

Dishforth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121487
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292134
Inspection date	27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Mason
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Ashley
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Grange Close Dishforth Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 3LN
Telephone number	01845 577206
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school serving a small village. In the last two years the school has begun to receive children from a wider area. The number of children in the Foundation Stage this year has grown and is set to increase further. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. There are three mixed age classes in the school. The school has received among others the Basic Skills Quality Mark 1 and 2, the Leading Aspects award and the Healthy Schools 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 where pupils achieve exceptionally well in both their personal qualities and their academic accomplishments. The school is held in high regard by parents whose views are typified by the comment that they 'can't praise the staff enough'. Pupils, too, thoroughly enjoy coming to school and wouldn't want to see any changes because, 'it's perfect as it is'.

Children start their schooling with knowledge and skills at the expected levels for their age. Their achievement over the course of their time at the school is outstanding and they reach standards that are well above average by the time they leave Year 6.

The key to much of the school's success lies in its strength as a small community where staff and pupils know one another extremely well. This factor is a significant component of its outstanding care, guidance and support. As a result, there is an exceptionally strong family feel in which all views are valued and built on. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix happily together. Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are reflected in their exemplary behaviour, their respect for all those around them and the pride they take in achieving so well. Pupils feel safe because they are confident that they have adults to turn to should any problem arise. The school's highly effective promotion of healthy lifestyles has led to a national award. Pupils have developed a very good awareness of the need to eat healthily. They understand very clearly the importance of exercise and eagerly take part in sporting activities. They willingly take on responsibilities and treat them seriously both in school and in the wider community.

Much thought, time and energy has gone into developing a curriculum that emphasises the acquisition of skills. For example, the development of reading skills through an exciting and innovative 'literature circle' is an exceptionally successful initiative that enables pupils to reach very high standards in English at Key Stage 2. There is a very strong focus on planning for the development of the early skills in reading and writing in the Reception year. However, outdoor facilities for developing creative play are limited and this inhibits this aspect of the children's learning. A very good range of enriching activities out of school broadens pupils' experiences and contributes valuably to their learning and their personal development.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Different age groups and the varied range of ability within each class are managed very skilfully during lessons. Expectations are high. Tasks are very well planned to challenge all pupils, whose individual needs are identified through careful analysis of assessment information. As a result, pupils are eager to take part in all classroom activities and achievement is outstanding.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has developed a very clear vision of what can be achieved. Morale is high and all staff are committed to maintaining high standards and achievement. There is a common sense of purpose throughout the school, due in no small part to the determination and drive of everyone. Governors have a very thorough understanding of the school's performance. They play a very active part in monitoring the school's work, challenging where necessary and holding the school to account. They work as a close-knit team and undertake their roles and responsibilities with great commitment. The excellent leadership and management, coupled with the school's impressive levels of achievement, rigorous self-evaluation, ensure that the capacity for continued improvement is outstanding and places the school in a very strong position for further success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the outdoor facilities so that children in the Reception have improved opportunities for creative play.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above the national average by the time they leave the school.

Children get off to a flying start in Reception. Most reach or exceed the goals they are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year. They continue to progress well through Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. During Key Stage 2, progress accelerates even further, particularly in English as a result of a highly successful and innovative approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils have challenging targets, which are shared with their parents and reviewed regularly. Their progress towards these targets is monitored rigorously and as a result, they are often exceeded. The few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress and achieve as well as their peers because of the very well targeted support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love school. This is shown in the high levels of attendance and their obvious enthusiasm and desire to succeed in their work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and they help to foster a real sense of community. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know there is an adult they can turn to if they have a problem because 'teachers always recognise if you're feeling down'. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in the many outstanding learning activities and opportunities that the school provides. School council members are proud of their involvement in making decisions, which benefit all children, such as selecting new play equipment. Pupils develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded. They are extremely well prepared for later life because of their outstanding achievements and the many opportunities they have to develop independence and teamwork skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. There is a shared and consistent understanding of how to motivate, interest and engage pupils. Planning is of high quality, focusing extremely well on group and individual needs. Thorough and regular marking is sharply focused on helping pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Consistent strengths of lessons are found in good questioning techniques, a brisk pace and the provision of many opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas and help one another. Teachers manage the pupils exceptionally well and develop a climate for learning that is based on respect and trust.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and stimulates pupils' desire to learn. In Reception, it is planned so that children make very good progress in their learning. There is a very strong focus on planning for the development of the early skills in reading and writing. However, outdoor facilities for developing creative play are limited and consequently, inhibit this aspect of the children's experience. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is strong. Basic skills are taught very effectively and reinforced in links between subjects, reflecting the national awards the school has received. Good emphasis is given to speaking and listening skills from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6. Planning for pupils to develop their reading skills in Key Stage 2 is exceptionally successful in moving them on and has led to the school being given a Leading Aspects award.

Curriculum enrichment is another success and is much appreciated by pupils. It is a vital part of pupils' high achievement and broadens their experiences, for example, through visits to a variety of places of worship and residential stays at outdoor activity centres. The school works very well with external agencies to provide pupils with opportunities to enhance their learning skills and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The greatest strength of the school's pastoral and academic support lies in its knowledge of individual pupils. In addition to the benefits of its small and close community, the school takes every step to ensure pupils' trust, safety and security. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Parents are readily welcomed into the school and strong relationships have been developed. There are effective strategies and procedures to ensure a positive and encouraging climate for learning.

Guidance given to pupils about their academic performance is excellent. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. Teachers' marking clearly tells pupils what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. As a result of these successful initiatives, pupils are provided with a highly effective steer for their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of its leadership and management is a major reason why this school is so successful. Despite the restrictions imposed by running a very small school, such as having a substantial teaching commitment himself, the headteacher has taken highly effective action that is improving the school's performance.

Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Achievement is now outstanding and effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and analysing assessment data have been introduced. The school knows itself extremely well and has evaluated its strengths and weaknesses accurately. It is not complacent, however, and is sometimes unduly modest in assessing its impact on pupils' development. The team of teachers and teaching assistants is very strong and works diligently to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. The distribution of responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance is effective, extremely

well thought out and takes into consideration the management pressures faced by a small staff. Governors carry out their duties very conscientiously and hold the school to account in an excellent way. Financial management is very strong and the school provides outstanding value for money.

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Annex A

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?	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

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	1
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 warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school recently. I would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out your views about the school. I spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. I came to the conclusion that Dishforth Primary is an outstanding school.

I think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you very well, keeping you safe and healthy. I know, too, that you are proud of your school and that you enjoy your lessons and all of the out-of-school activities that the school provides.

It was very pleasing to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. I was impressed by the consideration shown by the older pupils to the younger ones. I think that you are working extremely well in your lessons and making excellent progress.

To help your school to become even better, I have asked your teachers to try to improve the outdoor facilities for Class 1 so that the children there can have more opportunities to learn through playing with a wider range of equipment.

I am sure that you will carry on enjoying school. Most of all, I hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make sure that Dishforth Primary maintains its excellent reputation.