



Spennithorne Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121517
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292144
Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Spennithorne
School category	Voluntary controlled		Leyburn
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire DL8 5PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01969 623474
Number on roll (school)	89	Fax number	01969 622731
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Littleton
		Headteacher	Mr C Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves a mixed rural area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than usual. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average and none has a statement of special educational needs. Greater than average proportions of pupils enter or leave the school at other than the usual times. Over recent years, the school has seen a high turnover of staff and its work has been disrupted by a building programme that is now complete.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is a happy place that has the support of the great majority of parents, one of whom said, 'It is a warm and welcoming environment in which children can shine'. On entry to Spennithorne pupils become part of a community of care in which they are sure they are known and valued. All who work in the school contribute to the atmosphere of warmth and enjoyment that is reflected in the 'Working together, playing together' display at the school entrance. The school provides good value for money.

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups. Children enter the Foundation Stage with broadly average standards. They make good progress towards the expected learning goals, particularly in social learning, and are well prepared for their life in the school. Good progress is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2. This has not always been the case. In recent years pupils' good progress in Key Stage 1 slowed in Key Stage 2, so that standards declined. This was because long term staffing difficulties meant that pupils were taught by a succession of temporary teachers. Specialist expertise was not consistently available and there was a consequent effect on the continuity of learning. This situation has been resolved. The school is now fully staffed and the appointment of teachers with specialist knowledge has resulted in considerable improvements in the teaching and learning of literacy, numeracy and science. Provisional results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 showed a substantial improvement, meeting the school's challenging targets and showing good achievement. Current standards of work seen match those results and show that improvement is continuing, as new teaching methods, together with changes in class and curricular organisation, take effect on learning throughout the school.

Personal development is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show a keen sense of right and wrong and of responsibilities and care for other members of the community. This is the result of a consistent approach by all who work in the school that shows pupils they are cared for and valued. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy coming to school. Behaviour in and out of lessons is exemplary and results from teachers' consistently high expectations. Pupils work very well together and individually, even when not directly supervised. Above all, pupils develop confidence in themselves because of the school's supportive atmosphere. In the Foundation Stage, many interesting activities capture children's interest and help them to develop good attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers throughout the school promote good progress for pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They and their pupils are well supported by the teaching assistants attached to each class. Teachers are good at planning interesting work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons and are eager learners. Many say that, 'lessons are fun'.

Curriculum provision is good. Pupils' needs are met through a well planned series of interesting activities that promote good learning and personal development. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential adventurous experience, helps to extend learning and contributes much to pupils' personal development. Although teachers and assistants in the Foundation Stage make the best of the very limited provision for outdoor learning and play, the equipment and facilities are insufficient to support their work.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. They feel safe in the school. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that any such matters will be dealt with promptly and effectively. As a parent said: 'It is a happy well-run school that makes every effort to guide children morally and educationally'. Support for vulnerable pupils and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Well developed systems are in place to identify pupils needing support and to follow through measures designed to help them. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. Progress is monitored effectively, so that underachievement can be identified and action taken. Pupils have general targets for improvement but these are often not specific enough to provide clear guidance. Virtually all pupils think that they are doing well because marking of their work is supportive. However, as with target-setting, it does not consistently let pupils know how well they ought to be doing or what they specifically need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are good. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and matches inspection findings. Good progress has been made in dealing with the issues from the last inspection. The headteacher and the governing body have worked together to manage improvements in accommodation and staffing over recent years that have dealt with the weaknesses identified in older pupils' progress. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils know how well they ought to be doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve facilities for outdoor learning and play in the Foundation Stage, so that children have more opportunities to develop their independence and their skills of enquiry.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school maintains above average standards as pupils move through the school. Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and this is built on effectively in Key Stage 1 to enable them to reach above average standards. Pupils successfully acquire the learning skills that stand them in good stead for their education in Years 3 to 6. In recent years the school's records show that pupils' progress slowed in Years 4, 5 and 6 with performance in mathematics falling off markedly. The school identified and dealt with the causes of this underachievement. Improved results

