



Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121472
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292128
Inspection dates 5–6 March 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 address	2 Leeming Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Leeming Bar, Northallerton
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire DL7 9AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01677 422403
Number on roll (school)	71	Fax number	01677 422403
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Derek Eccles
		Headteacher	Mrs Jill Wells
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007	Inspection number 292128
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school serves a socio-economically advantaged area including the local airbase. Currently, a quarter of pupils come from families connected with the armed forces. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual is very high. Three per cent come from traveller families and three per cent have English as an additional language though they are not at an early stage of learning it. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is below average as is the number with statements of special need. The school has had considerable staffing difficulties over the past year due to ill health. From May 2006 the school was run by the deputy headteacher, with support from an acting headteacher until the appointment of the current acting headteacher in November 2006. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have had many different teachers in the past 15 months as a consequence. The school has a local authority funded partnership with another school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Aiskew, Leeming Bar Church of England Primary School gives its pupils a satisfactory education. It is a happy, friendly school. Newcomers are warmly welcomed so they quickly settle in. Pupils' personal development is effective because the school takes good care of all its pupils and encourages them to support each other. Assemblies and lunchtimes are delightful occasions as older pupils look after younger ones, serving them at table, helping them if they are unhappy and holding their hands to make them feel safe and comfortable. Despite an unsettled 15 months, with frequent staffing changes and several acting headteachers, these aspects have remained strengths of the school. Under the current acting headteacher the school has started to regain its former strength in other areas. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards, which dropped in 2006, are beginning to pick up because of clear direction based on an honest appraisal of the school's weaknesses and immediate and effective action to put them right.

Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6, reflecting a drop in previous standards which have generally been above average. This means that some Year 6 pupils underachieved in 2006 and there are pockets of underachievement by more able pupils elsewhere, as a result of unavoidable but frequent staff changes. On balance, therefore, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. However, more able pupils do not always fulfil their potential. This is because they are sometimes set work that is too easy and they have relatively few opportunities to make independent choices, use their initiative or research information in depth. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with the promotion of good relationships, and the good use of questions and resources being strengths. There is some outstanding teaching in Year 6. In many lessons, however, pupils' different ways of learning are not fully catered for and neither are they encouraged to be involved in assessing their own work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The recent, funded partnership with a local school is improving curricular provision, especially in science. However, more remains to be done to link subjects together in an interesting way to enhance pupils' enjoyment and the relevance of what they learn. The range of educational visits and visitors to school is outstanding. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in terms of their personal development and in acquiring the early skills of literacy and numeracy. However, much of their time is too organised. This means that they miss out on learning through exploration and discovery by regularly choosing from a wide range of stimulating activities, both indoors and out.

In the last four months the school has begun to change rapidly. While it is too soon to measure the full impact of these changes, there are definite green shoots. The decisive, efficient leadership of the acting headteacher has heartened staff and receives the positive support of parents who are confident that the school has 'managed a troubled time well'. They praise the school's 'calm, friendly atmosphere where each child is treated as an individual'. Leadership and management are satisfactory at the

present time. The strong teamwork and clear direction for improvement based on scrupulous self-evaluation means that the school has good capacity to improve further. It gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set more able pupils suitably challenging work to develop their capacity to think independently and to use their initiative.
- Ensure that lessons give pupils a variety of different ways to learn and opportunities to involve them in checking their own work so that they know what and how to improve.
- Link subjects together in an interesting way to enhance pupils' enjoyment and engagement with their learning.
- In the Foundation Stage ensure that children have full access to a wide range of interesting and thought-provoking activities both indoors and out, so that they develop enquiring minds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards broadly average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with average to above average levels of attainment depending on the make up of each group. They make satisfactory progress with roughly half exceeding expected levels at the start of Year 1. Pupils then make steady progress to reach generally above average standards at the end of Year 2. Results at the end of Year 6 took a dip in 2006 with some pupils underachieving as a result of considerable disruption to teaching. Satisfactory achievement continues in Years 3 to 5 but in Year 6 pupils have recently progressed well. This is the result of outstanding teaching in English, mathematics and science. The school is now on track to meet its modest targets and the more ambitious ones set for 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They are happy, friendly and polite people and have clearly responded well to the school's more settled environment. Behaviour is good, there are no exclusions and attendance is average. However, pupils have relatively few opportunities to be independent learners and so are less self-reliant than they could be. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly and playtime leaders ensure that break times are fun for all. They are active and energetic outdoors and really enjoy sport. The school council represents pupils' views and has good ideas to extend the playground provision, but meetings are not frequent enough for them to have a real impact. Pupils grow produce in the school garden. This helps them appreciate the importance of healthy eating and gives them a taste for vegetables, such as the brussel sprouts they grew and ate at Christmas. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school day is framed by prayers, many of which pupils write

