

Knaresborough, Aspin Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121432
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292112
Inspection dates	18–19 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Stirling
Headteacher	Mr Peter Kendall
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Wetherby Road Knaresborough North Yorkshire HG5 8LQ
Telephone number	01423 863920
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Aspin Park Community Primary is a larger than average school which draws its pupils from the surrounding market town. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds with very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is very low. The school has 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: 1

This is an outstanding school that enjoys high levels of support and confidence from parents and the community. Parents speak of a 'happy, caring and inclusive school' where children 'skipped into school every morning'. Although a very small number of parents feel more could be done to take their views into account, a large amount of evidence exists to show that the school actively seeks, considers and acts on their views. The excellent leadership, exceptional achievement and the high quality of care and personal development are outstanding features. Pupils enjoy going to school, feel safe, demonstrate a passion to learn and behave extremely well.

Pupils' achievement is excellent overall with exceptional standards achieved in science. However, not all of the more able pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics in national tests. Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage gives children essential personal and language skills, which ensure confident and brisk progress in all areas of learning. A pattern of high achievement for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is reflected in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. Standards are well above average with similar standards existing across the foundation subjects. This pattern is sustained throughout the school. This overall excellent achievement is the outcome of consistently good teaching, which is sometimes outstanding, combined with the keenness of pupils to learn and work very hard. Although teachers have high expectations, not all opportunities are taken in learning to stimulate interests, nurture talents and probe understanding of the gifted and talented pupils.

The well planned curriculum teaches pupils how to adopt healthy daily routines. Their often exceptional academic and personal skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage of education. They are mature, sensitive to one another's feelings and take on responsibility as a matter of routine. They show a capacity for reflection and questioning. The very caring and supportive ethos created in the school promotes these positive qualities.

The headteacher's determined pursuit of high standards in all aspects of school work is both motivating and challenging for staff. Staff fully support his ambitions by following his lead, extending their skills and setting high standards for their own work. Together, managers and headteacher provide admirable leadership and management for the school. Governors give excellent support to the work of the school. Through the drive of the chair of governors, they have a very secure grasp of the needs of the school and are able not only to hold the school to account but also be instrumental in its development, for example by establishing extended provision and ensuring that appointment processes are testing and involve all stakeholders. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has a clear sense of direction and a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for gifted and talented pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school does much more for its pupils than simply 'sow the seeds of success'. It enables them to achieve it. Results from national tests and assessments indicate that standards have been consistently high in all subjects over a number of years. Pupils, including those with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve very well as they move through the school. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils, which are regularly exceeded. In the Foundation Stage, children start school with skills above those normally expected and because they are very effectively taught, they grow to be self-assured and progress well. By the time they move into Year 1, all are achieving well beyond national expectations. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are often exceptionally high, particularly in science. School tracking data predict a similar picture for the current Years 2 and 6 and inspection evidence confirms this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They get off to a flying start in Reception and quickly develop the personal and social skills needed to become positive, friendly, polite and caring members of the school community. The behaviour of pupils during lessons and at play is excellent and makes a significant contribution to their achievement. They thoroughly enjoy their learning as reflected in their positive attitudes and the exceptionally high attendance rate. This enjoyment and pupils' thirst for learning is a significant factor in the excellent progress they make. The school is working hard towards the Healthy Schools Award and pupils understand the importance and value of leading a healthy lifestyle. As one pupil said, 'If you keep fit, you can learn better.' Pupils feel secure and they are confident that any concerns are dealt with quickly and decisively. The school council makes a valuable contribution to school life. Members are learning a great deal about the democratic process and this prepares them well for the future. They speak enthusiastically about their ideas for playtime buddies and enjoy seeing their 'buddy benches' in action. Pupils' attitudes were summed up by one pupil remarking: 'We want everyone to be happy and have someone to play with.' Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and take their many roles very seriously from organising play equipment for the younger pupils to helping the school choose their next headteacher.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent relationships, effective management of pupils and high levels of care successfully underpin the high quality of teaching and learning. In the Foundation Stage, a very good balance is struck between practical activities and the teaching of key skills. As a result, children maintain interest in their learning. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives. They share these with pupils at the start of the lesson and evaluate with pupils whether they have been met at the end of the lesson. This gives pupils a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn as well as the drive to work at pace to successfully complete work. Work is usually well matched to pupil needs and abilities. However, in a few lessons observed, the pace can slow and opportunities are missed to probe and ask searching questions to promote higher level thinking. Very effective procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. As a result, pupils who underachieve are quickly spotted and targeted for additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum is diverse and challenging and provides enjoyment through its variety. It has successfully begun to break down barriers between subjects using a 'themes and schemes' approach to make learning more relevant, interesting and often exciting, for example through a Greek Day and a Space Week. Teachers plan and review carefully what is taught to ensure that work matches the needs of pupils, enabling them to develop a range of skills, talents and interests. Speaking, listening and writing are given high priority and so pupils are able to take full advantage of all learning opportunities. The school has rightly identified that it needs to do more for its gifted and talented pupils, making sure that more learning inspires, excites and stretches the boundaries of their thinking. Excellent links with the local specialist secondary school, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, all promote and sustain high achievement and excitement. Residential experiences add to the enjoyment of learning and give further opportunities for pupils to show initiative and develop teamwork skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. The school's very caring and inclusive ethos means that pupils are valued as individuals, who then thrive and grow in confidence. Pupils see school as a 'happy and fun place' to learn and value the support they receive. The outstanding level of care for pupils is reflected in the importance placed by pupils on caring and supporting each other. As one pupil said, 'We help each other here.' Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for ensuring health and safety are robust. The school has forged close working partnerships with a range of agencies, providing pupils with the skilled support they need to overcome barriers to learning. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are extremely well-cared for and safe, highlighting the 'happy, friendly and caring environment'. Support for pupils through target-setting and academic marking is developing well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has ensured that the school's high achievement and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. He has been well supported by an experienced and hardworking senior leadership team. Together they have refined provision even further to sustain consistently strong achievement, including through providing additional opportunities for the more able to reach their full potential. The recent appointment of a member of staff as a Local Authority Lead Teacher in Assessment for Learning has strengthened management in this key area. Self-evaluation is accurate and reliable and identifies the correct priorities. Monitoring and tracking show standards are being maintained but have also identified the need to review provision for the gifted and talented. Evaluation is effective, although it is not always used precisely enough to identify exactly why exemplary practice is so successful. Governance is excellent. The chair of governors, ably supported by all the governing body, gives strength and direction to the work of the school, so ensuring high standards are promoted. A very good example of her drive is the successful establishment of

'Before and After' school provision. The governors hold the school to account for its performance including benchmarking of practice. The school offers excellent value for money.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2
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?	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?	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	2
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

Thank you for the very friendly welcome to your school and for being so polite and helpful when you met with us. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your staff and joining you in lessons, in the dining hall and assembly. You go to an outstanding school in which there are many things that are far better than we usually see in schools.

This is what we found to be excellent about your school:

- the determined way which your headteacher is improving the school for your benefit
- the way you enjoy your lessons, are really eager to learn and are happy to attend school every day
- the way your teachers make sure you do as well as you can to reach high standards
- your excellent behaviour and your knowledge of how to lead healthy lives and stay safe
- the high quality of care and support of all staff to help you learn, and listen to any worries and concerns you may have.

Nevertheless, we think that some of you could do even better if:

- some of your work was even more challenging and developed more of your interests, gifts and talents.

I hope that you will continue to work as hard as you can and do as well as you can.

I wish you well in the future.