in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 and the above average standards seen in current work indicate the success of changes made to teaching methods, grouping of pupils and the establishment of a stable teaching staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school does much to promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils have many opportunities across the curriculum for reflection and expression of thoughts and feelings that contribute greatly to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities are underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Pupils participate in community events and productions put on for the wider community. Very good attitudes are shown in excellent behaviour and the way that older pupils look after and help those who are younger. They are aware of the needs of others. For example, much has been learnt about the realities of life for people in Africa through a contact made by a parent with a school in Sudan. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities that they are offered and, for example, as members of the school council, show pride in their contribution to the school. They work well together, listen to each other and are able to recognise the value of differing opinions. Pupils have a voice in the school and can show many examples of action taken as a result of their suggestions, such as the improvements to the toilet areas and the provision of play equipment. Pupils understand the need to be conscious of their own and others' safety. They are able to explain the elements of maintaining healthy lifestyles such as the importance of exercise and diet. Good work habits are developed through team and independent work so that they are well prepared for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because they are taught well. Teachers plan work, with classroom assistants, that offers a variety of stimulating activities to capture and keep pupils' interest and to maintain a good pace in lessons. Because pupils are involved in their work and teachers are consistently clear in their expectations of work and attitudes, time is used well and very little is wasted on dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour. Teachers bring subjects to life and make good links between them to help pupils make sense of what they are learning. They are very supportive, giving pupils the confidence to risk making mistakes and helping them to learn from them. Teachers are good at turning the demands of teaching mixed-age classes to advantage, in the way that they organise groups within the class so that pupils are challenged appropriately. Classroom assistants play a prominent part in promoting progress through group work. Above all, teachers make lessons fun so that pupils enjoy them and are eager to learn. Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress and to identify

underachievement so that action can be taken. Teachers have a good picture of individual pupils' progress and their needs, which they use effectively in planning. Nevertheless, they do not consistently use marking and target-setting to let pupils know how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is organised well to promote good progress and personal development by making learning an enjoyable experience. Provision for teaching basic skills is good. Displays in classrooms show how well the teaching of arts and crafts is built into the curriculum to support learning, make it fun and to make effective links between subjects. Cooperative partnerships with other schools enhance provision, for example in information and communication technology (ICT). The only significant gap in provision affecting pupils' learning is the lack of opportunities for outdoor learning and play in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The strength of this aspect of the school's work is the flow of information between all the members of a small staff. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to take care of its pupils. Child protection procedures are well developed, as are those for health and safety. Pupils feel well cared for and supported. They know whom to approach for help and are confident they will get it. They do not always know how to improve their work, because marking tends to be supportive rather than guiding pupils towards further improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management promote good progress in all aspects of pupils' learning and personal development. Leadership identifies what needs to be done to manage improvement and works to bring it about. For example, cost savings on ICT, made through partnership with other schools, have enabled money to be spent on improving other resources. Good strategic planning and understanding of the school's needs are shown in the way that the headteacher and governors have managed the building programme and established an effective staff team. Specialist expertise is deployed to good advantage, as is seen in improvements to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. A common sense of purpose and shared values has been developed among the staff, underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Rigorous monitoring of classroom performance by senior staff, together with training, development of schemes of work and teaching methods, has led to a marked improvement in standards and pupils' progress. Initiatives are carefully evaluated for their effectiveness. Management of the Foundation Stage is good. Good records are kept to enable checks to be made on progress.

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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	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

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	1
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	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?	2
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

As you know, I visited your school to find out if it is giving you the education you should receive. Thank you very much for making me so welcome. I really enjoyed talking to you and you were very clear about what you think of the school and what you enjoy. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it.

Some of the things particularly good things about your school are:

- the way that Mr Morgan and all the other adults at the school look after you
- your excellent behaviour and your good attitude to learning
- the way your teachers make learning enjoyable for you - so many of you told me that learning was fun
- how keen you are to take on responsibilities, help to make decisions about your school and care about one another.

To help make your school an even better place to learn, I have asked Mr Morgan and your teachers to make sure that the younger children have better facilities for outdoor learning and play and that all of you know exactly what you need to do next to improve your learning.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I hope you will carry on enjoying learning at Spennithorne and wish you well for the future.