



Bedale Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121479
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292131
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Bernard Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Firby Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bedale
Age range of pupils	5–11		North Yorkshire DL8 2AT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01677 422401
Number on roll (school)	330	Fax number	01677 458266
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev David Paton-Williams
		Headteacher	Mr D Fishburn
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	17–18 January 2007	292131

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves the community on the outskirts of Bedale. Pupils attend from a wide area, including those from service families, and this partly accounts for the larger than average number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and there is a wide variety of social circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most enter the Reception class with some pre-school experience and attainment levels that are broadly average. There have been significant changes to the staff in the past two years, and a number of senior and middle managers have left for promotion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, giving satisfactory value for money. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is a strength, reflecting the inclusive nature of the school and the strong values taught. Pupils show a positive and friendly approach to visitors. The school provides a safe and happy environment in which pupils flourish and learn to take responsibility well. Strengths in provision are the care that each individual pupil receives and the way in which teaching meets the pastoral needs of pupils so that they enjoy school and their learning. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils make informed choices about healthy lifestyles and by, Year 6, are mature and ready to move on to secondary education.

Standards across the school in 2006 were average and represented satisfactory achievement for all groups of pupils. This is an improvement on recent years and reflected the successful initiatives implemented to improve the achievement of boys and overall standards in English, mathematics and science. Children achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and, currently, most enter Year 1 with expected skills. Current standards are broadly average and most pupils achieve satisfactorily, but higher-attaining pupils do not always reach their full potential. Individual targets are set for pupils, but they lack the challenge needed to really stretch the more able to achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate. However, procedures to track pupils' progress are relatively new and have yet to impact significantly on all pupils' achievement. Senior leaders have taken successful action to raise standards in writing, mathematics and science and have tackled the underachievement of some boys. This and the positive response to the last report reflect satisfactory capacity to improve.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good and outstanding teaching and, in these classes, pupils enjoy their learning considerably. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the tasks set do not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning take place, but they are not yet having enough impact to raise the overall quality from satisfactory to good. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment data to record pupils' attainment. However, analysis of this data is not used rigorously enough to ensure all pupils are set work that is challenging enough or to ensure they receive the focused support they need to enable them to achieve consistently well.

There is a satisfactory curriculum. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are interested in their lessons and are further stimulated by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Good links with local schools and the community further enrich the curriculum. Parents and pupils relate how teachers are committed and approachable. A pupil explained, 'Our teachers are very understanding and helpful and this makes us very proud of our school.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is consistently good.
- Ensure that when the quality of teaching and learning is evaluated, the focus is predominantly on how well pupils progress as a result of what teachers and teaching assistants do.
- Have higher expectations of, and set more challenging work for, the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children start school, their skills are broadly average. In the Foundation Stage, structured play, sound planning and careful assessment are used effectively to ensure children's satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning. At the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are average.

Standards in the 2006 Year 6 national tests were broadly average in English, mathematics and science, reflecting satisfactory progress. Current standards are average and reflect satisfactory achievement for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Most pupils meet their targets which are, in the main, sufficiently challenging. However, too little is expected of some of the more able pupils and, as a result, they relatively underachieve. All other groups, including the significant minority who join the school at a later time than normal, achieve satisfactorily. This is because the school has successfully improved standards in writing and science and tackled the underachievement of some boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They cite very helpful and understanding teachers, friendships and their fundraising work as the major reasons for this sense of pride. In lessons, pupils have good attitudes to work. They show determination to complete set tasks and enjoy school. Behaviour is excellent, not only in lessons but also at playtimes and in the dining hall, where a calm, social atmosphere prevails. Attendance is good and unauthorised absence is minimal. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They quickly grow in confidence and older pupils are very polite and courteous. They work well in pairs and small groups. There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching basic skills to equip pupils for their future. Pupils' preparation for life in a multicultural world benefits from the work done in religious education, the links with an Indian school and the fundraising for clean water in Africa. Parents comment that they greatly value the school's work in creating well rounded young people. The active school council gives pupils good experience of working together for the benefit of the school community. Older pupils act as buddies to younger ones, and the significant number of pupils who join the school at other than the normal time are very well supported; this helps them settle

in. Pupils understand well how to keep safe and healthy. They learn, for instance, about the importance of having a balanced diet and taking regular exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies within year groups. The impact on pupils' learning is satisfactory for most groups, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. However, in some classes the more able pupils underachieve because they are often given the same tasks as others and are expected to do more of the same. Aspects that differentiate the good or better quality of teaching from the satisfactory include the pace that is set for pupils' learning and the expectation of what they can achieve. Questioning at its best makes pupils think very hard and work out problems for themselves. At other times, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Good use is made of 'top tips' in some classes to help pupils think quickly about their work. Pupils' behaviour is managed exceedingly well. This results in excellent behaviour and means pupils come to class ready and very willing to learn. Their well developed social skills enable them to cooperate and share ideas. Teaching assistants make a good contribution by taking a full part in the teaching of groups and individuals. Assessment is used satisfactorily to inform teachers' planning. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently and encourage them by acknowledging their good efforts. However, their comments are not always sufficiently focused on ways in which pupils could improve their work. Teachers use homework well and are supported positively by parents and carers, particularly in helping pupils improve their basic skills in English and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum in the Foundation Stage through to Year 6 meets the needs of most learners. The activities for the more able pupils, however, are at times too easy, and this limits their progress. Curricular plans generally guide teachers well about what to teach and how to integrate basic skills across subjects. The planning includes a 'ready reckoner' of standards to give guidance to teachers on the National Curriculum levels at which their pupils should be working. This ensures that the curriculum mainly meets their pupils' needs. Teachers plan together to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes are taught the appropriate curriculum. The school's Basic Skills Quality Mark acknowledges its work in maintaining a whole-school strategy to improve basic skills. The curriculum is enriched well by educational visits and visitors and a good selection of well attended clubs which increase pupils' enjoyment and their contribution to the wider community. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes well to pupils' health and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who join school at a later time than usual, receive outstanding pastoral care and satisfactory academic guidance. The use of assessment to track pupils' progress is currently satisfactory. Pupils experiencing personal difficulties are very well supported, not only by adults, but also by their classmates. Parents and pupils find staff approachable and understanding. The views of parents and pupils are sought, valued and taken into account. Arrangements for health and safety, including safeguarding and protecting children, are in place. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with some good features. The strong moral values taught contribute to an ethos which is particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development. Governors fulfill their responsibilities satisfactorily and, together with the headteacher, make a particularly good contribution to establishing a clear vision for the school. There are good partnerships with parents and outside agencies to support its work: for example, local churches provide inspiring assemblies to further pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the quality of the school's provision. The headteacher gives clear direction and, along with other leaders, has been successful in identifying and tackling weaknesses in order to raise standards. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate, but lacks rigour. For example, when they monitor and evaluate teaching, senior leaders do not give enough emphasis to the impact of individual teachers on the progress pupils make.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	1
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	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	3
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 very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school, which provides you with a satisfactory education. I really enjoyed my visit and the opportunity it gave me to talk with you and see you working.

These are the things that are good about your school:

- your excellent behaviour and particularly the way you work so well in pairs and groups while teachers help other pupils
- how well the school helps you to develop into responsible and mature young people, for example, in the work of the school council and the way older pupils help younger children
- the many activities and clubs that you enjoy which give you the chance to develop your sport and music and to help in your local community
- the way your teachers take good care of you and teach you to be safe and healthy so that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school.

To make things even better and make your school into a good school, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure you progress as well as you can in lessons
- make all teaching as good as that which is most effective
- make sure that the brightest pupils are encouraged to produce their very best work.