



Saltergate Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121464
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292125
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lesley Clark

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

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|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Newby Crescent |
| School category | Community | | Harrogate |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 | | North Yorkshire HG3 2TT |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01423 508552 |
| Number on roll (school) | 175 | Fax number | 01423 565177 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr David England |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Linda Mortimer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 February 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small infant school with a nursery is on the edge of a large housing estate to the north west of Harrogate. It serves the local community as well as drawing a few children from the nearby British Army Foundation College and American airbase. The school has successfully halted declining numbers and the Reception year is now at full capacity. The nature of the school's intake has changed in the last five years with a larger proportion (from within the very wide ranging catchment) coming from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who are vulnerable. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number with statements of special educational need. Since September 2004, including one year as a job share with the former headteacher, the school has been led and managed by an acting headteacher. The school will continue to be led by the acting headteacher for the next year until a permanent appointment is made. The school shares a family link worker with the junior school who supports children and parents.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Saltergate Infants is a good school which makes outstanding provision for outdoor learning. It well deserves the national recognition it received for this in May 2006, a feature which makes a major contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The school is very caring and mindful of pupils' academic, physical and emotional needs. It gives them excellent care, support and guidance to help them grow into responsible, confident learners. Provision for vulnerable pupils is outstanding.

The school's self evaluation is too modest; the school is better than it thinks it is. Leadership and management are good and outstanding features have led to huge changes in the last two years which have had a real impact on children's progress. Parents comment on the school's 'empathy and energy' and its 'warm and unconditional welcome' and praise the fact that their children are treated as individuals.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with sensitive changes to accommodate the needs of the changing intake. For example, the introduction of the 'Huff and Puff' lunchtime club ensures that pupils never feel isolated. Pupils achieve well throughout their time in school and from a little below average starting point go on to attain standards that are close to and sometimes above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage and children have lots of times when they learn through finding out for themselves from stimulating and challenging activities both indoors and outside.

The curriculum is good and provides a balanced education for all. The school's aim to turn children into happy, energetic and independent learners is certainly realised when they learn outside. The school buzzes with energy and enthusiasm at lunchtimes, playtimes and on Wednesday afternoons when Years 1 and 2 follow an outdoor curriculum. The school correctly identified that boys' learning was lagging behind that of girls and so took the innovative step of developing a more active curriculum that boys could especially relate to. Concentration levels and behaviour have improved and this has improved achievement. Learning indoors, however, is less stimulating. While teaching is generally good, pupils sometimes spend too long listening rather than trying things out for themselves. They have relatively few opportunities to assess how well they have understood new things and so the work is not always matched closely to what they need to learn next.

Pupils behave well and attendance levels, which were slipping below average, have picked up as a result of the school rewarding good attendance and the family link worker vigorously chasing up absences and lateness. The school runs well, with all staff taking their fair share in leading and managing their aspects. As yet, subject leaders do not monitor learning in their subjects and so have less of a say on how the curriculum is taught. Governors play a full part in supporting the work of the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to learn through trying things out for themselves and make sure that work is adapted to their different needs and abilities.
- Involve subject leaders in checking on the quality of learning.
- Ensure that pupils' views of what they know and understand are taken into account when planning lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From a slightly below average starting point, all pupils make good progress at each stage of their education. Standards are generally close to average and sometimes above by the end of Year 2. For example, there was a dip in 2006 when an unusually high percentage of pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities but standards are set to be above average next year as they were in 2005. Standards in writing have gone up as a result of the school's successful focus on this aspect of literacy. In addition, pupils develop into confident, articulate speakers because teachers expect them to communicate clearly and audibly. Children do well in the Foundation Stage as they learn many new skills through exploration, discussion and learning to work together on interesting projects such as constructing a fire engine out of a wheeled vehicle and cardboard.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in developing the personal skills and attributes which will help them become independent and caring young people. They really enjoy coming to school, saying 'I like learning and playing with my friends'. They eagerly anticipate transfer to the adjoining junior school because the school fosters strong links, for instance, through the lunchtime 'Huff and Puff' activities which junior children help to lead. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy because the school encourages healthy eating, good hygiene and respect for one another. They are physically active and energetic and readily take on responsibilities to help their teachers and each other. Behaviour is good. Pupils understand the need to support those less fortunate than themselves and support fund-raising events for charities. They know they must acquire good skills in reading, writing and mathematics and in using computers to help them when they are older. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual awareness is outstanding. 'Together Time' assemblies, to which parents are sometimes invited, are inspiring and help pupils' spiritual development, confidence and tolerance for others in our global community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and this means that pupils make good progress. Teachers plan lessons and activities carefully, making effective and imaginative use of information and communication technology to make lessons exciting and interesting for young children. An outstanding feature is the great variety of activities provided which ensure that pupils learn happily and busily. In effective lessons, there are many occasions for pupils to ask and answer questions which help them to learn well. In some lessons, however, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop independent learning skills. This is because teachers spend too long talking rather than letting pupils work by themselves or in small groups. Sometimes pupils become restless if they find the work too easy or too hard. Marking is helpful but pupils have few opportunities to assess how well they think they have understood new things.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding provision for outdoor learning and music. It provides rich opportunities for creativity and language development.

