



Thornton Watlass Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121521
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292146
Inspection date 1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thornton Watlass
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ripon
Age range of pupils	4-11		North Yorkshire HG4 4AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01677 422685
Number on roll (school)	41	Fax number	01677 422685
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Wendy Irvine
		Headteacher	Mr Adam Pritchard-Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 1 March 2007	Inspection number 292146
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school, with two separate mixed age classes, one for Foundation Stage children and infants, and the other for juniors. No pupils qualify for free school meals. Nearly all are of White British heritage with a few from other White backgrounds. All have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average and none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils that join at other than the usual time is high, especially in junior year groups. There is a projected decline in pupil numbers due to falling rolls in the area. The school has recently gained the Activemark.

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 with some outstanding features. Governors and staff are fired by a common belief in providing a well rounded education for all pupils. As a result, the school provides excellent care, guidance and support for pupils, and their personal development is outstanding. Parents are very positive about all that the school provides and achieves, with a number citing, 'the happiness and friendliness that is in many ways akin to a large, successful family'. This is a tribute to the positive and consistent approach adopted by all staff. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been sound, with an acceleration in progress in recent years. It has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

The school's pastoral care for pupils and their personal development are major strengths. Parents find that staff are very approachable and helpful when difficulties or concerns arise. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time, settle well, as they are made welcome by staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for. Key aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their work in lessons and they clearly enjoy school a great deal. This is reflected in consistently good attendance. Behaviour is excellent both inside and outside of lessons and pupils show good levels of respect and tolerance for each other. Pupils undertake with enthusiasm their responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, being a 'buddy' for younger pupils and the house captain roles. They understand about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and how to stay safe. Most pupils are polite, caring, confident and independent individuals well before they leave Year 6.

Pupils' academic achievement is good. This is because both teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Although there is some cohort variation, given the school's small size, standards are typical of those found nationally on entry to the Reception class. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, enabling pupils to make a good start in their development and learning. Pupils make good progress between Years 1 and 6, so that standards are usually above the national average by the end of Year 6. Pupils do particularly well in reading, mathematics and science. However, whilst improving, progress and standards are broadly average in writing. The good curriculum now benefits from the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. There is good enrichment through a range of visits, visitors, community events and the range of out of school clubs.

Leadership, management and governance are all good. The headteacher provides an ambitious vision for all, centred on maximising the learning opportunities for pupils whilst rejecting any limitations imposed by the school's size. As a result, pupils enjoy the advantages of a small school whilst having the range of experiences more often associated with much larger ones. The levels of common purpose and teamwork among staff are high. Governors provide the right combination of support and challenge for the capable school team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very small numbers of pupils show ability variations from year to year. However, children usually enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly similar to those found nationally. They get off to a good start, so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, they reach the expected levels in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress overall in Years 1-6 and, by the time they leave the school, standards are above the national average. Most recent national test results generally confirm this picture. However, results have been lower in some years, due to the impact on standards of the relatively high proportions of pupils who join in Years 3 to 6. Progress in writing is somewhat weaker, although it is satisfactory and improving. The school meets its challenging Year 6 targets, as these are well informed by the rigorous pupil tracking system.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are proud of their school. They value the excellent relationships with adults and pupils as well as the good range of clubs and events, such as the performances and 'magic' shows. Pupils clearly enjoy both the social and learning sides of school and show good attitudes to lessons and learning. Excellent behaviour around the school leads to a calm, orderly atmosphere. Pupils have confidence in adults to resolve any rare, minor incidents of misbehaviour. The attendance levels and punctuality of pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and cultural development is good. They are respectful, courteous and most work very well in pairs and small groups. They gain an important awareness of world faiths and cultures through visits and visitors as well as in religious education, history and art lessons.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. Adults and pupils take seriously the pupils' work as school councillors, buddies and house captains. The pupils' contribution is a key reason for the excellent social atmosphere. It reduces unproductive staff workload associated with resolving disputes between pupils. Pupils are well prepared to make a positive contribution to society and the workplace in later years, based on their excellent personal qualities and good academic standards.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall and this is reflected in pupils' good progress. High expectations and good relationships throughout school lead to a happy learning environment, where pupils are keen to do well. The set work, in mixed age classes, is well matched to pupils' capabilities and ages. Good use is made of ICT to capture pupils' interest and enliven learning. There are good levels of pupil involvement, through well pitched questioning and by allowing significant amounts of time for pupils' work.

Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in assessing pupils' work during the lesson and providing additional support for individuals, as needed. As a result, pupils learn more securely and staff have a good knowledge of where each pupil is in their learning. Marking is good, as it regularly provides pupils with suggestions on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good balance between basic skills and creative activities that enhance the enjoyment of all pupils. Significant use is made of specialist staff in music and physical education. The growing use of literacy and ICT skills across the curriculum is now a positive feature. This significantly increases the motivation and interest of some pupils. The personal, social, health and citizenship education is good and makes an important contribution to pupils' excellent personal development. The outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage is of high quality, as a result of recent expenditure.

The range and participation levels in out-of-school activities, centred on sport but also including music and art, are good. There is a good range of visits and visitors that play an important part in opening pupils' eyes to the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils is excellent. The views of pupils and parents are sought, valued and acted on. Pupils experiencing any little anxieties or difficulties are very well supported, not only by adults but also by their peers. For example, the 'comment box' allows pupils to report their concerns and these are acted on by staff and/or the school council. Adults use praise very well when pupils show positive attitudes, politeness and consideration. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are well established. Pupils understandably feel safe and very well cared for. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Their progress is reviewed regularly and outside agencies are consulted when

appropriate. More widely, academic guidance is good. Older pupils know their current national curriculum levels and get good guidance on how to improve pieces of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is an excellent leader and pupils, parents and governors regard him very highly. There is a clear emphasis on ensuring pupils make good academic progress. Developments under his leadership have made school a richer and more enjoyable experience for pupils. For example, all pupils have a voice and significant opportunities to exercise responsibility and to experience a wide range of outdoor activities. He is well supported by the rest of the staff. Good teamwork ensures there is consistency in what pupils experience across the school, in terms of academic challenge but also in relation to wider expectations.

The use of data on pupils' performance is good. Performance management is well established and effective in spreading the contribution of all staff to school improvement. There is a clear emphasis on developing the roles of all adults. This is an important feature in avoiding excessive teacher workload whilst operating to a tight budget due to the projected decline in pupil numbers. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge for the school, based on a clear and accurate grasp of its performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	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	2
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

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?	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.

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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. It was very useful to hear how much you like your school. I really enjoyed my visit and want to share with you what I found out. You go to a good school, where you learn well, not only in subjects but in the way your personal qualities develop.

What I liked most about your school.

- The headteacher and other staff work well together and are good at their jobs.
- The school cares very well for you, based on treating all of you as individuals.
- You are happy and feel safe in school.
- The school is a more pleasant place for everybody, due to the good work of school councillors, buddies and house captains.
- You behave excellently, both in lessons and outside, and your attendance is good.
- You benefit from a good range of trips, visits and after school clubs.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Help you to raise standards in your written work.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school.