energy and good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, they are very well placed for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding with notable strengths in teachers' good subject knowledge and careful planning for the wide age range and ability groups in each class. The quality of assistance given by support staff is highly valuable because teachers plan so well to ensure that pupils benefit from their skills. This results in close team work in the Reception/

Key Stage 1 class, promoting consistently good quality individual learning and very effective challenge for different groups of pupils elsewhere. Very occasionally, the pace of lessons is a bit relaxed and discussions a little too long. Marking is outstanding in the Reception/ Key Stage 1 class so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work. In the other classes, marking is very encouraging but rarely indicates the next steps to make the work even better. This means that pupils are not as involved as they might be in checking their own learning, despite the good quality of teachers' incidental oral assessments of older pupils' work. Teachers plan the use of computers extensively and this particularly aids more able, gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to learn effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum provides well for literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to be taught and also to be used in other subjects. A good start has been made on linking subjects together and the school's current focus on writing in other subjects is pertinent. Specialist teachers for music, art and French bring diversity to teaching and learning in a small school. Recent links with other small schools whereby older pupils in three small schools regularly spend a day together are successfully widening pupils' experiences and extending their social development. The choice of extra-curricular activities is vast, ranging from many different sports to gardening. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is also strong and contributes successfully to pupils' confidence and growing maturity to make their own decisions and state their point of view whilst respecting the views of others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for safeguarding children meet current government guidelines. Pastoral care is excellent because the school caters for individual needs exceptionally well so that pupils become increasingly self-reliant, mature and responsible. Good systems to check academic progress give a clear overview of individual achievement so it is easy to target extra support where it is needed. The school is developing target-setting so that pupils are more aware of what they need to learn next. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding as is the provision for able, gifted and talented pupils, as they are supported extremely well to make the best possible progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management have ensured rapid development over the past two years, notably in improved assessment procedures, ICT resources and the curriculum. New buildings have further enhanced provision and the school is able to provide extended education outside the school day. These measures have also helped the school to cater more easily for the full range of pupils' educational and physical needs with improvements in national tests as a result. The well-thought out school improvement plan, supported by high quality monitoring of teaching and learning, gives a clear programme for future development with achievable, measurable targets to ensure success. Given that the headteacher has a half-time teaching commitment, the rate of change is impressive. Unavoidable staff absence has had no ill effect on pupils' learning because the systems set up to run the three youngest year groups in one

class are highly effective. Self-evaluation is accurate though a little over-cautious in one or two instances because the school is still working on some areas. The outstanding governance demonstrates clear understanding of strengths of the school and provides challenge and support to maintain constant improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
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

Inspection of Rufforth Primary School, North Yorkshire, YO23 3QF.

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for answering all my questions so politely. I really enjoyed talking to so many of you and especially to Year 6 who gave up 10 minutes of their lunchtime because we were chatting so much. I agree with you when you say that your school is 'brilliant'; it gives you an outstanding education. Your work is of a good standard and those of you who find learning easy do extremely well as do those of you who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because your school is so well led and managed that teachers know the progress that every single one of you is making. This helps your teachers and teaching assistants to plan interesting lessons to help you learn to the best of your ability. I was glad to see you using laptops so extensively for they really help you to learn when used wisely as you were doing. Your school gives you outstanding support to help you mature and grow into responsible people. I was impressed at how well you work and play together and could see what you meant when you said you were like one big family as I watched 'play leaders' organising a great game on the field for younger ones.

It is part of my job to point out what schools should do to get even better and although your headteacher has thought of just about everything, I have suggested the following to help you to learn even better. I noticed when I looked through your books that teachers are very good at encouraging you but do not always point out what you should do to improve your work. Although they talk to you about your work a great deal, it does mean that some of you tend to repeat mistakes because you are not in charge of checking it yourselves. So I have asked your teachers to:

- Make sure that the marking of pupils' work in all classes gives clear steps for improvement as well as encouragement so that pupils are more involved in checking what they need to do next to improve their work.

I hope you enjoy helping your teachers and that you continue to learn with such enjoyment.