



Sand Hutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121513
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292143
Inspection dates 21–22 February 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	Sand Hutton
School category	Voluntary controlled		York
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire YO41 1LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01904 468308
Number on roll (school)	66	Fax number	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Lindsey Bradbury
		Headteacher	Mrs Dowie
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school serves a widespread rural area with pockets of socio-economic disadvantage to the north-east of York. Most pupils come to school by bus. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number with statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at times other than the usual is also higher than normal. There have been three headteachers, several staffing changes and redevelopment of parts of the building and play areas since the last inspection. The school was confederated with Warthill Primary School two years ago when the current headteacher was appointed to lead and manage both with the support of an assistant headteacher in each school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sand Hutton C of E Primary is a happy school which provides a satisfactory education and gives satisfactory value for money. The school lives out the characteristics of its Church of England status which underpin the good care, support and guidance given to all pupils. The school went through an unsettled period after the last inspection which affected pupils' achievement and behaviour. The confederation with a local school two years ago saw the start of many changes, all of which have had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and achievement, though there is still some way to go. This has been achieved by good leadership and management and absolutely accurate self-evaluation. Issues raised at the last inspection have been tackled well. The school is on the way up and has good capacity to continue to improve.

Standards are average by the end of Year 6 in English and science and close to above average in mathematics where there has been significant improvement in the last year. The school has rightly identified writing as an area needing further improvement and new ways of teaching and assessing writing are making a marked difference in the short time the scheme has been running. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, making the best progress in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 where the work is well matched to their abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Average achievers in Years 3 to 6 and the more able pupils in Year 2 do not always fulfil their potential. This is because pupils are often set work that is matched to their age rather than their ability and so there is some underachievement. Teaching therefore is satisfactory overall with elements of good practice across the school.

The Foundation Stage provision is good and has improved considerably in the last two years with the development of the accommodation, including the outside play area. The wide range of interesting activities develops children's confidence and independence well. In the rest of the school, the satisfactory curriculum is developing rapidly as links with the partner school offer increasing opportunities to broaden pupils' learning. The school is at an early stage of linking subjects creatively together. In lessons where this takes place, for example using drama to bring history and science alive, pupils' learning and enjoyment increase enormously. A good feature is the lively French lessons throughout the school which develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well and also their confidence.

The school takes good care of all its pupils. As a result of the strong emphasis on personal development pupils are becoming more purposeful learners though they still need support when working independently. Their personal development is satisfactory overall. The school council gives pupils a voice in what goes on at school and they appreciate the fact that 'the school spends loads of money on us'. Small groups such as the nurture group give stability to pupils who require a settled start to the day, and a clear system of rewards and stickers have improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Behaviour is now satisfactory and attendance has risen to above average. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and show increasing respect and consideration for others. They have a satisfactory understanding of why it is important to lead healthy lives and have sound skills to equip them for their future lives.

Pupils say 'We feel very safe in this school, the teachers are all kind, everyone is friendly and our views are important.' The school's plans to involve parents further, so they can support its work, are appropriate as some parents feel they would like to be more closely involved. Governors give good support and ask the right questions to help the school meet its priority to raise achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of the same age but of different abilities do suitably different and challenging work.
- Give pupils greater opportunities to learn independently.
- Develop the curriculum so as to maximise creative links between subjects to make learning more effective and enhance pupils' enjoyment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards broadly average. Foundation Stage children make good progress, and from a generally below average starting point most reach the level expected at the start of Year 1. Pupils then make steady progress to reach average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards are slightly higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. This pattern continues in Years 3 to 6 and the 2006 test results confirmed close to average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do higher achievers in Year 6, because the teaching meets their needs. The trend in the school's results has dipped since the last inspection but is now creeping upwards because the school has begun to address elements of underachievement by different groups of pupils. The school generally meets its targets though there are setbacks when pupils join or leave the school unexpectedly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage because children have lots of opportunities to be independent learners and so become self-motivating and self-reliant. Pupils are happy. They respond well to the school's systems of stickers and awards and are keen to 'run a golden mile' to win certificates. They are energetic, almost too energetic at times when vigorous play can tip into roughness. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and pupils want to please their teachers. Some have yet to learn self-discipline though, and opportunities for them to work independently and to use their initiative are relatively few. Pupils take responsibility well in organising charity fund-raising. Playground buddies too take their duties seriously and are well respected by others. Pupils believe this has helped eradicate bullying. The school council represents pupils' views fully. Its members are justifiably proud of their job