The school choir has won a place in the final in a local competition for the second year running. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned with a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities, both chosen and taught, which help children to learn successfully at their own level. Wednesday afternoon's outdoor curriculum promotes active, healthy learning incorporating a full range of activities covering different subjects. This successfully develops pupils' confidence and a wide range of skills. In contrast, the Key Stage 1 curriculum for literacy and numeracy is too formal, offering relatively few opportunities for pupils to participate actively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils feel safe, valued and happy to learn and achieve together. As one parent comments, 'The school makes individual arrangements to help young children settle.' Pupils' learning benefits from the simple and effective systems to track progress and set individual targets. These provide a good overview of achievement so that the school can target those who need extra support. Good support and guidance is given to pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those who are gifted or talented to enable them to make good progress. Vulnerable pupils receive exceptional levels of care to ensure that they grow in confidence and self-esteem and the lunchtime arrangements ensure they are fully supported. Health, safety and child protection procedures are robust and 'drop-in sessions' for parents with the family link worker further contribute to the strong

home-school partnership. A weekly after school homework club, where parents can work alongside their children or ask teachers for help, is very effective at involving parents in supporting their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the acting headteacher has had an outstanding impact on the educational provision which has changed dramatically in the last two years, especially in providing exceptional outdoor learning for the whole school. The impact is seen in much improved results in 2005, good achievement by all groups of pupils in 2006 and good performance by pupils currently in Year 2. This innovative approach has helped to raise boys' achievement, which was lagging behind that of girls, through improving concentration and behaviour. Links with the junior school have been strengthened and the drive to get more parents into school to support their children's education through the homework club and making 'story sacks' is proving successful. The school's cautious self-evaluation stems from the recognition that there is more to do. The school improvement plan is already out of date because of the speed with which the school is progressing. This is because all staff work together with great enthusiasm and a real sense of ownership of their school. Checks on the quality of teaching are accurate but, as yet, subject leaders are not fully involved in checking learning. Management and governance are good and the school runs efficiently and with increasing effectiveness. It is well placed to continue to improve at this good rate.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 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? | 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.

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 1 |
| 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 giving us such a friendly and smiling welcome to your school. We really enjoyed our visit, especially the Huff and Puff and Wacky Wednesday club! We were delighted to see you making such good use of your school grounds. Even in the rain you seemed to be having a lot of fun and learning such a lot.

You go to a good school and everyone takes extremely good care of you. This helps you grow into confident young people. You speak out well in front of others and this is a very good skill for you to learn at such an early age. Your work is of a high standard and you do well in every class. Best of all is the enjoyment you all seem to have, adults included!

It is part of our job to point out things which will make your school even better than it is now. Sometimes you get a bit restless in class and this is because some of you find the work a bit too easy or too hard. We want you to enjoy learning as much inside the classroom as you do outside and so this is what we have suggested.

- We want your teachers to get you to check what you know and understand and then use this information to help them plan their lessons. We would also like them to give you more opportunities to learn through trying things out for yourselves.
- Your headteacher works very hard watching everyone teach and we think that the other teachers could help her by looking at how well you all learn.

We hope you continue to have a good time at Saltergate Infants.