



Baldersby St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121478
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292130
Inspection date 6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Joy Frost

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Baldersby St James
School category	Voluntary controlled		Thirsk
Age range of pupils	4-11		North Yorkshire YO7 4PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01765 640277
Number on roll (school)	43	Fax number	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Yvonne Helps
		Headteacher	Mr M Lawn
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a popular, small rural school which serves the villages of Baldersby, Baldersby St James and Rainton in North Yorkshire. All pupils travel to school from outlying villages and a large proportion travel on a bus provided by the local authority. Currently 71% of pupils travel from outside the catchment area. All pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. Numbers on roll have risen in recent years. The school has recently undergone building work to extend the school capacity. Two new classrooms have been added, replacing a temporary classroom, and creating a hall space and an outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage pupils. The school has gained the national Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People and Basic Skills accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This small village school is starting a new and exciting phase in its development. The school moved into new accommodation only a few days before the inspection and all teaching staff are new to the school since September 2006. The headteacher has led the school through a recent difficult period of staffing instability and change well, and has maintained the school's happy and friendly atmosphere throughout. It has made good progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve even further.

Achievement and standards are good. However, due to the very small numbers of pupils in each cohort comparisons with national standards are made with caution. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge in line with those expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They are taught in a mixed class with Year 1 and 2 pupils and have only recently moved into accommodation which enables the school to fully offer all areas of the early years curriculum. By the time they enter Year 1 nearly all pupils have achieved the level expected for their age. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and in the national tests for seven-year-olds standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the mixed Key Stage 2 class pupils also make good progress and achieve high standards especially in mathematics. However, standards and progress in science have dipped over the last two years. The school has recognised this and has developed tracking systems to ensure that consistent progress is made in all subjects.

The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. This is a school where every child matters. Pupils are confident and courteous to each other and to staff. The relationships in the two mixed-age classes are very good. Older pupils help the younger ones in class and at lunch time in the dining hall, where they sit together and chat in a family atmosphere. All of the staff know pupils very well and consequently they feel safe and secure in school and display very good attitudes to learning. Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy coming to school and they were especially proud of their new buildings. All pupils take on responsibility well and the active school council ensures that all pupils have a voice.

Teaching and learning are good. Both teachers are very new to the school but they have formed a good team with the headteacher, who teaches two days a week, to tackle the problems associated with teaching mixed-age classes. Lessons are well planned and activities closely match pupils' abilities regardless of age. Teachers ensure that classrooms are lively and they encourage all pupils to discuss their learning and to work cooperatively. The school has relatively new systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement. These targets are often too broad and along with the marking of work need to be more focused to guide pupils towards the next steps in their learning.

This is a school that looks after its pupils very well. Support staff are very experienced and well trained. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

and vulnerable pupils is good. Pupils are well cared for and attendance and behaviour are good.

The headteacher, ably supported by the governing body, sets a clear direction for the school. He has coped well with the problems associated with staff absence and the recent building work, ensuring that there has been minimum disruption to the day-to-day working of the school. The newly appointed staff have settled quickly into the school and have maintained the family ethos. The school knows itself well because it has good systems for monitoring and evaluating its progress which include all members of staff and governors. The governing body is well informed by the headteacher and they play a large part in the life of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science.
- Embed new tracking systems to ensure that pupils' progress is consistent across all subjects in Key Stage 2.
- Improve individual target-setting and marking to ensure that all pupils across the school know the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards overall are good. Pupils enter school with the knowledge and skills expected for their age and by the time they leave the Foundation Stage they have made satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and nearly all pupils are working at the expected level. In Key Stage 1 progress accelerates and by the age of seven standards are consistently above those expected for their age. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds standards in 2006 were broadly in line with national expectations. In mathematics they were above and well above for the higher attaining pupils. However, in English and science pupils made slightly less progress than expected. The school has identified this and new tracking systems have been implemented, which are beginning to impact on progress. The good teaching and learning seen by inspectors in Key Stage 2 is now helping pupils make consistently good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being including pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is good. Cultural awareness is satisfactory and the school has plans to develop this further. Most pupils are polite, courteous and happy in and around school. The behaviour of most pupils is good and they work well together, forming good relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles and keep themselves safe. They can tell the difference between bullying and falling

out with friends and told the inspector that bullying in their school was very rare. They enjoy coming to school as shown by their very good attendance and think that they work hard and do well. Pupils make a contribution to the community through their active fundraising and performances in the village hall. Pupils take on responsibility for jobs around the school and were actively involved in plans for the decoration of the new classrooms. Fundraising has enabled pupils to contribute to new items for the school, for example, playground equipment and books for the new library. Pupils are well prepared for life after school and there are good transition arrangements for pupils to move on to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers' planning is thorough and takes into account the ability of pupils regardless of age. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and teachers give pupils clear instructions so they know what they are learning. Teachers cope well with teaching a range of ages in one class. This is especially so in mathematics where teachers' questioning skills challenge pupils' thinking and move them forward in their learning. Pupils of different ages work cooperatively together; there are opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with each other and check each other's work. Support staff are of a high quality, they are well deployed and ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.

The quality of marking is inconsistent across subjects and pupils' learning targets are not focused enough to enable pupils to know the next steps in their learning. There is an over reliance on published work sheets in foundation subjects and opportunities to write at length in these subjects is often missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. Enrichment opportunities including visits and visitors to the school and extra-curricular activities are a strength of this small school. There are a number of extra-curricular activities on offer including a modern foreign language. The take-up for these activities is good despite the fact that parents have to overcome transport problems. The school now has adequate buildings which will enable them to fully develop the curriculum for pupils in the early years. The use of new equipment for information and communication technology (ICT) needs embedding across the curriculum and links between subject areas made more explicit, so that pupils can practice their literacy and numeracy skills in other subject areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are given opportunities to be involved in pupils' learning through a good homework programme and attendance at curriculum evenings. The school cares for its pupils well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and all staff have received training. Academic guidance is in place and individual pupils have termly targets which are shared with parents. However, these targets are often too broad and need to be broken down into small steps to enable pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recent turbulence in staffing coupled with the new build have been dealt with very well. The headteacher has formed the new staff into an effective team that is working well together to identify areas for development and plan appropriate actions. All staff and governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This is a school that knows itself well and its self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school and leadership and management are good at all levels. New tracking procedures still need to be embedded to ensure that pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is consistent across all subjects. The governing body has developed since the last inspection and is now playing a fuller role in the life of the school by asking challenging questions when holding the school to account. The school is well placed to develop further and maximise the use of the new buildings.

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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	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?	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	2

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?	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?	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 making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you all and I agree with you that you attend a good school.

I was very impressed with the way you all get along together and how friendly you all are. You work very hard in lessons and try your best at all times. Your behaviour is good and you obviously enjoy coming to school because you all attend school regularly and arrive on time. The school gives you lots of opportunities to take on responsibilities and you carry these out well. Your school council has made a good contribution to the new building work and I especially liked your choice of colour scheme in the new toilets.

Your teachers plan interesting lessons for you and the headteacher and staff work well together to make sure that you are happy and safe in school at all times. I was pleased that many of you stay behind after school to attend clubs when it is difficult for your parents to pick you up - well done!

I have asked your teachers to track your progress more carefully so that you make as much progress as you can in all subjects. You told me that teachers set you targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. I have asked your teachers to break these up into smaller steps so that you know exactly what to do next to improve your work and to consider these targets more closely when marking your work. You can help them by reading their comments carefully and following their instructions.

I am sure that with your new buildings your school will continue to grow and thrive and I wish you all well for the future.