and the playground games they helped introduce contribute well to pupils' fitness levels and health awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage where children thrive as they learn independently from lively and interesting activities both indoors and outside. Good features of teaching in Years 1 to 6 are teachers' behaviour management and questioning skills, which guide pupils to think things out for themselves. Pupils learn best in lessons where there is a strong practical element, as they enjoy learning through discovery. In some lessons, teachers plan activities for different ages rather than ability groups and this means that pupils' learning slows as the work is either too challenging or too easy. Expectations of what pupils can learn therefore are not always high enough. Marking is satisfactory. The recent development in the way writing is assessed is having a huge impact on pupils' learning, as they now know how to improve their work. A similar system in mathematics helps pupils assess whether they have found the work easy or not but this is not always used by teachers to direct what they teach next. While homework is set regularly, parents are not as fully informed as they should be and so the support they can give is limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes suitable provision for the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) as well as other subjects. A good feature is the provision for all pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, to learn French. A varied programme of educational visits and visitors to school further broadens pupils' experiences. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, offering a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. Suitable provision is made for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics to work with others at a similar level in neighbouring schools, contributing to the good standards in mathematics. A strength is the joint curriculum days with the school's confederated partner, such as a multicultural arts day which effectively expanded pupils' cultural awareness and developed their practical skills. The school is at an early stage of exploring creative links between subjects so as to make learning more enjoyable and pertinent. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory given that most pupils travel to and from school by bus.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils. Health, safety and child protection procedures are robust. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised and effective, with experienced and committed teaching assistants helping pupils to learn, resulting in good progress. A nurture group helps settle pupils who need extra support at the start of the school day before they start lessons. This has had a positive impact on attitudes and behaviour and means the day gets off to a good start for everyone. Discussion times in class and clearly understood systems to support behaviour and motivate pupils to learn have resulted in improved attendance and no exclusions this year. Academic guidance is satisfactory with recent improvements having a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have guided the school through a turbulent time of staff changes and have ensured that standards are rising once again.

Governors fully supported the move to confederation with another school as this meant the school benefits from a non-teaching headteacher. Scrupulous self-evaluation has been the main tool to effect changes. Actions taken have been successful on a broad range of fronts because the headteacher never loses sight of the impact on achievement or standards, both academic and personal. This in turn has raised teachers' expectations of themselves and their pupils. The result is a school with a buoyant future. The assistant headteacher works extremely well in partnership with the headteacher and so the school runs smoothly and efficiently. There is well thought out provision for staff to have adequate planning preparation and assessment time. This is bearing fruit in the innovative approaches the school is now adopting such as in English, where pupils are keen to beat their targets. Subject leaders have a positive impact on their subjects and their good subject knowledge contributes effectively to school improvement planning. The systems now in place support individuals well and the result is being seen in pupils' all-round improvement, both academic and personal.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	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	1
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 welcoming me to your school and for talking to me so readily. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work and hearing what you thought about your school. I am pleased that you are so positive about it and that you feel that your teachers do a lot for you. Like you, I think the new work you are doing in English is very successful and I like the way you read each other's work and discuss what you are doing well and what you could improve on. I think your school is a happy place to be and that it is giving you a satisfactory education. Your 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 the awards and stickers that you told me about are certainly helping everyone to behave. Did you know that your school's attendance has gone up as a result? I think the school council does a good job and so do the playground buddies and I was impressed at the way you organise fund-raising for charity events.

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 noticed that in many lessons pupils of the same age do the same work. Sometimes this works well but it means that some of you are doing work that you find too easy or sometimes too difficult. I have suggested that the school makes sure that the work you are set matches your abilities, not just your age.
- You need more opportunities to learn independently so you become self-reliant and don't always rely on your teachers telling you what to do.
- I have asked your teachers to think of lots more ways to link different subjects together to make your learning more interesting and enjoyable.

I am sure that these things will make your school much better and that you will do your bit to ensure that it does. I wish you all the best for the future.