



South Milford Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121418
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292109
Inspection dates 22–23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sand Lane
School category	Community		South Milford, Leeds
Age range of pupils	5–11		West Yorkshire LS25 5AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 682359
Number on roll (school)	151	Fax number	01977 682359
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Alison Whale
		Headteacher	Mrs Sue Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	22–23 February 2007	292109

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school has six classes covering the seven year groups. Pupils come mostly from an established residential area. Less than one in twenty pupils is entitled to free school meals, which is around a quarter of the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and all have English as their first language. Around one in ten pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is below the national average. The school takes in a higher than average proportion of pupils, mostly in Key Stage 2, at other than the usual time.

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 where pupils achieve well both academically and in developing their personal qualities. The quality of teaching and learning is good, as is the curriculum and the pastoral care and support for pupils. The school's senior leadership is a key strength. The school has a largely accurate view of its performance, based on rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring. However, it was somewhat modest in its overall judgements of some aspects, for example achievement and teaching. Parents are positive about what the school provides and achieves.

The school's pastoral care for pupils is a real strength. Parents find that staff are very approachable and helpful when difficulties or concerns arise. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time settle well, as they are made welcome by staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for. Academic guidance for pupils, while developing, is not yet a consistent feature across the school. All key aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils clearly enjoy school and have good attitudes to all it offers, including their work in lessons. This is reflected in consistently good attendance. Behaviour is good both inside and outside of lessons and pupils show good levels of respect and tolerance for each other. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as serving on the school council. They understand, for example, about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and how to stay safe. The school is remarkably good at providing pupils with experience of enterprise, the world of work and insights on a wide range of cultures and societies around the world. This stands them in good stead for their future lives.

Pupils' academic achievement is good. This is because both teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Standards are typical of those found nationally on entry to the Reception class. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, enabling pupils to make a good start in their development and learning. Pupils make good progress overall between Years 1 and 6, despite some variation in the quality of teaching. School leaders have done much to minimise the impact of these variations, by identifying gaps in pupils' learning and putting in place recovery strategies, where needed. The curriculum is good, giving pupils a rich experience right across its full range. There is effective enrichment through a range of visits, visitors, community events and the good range of out-of-school clubs. The key issue in the previous inspection report, related to pupils' access and use of information and communication technology (ICT), has been decisively addressed.

Leadership, management and governance are all good. The headteacher has established a clear sense of direction, while effectively encouraging and challenging everybody to become part of a shared enterprise. She is ably supported by senior staff. The monitoring of key areas that impact on pupils' progress is open and regular, and the learning arising is rapidly put into practice. There are still opportunities to make more proactive use of the wide range of assessment data, as part of the school's journey towards excellence. The governing body plays a key role in shaping the longer-term direction of the school. Governors are supportive of the school and are positive about the acceleration in the pace of improvement taking place. Improvement since the

previous inspection has been good. These factors indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to move the school towards becoming excellent, make more use of assessment data to predict longer-term performance, and to identify, as early as possible, where improvements are needed.
- Create more opportunities to share the good and sometimes outstanding teaching practice across the school, to make pupil progress at least good in all classes.
- Provide improvement targets for all pupils on a consistent basis.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress, throughout the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly similar to those found nationally, although early language and mathematical skills are weaker than other areas. They get off to a good start, so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are broadly average in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development; they are above average in all other areas. By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

By the end of Year 6, standards are rising strongly and are significantly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. A major improvement in recent years has been that high proportions of pupils now reach the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) at the end of Years 2 and 6. Following a dip in the years after the previous inspection, standards are now significantly higher than ever before. The school confidently sets and meets challenging whole school targets, as these are well informed by the rigorous pupil tracking system.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school a good deal, as shown by their above average attendance and positive attitudes. 'We love learning at school!' a group of Year 6 pupils agreed. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know they are valued as individuals and treat others with respect. They learn to respect other faiths and cultures and contribute to the wider community through fundraising initiatives.

Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop important life skills. They act as budding entrepreneurs raising money by selling 'Amazing Raisins' as a healthy snack. They have learned about the world of work by taking on a variety of service roles at a local hotel. They show they can work as a team, solve problems and listen to others as they carry out responsibilities in school, such as school buddy and councillor.

Pupils demonstrated their good understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy when they made their own video for the Healthy Schools award and designed a healthy lunchbox for Pudsey Bear. The school was also awarded the Activemark' in 2006, in recognition of its work on health and fitness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall and this is reflected in pupils' good progress. High expectations and good relationships throughout school lead to a happy learning environment, where pupils are keen to do well.

Lessons are usually thoroughly planned. In the best lessons a sequence of short activities builds progressively on pupils' previous learning. An outstanding feature of some teaching is when pupils are challenged to think, talk about and develop their own ideas. As a consequence, pupils of all ability levels work with enthusiasm, becoming fully involved in learning.

In a few lessons, however, work is not always so well matched to pupils' different abilities. Consequently, the pace of learning falls. The best examples of teaching are not yet shared enough between members of staff to promote consistently high quality teaching throughout school.

Very effective teaching assistants make a positive contribution, ensuring pupils' progress by supporting individuals and groups. Marking, mostly of good quality, shows pupils clearly how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils learn particularly well when they have the opportunity to work with a level of independence within a particular theme that combines a range of subjects. For example, in a recent topic on Peru, older pupils used ICT skills to research rainforests, wrote poems about rivers, made parrots in design and technology and found out about the contrasting localities. This approach is used well to challenge pupils of different ability levels. It helps them to develop an understanding of the way they learn best and consequently they become motivated to improve their work. Staff are working successfully to improve the quality of writing throughout school, by using a programme which encourages pupils to think about and discuss issues. Additional support programmes are used effectively to help those with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or those at risk of underachieving, to make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by the attractive outdoor facilities, such as the sensory garden, and pupils are able to grow their own vegetables. Pupils also enjoy a variety of clubs and themed days as well as residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. Parents feel welcomed into school and consider that their children are very well cared for and supported. Pupils feel valued because their good achievements are celebrated. They are confident that they would find someone to help in school if they had a problem and are encouraged to support each other when problems arise. Arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety and to safeguard them are in place. Systems to help teachers identify and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties are sound.

Academic guidance is not as consistent as it could be. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and outside agencies are consulted when appropriate. The practice of regularly setting and reviewing individual targets with pupils is at an early stage of development and has therefore had only limited impact on pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, helped by the governing body, has provided a sharp focus and clear sense of direction for all. The headteacher has adopted a calm, sensible approach to change and improvement, effectively encouraging and challenging staff to take part in this journey. She is well supported by senior staff. All staff feel valued, encouraged and challenged to take a full part in school improvement. As a result, pupils' progress is good and rising strongly and roles and responsibilities are clear.

Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, and leads to effective action. Senior staff have a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. The headteacher's evaluation skills combined with a sense of urgency have been key reasons for recent rapid improvement. For example, her identification of the need to challenge the more able pupils fully in lessons has resulted in greatly increased proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There is still a little room to improve this work further by basing it on early prediction of future performance, as part of moving the school towards becoming an excellent one.

The contribution of the governing body is good. Governors support and challenge the school well, based on a good knowledge of its strengths and key areas for improvement. The governing body discharges its strategic responsibilities admirably. For example, governors play key parts in staff restructuring and in the development and monitoring of the clear, manageable school improvement plan.

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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	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	2
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	1

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. It was very useful to hear how much you like your school. We really enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we found out. You go to a good school, where you learn well not only in subjects but in the way your personal qualities develop.

What we liked most about your school

- The headteacher and other staff are good at their jobs.
- You get an exceptionally good appreciation of how business works, from your links with the local hotel and fundraising.
- The school cares very well for you, based on treating all of you as individuals.
- You are happy and feel safe in school.
- You behave well both in lessons and outside, and your attendance is good.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make more use of the information about how you are getting on, so that your school has the best chance to become an excellent one.

Share and spread the already outstanding teaching practice across the school.

- Give each of you improvement targets on a regular basis to help you do even better in your work.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. We wish you every success in the future.