themselves, but their multi-cultural knowledge is less extensive. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and show consideration for others. They have satisfactory skills to equip them for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers' good organisation ensures pupils are attentive. Questioning is often good and pupils clearly feel comfortable to ask and answer questions. Much of the teaching follows a similar pattern which is more weighted towards teachers talking and pupils listening than pupils working and learning on their own. This means that pupils' different learning styles are not always taken sufficiently into account and pupils have relatively few opportunities to use their initiative. This slows down the learning of more able pupils in particular. Teachers' use of computer technology to vary pace and to involve pupils in demonstrations is at an early stage of development in all classes except Year 6 where it is used exceptionally well. Foundation Stage children learn satisfactorily. While they learn formal literacy and numeracy skills effectively opportunities to learn other skills, through choosing from a wide range of activities, are limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and gives due weight to the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology though opportunities are missed to use these skills in other subjects. Similarly, other subjects are not linked creatively to make pupils' learning more relevant and to cater fully for their different interests and aptitudes. The curriculum is enriched, however, by an outstanding range of visits and visitors to school which is reflected in pupils' interesting writing. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs including a recent Year 6 computer club to consolidate learning in science and mathematics. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory: while children have more freedom to choose activities outdoors, the curriculum indoors is rather formal.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is good provision for pupils' welfare and robust child protection procedures. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe and happy. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised and teaching assistants help pupils to reach the targets in their individual education plans. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school's assessment systems give a good overview of how well pupils are doing as they move through the school. Marking is thorough but does not always balance encouragement with points for improvement. Opportunities are missed to involve

pupils in this process in order to help them understand fully what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher provides strong leadership combined with efficient management. Initially appointed in a non-teaching role, the acting headteacher used assessment and observations of teaching to highlight where underachievement existed and why. The subsequent decision to teach Year 6 as a separate group is proving successful. The outstanding lead given by the acting headteacher to teaching and learning, together with the local authority funded partnership with another school, is boosting Year 6 pupils' attainment.

The school's self-evaluation concentrates necessarily and effectively on areas for improvement. This means that the school underestimated the care, support and guidance it gives to pupils and over-estimated the quality of the curriculum. Governors give satisfactory support and with increased self-awareness recognise the need to ask more pertinent questions. The result is a strong team with good capacity to improve the school.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 me to your school and for talking to me so readily. I really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you about your work and hearing what you thought about your school. I am pleased that you are so positive and that you feel that your teachers do a lot for you. I was impressed at how well the older pupils look after the younger ones and you are certainly very energetic and lively! I think your school is a happy place to be and that it is giving you a satisfactory education. Your acting headteacher knows exactly how to make your school even better and that is why so many changes have been taking place. Your school looks after you well and everyone is well behaved. I think the school council has lots of good ideas but could do with meeting more often.

It is part of my job to point out what your school should do to be even better. I have suggested several things that will help.

- I should like your teachers to set more challenging work for those of you who find learning easier than others. I have also asked them to set you all different types of work that will help you to think more independently and use your initiative.
- You need to be involved in checking your own work so that you know how to make it better and what you are aiming for.
- Some of the subjects you study could be linked together to make your learning more interesting, enjoyable and effective.
- I have asked that the children in Reception spend a bit more time choosing their activities and working on their own, indoors and outdoors, so that they can think things out for themselves.

These things will make your learning more interesting and will make sure that you all achieve as well as you possibly can. I wish you all the best for the future.