

# East Cowton Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121488
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292135
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Les Schubeler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Keith Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julia Campbell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 May 2002
<b>School address</b>	East Cowton Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 0BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 378347
<b>Fax number</b>	01325 378895

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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 and its surrounding area. The number of pupils in the school had fallen over recent years, but has grown this year 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 in line with the national average. There are two mixed age classes in the school. The school has received the Quality Mark for its provision for pupils with special educational needs, the sports Activemark 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: 2

East Cowton is a good school with outstanding features. These include the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, the excellent personal development of pupils and the very high quality of care and support, all of which help to promote pupils' good achievement. Parents place a high value on the work of the school. The strong bond between the school and parents is illustrated by those who say it is 'a fantastic school [that] expects high standards', 'a great asset to the village and community,' and a school where 'children enjoy the security of firm, fair boundaries which allow them to learn'.

Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. The skills and abilities of children when they enter the school vary from year to year, but mostly they match expectations for their age. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress throughout the school, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers make effective use of data to track pupils' progress and focus closely on the achievement of individual pupils. As a result, they are well placed to show pupils how to improve their work. This is accelerating pupils' learning.

Results in national tests in 2006 were above average and showed a significant improvement in levels of achievement. The school's challenging targets were met. Those set for the current Year 6 pupils are equally challenging and are helping to drive up standards, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are making progress at a faster rate than those in Years 3 and 4. Provisional results for 2007 indicate that the rise in achievement levels has been maintained.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school's harmonious, family atmosphere and close links with the church promote excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Older pupils care for younger ones and report that the very rare cases of bullying are effectively dealt with. They have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lives. There are healthy dining menus as well as a Healthy School tuck shop, and pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities for sport and exercise. They also make outstanding contributions to the community, both in school and more widely through participation in village and local events.

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. It is well planned, with good promotion of skills in the core subjects of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Although the place of other subjects in the curriculum is not neglected, the monitoring and assessment of work in these areas are as yet underdeveloped. Pupils are offered an excellent range of additional activities which they enjoy greatly. A wide variety of well attended out-of-school activities benefit pupils' learning, health and personal development.

Pupils are cared for extremely well and they are given very good academic guidance based on teachers' detailed knowledge of their progress. Excellent levels of support, both in school and involving outside agencies, are provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy life at East Cowton. They trust, and feel highly valued by, all staff. They feel safe, secure and happy at the school. Their views are typified by the comment: 'This is a happy school and everybody gets on well.'

After a prolonged period of disruption, the school has benefited from stability in its leadership and management during the last two years. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Teaching staff are supported well by effective teaching assistants. Governors, too, play an active part in determining the school's priorities and in helping the school to provide good

value for money. Effectively and efficiently supported by her colleagues, the headteacher ensures that a strong commitment to improvement is at the heart of everything the school does. There is a rigorous programme of self-evaluation which leads to a thorough understanding of strengths and areas for development. The school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Together with an improvement in achievement, this indicates that the capacity to continue to improve is good.

A cohesive team of staff has been developed and it works with a common sense of purpose which ensures the school is very well placed for continued improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate the rate of progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 to match that in Years 5 and 6.
- Improve the monitoring and assessment of work in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average and all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Good, lively teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress, which is continued throughout the school. There is now an emphasis throughout the school on improving the standard of pupils' writing. Current work in lessons indicates that it is succeeding, partly because pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are working and of how to make their work better. In 2006, higher-attaining pupils performed particularly well in English and science. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in these subjects was significantly above average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils welcome the many excellent opportunities to enhance their personal development. Members of the school council are very proud of their important and clear voice in the school's continuing development. They are involved in the interviewing of new staff, manage a budget and have purchased play equipment. They also drew up the school's mission statement.

Attendance is good, as is punctuality. Pupils like sport and physical education, and they thoroughly enjoy taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities.

They also enthusiastically participate in the many opportunities for musical development. They enhance their cultural development through visits to museums and by taking part in musical and drama productions. They make excellent contributions to the school and wider communities, for example by acting as play leaders, taking part in charity fundraising activities and singing to pensioners at the village Christmas lunch.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is lively and supportive, providing children with good opportunities to make choices, work in groups and acquire essential skills. Throughout the school there are good relationships in the classroom. Pupils want to learn. As a result, they

enjoy learning and achieve well. Regular assessments provide teachers with data which they analyse carefully in order to match activities well to pupils' needs. Lessons are well planned with a clear focus, an awareness of the needs of mixed age groups and an appropriate structure to help pupils to learn in graded steps. Occasionally, where there is too much teacher direction and pupils are not actively involved, the attention of a small minority of pupils drifts and they learn less well. The quality of marking is very good. Teachers make helpful comments on pupils' work and give them constructive guidance on how they can improve its quality.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the required areas of learning in a way that ensures that all pupils are excited and make good progress. The wide-ranging physical education programme promotes effectively pupils' health and well-being, and the school has achieved the Activemark award. ICT makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, but because of easier access it is used more effectively at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Pupils are excited about opportunities to attend a wide range of clubs and take part in extra-curricular events such as the residential visits to outdoor activity centres. The curriculum is further enriched by events such as French Day, music festivals and Multicultural Week. The very good range of out-of-school activities in and beyond the school day provides the pupils with valuable sports, arts and cultural experiences, supporting their personal development and adding to their enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding quality of care, support and guidance to pupils at the school is crucial in enabling pupils to achieve well and to understand themselves and others. Staff know the pupils extremely well; this significantly underpins the school's care provision and helps pupils to develop a growing understanding of their own personal development and of health and safety. The needs of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early, and effective programmes are planned to ensure that they take a full part in lessons and achieve well in relation to their starting points. Child protection and health and safety systems are in place. Pupils are increasingly aware of their personal targets for improvement and effective assessment strategies across the school are helping to ensure that pupils consistently know what to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and clear direction. She is highly respected by pupils, parents and staff. Data is analysed thoroughly and accurately to monitor school performance and effective action is taken to address areas for improvement. Comprehensive systems to track the progress of pupils have been developed. Their effective use is having a positive impact on pupils' performance in the classroom. The roles and responsibilities of all staff are clearly defined. Good opportunities for the professional development of all staff are provided, and good practice is openly shared. As a result, all teachers and teaching assistants work confidently together with the same vision for future developments.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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

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**Annex B****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 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 East Cowton is a good school. It has some outstanding features that help you to enjoy school and make good progress in your work. I was impressed by how well you get on with one another, by your positive attitudes to learning and by your enthusiasm for the school in general. I think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you extremely well, keeping you safe and healthy. I know, too, that you are very proud of your school and that you thoroughly enjoy the many activities such as visits, sports and music that it provides for you.

Your teachers teach you well and make your lessons interesting and enjoyable. I have asked them to look at ways of helping some of you to make even faster progress. Having met you, I am confident you can.

I am sure that you will continue to enjoy school and to make good progress. Most of all, I hope that you will carry on working hard and helping all the staff to make East Cowton an even better school.