

Elvington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121531
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	292150
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Howard

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	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Andrea Lawson
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Rawling
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Dauby Lane Elvington York North Yorkshire YO41 4HP
Telephone number	01904 608398
Fax number	01904 608398

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Inspection number	292150

© 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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small rural primary school serving an area of social advantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The great majority of pupils are drawn from the village of Elvington, with a minority coming from further afield. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, pupils are drawn from the full ability range and the level of skills and knowledge of children entering Reception is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and none are in the early stages of learning the English Language. The school holds the ArtsMark Silver and Healthy School Awards.

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 and improving school, with a number of outstanding features. The school works very effectively to give pupils many opportunities to develop as fully rounded individuals. Pupils enjoy school, their behaviour is exceptional and they maintain excellent relationships with each other and staff. The school's caring ethos contributes to pupils' mature understanding of the difference between right and wrong and their strong commitment to treating each other with mutual respect. Pupils take advantage of many opportunities to exercise responsibility and learn to act both independently and cooperatively. These strengths are reflected in pupils' outstanding levels of personal development and well-being. There is a good and strengthening partnership between school and parents who give the school their overwhelming support. A typical comment from parents was, 'We can't praise the headteacher and all the teachers enough for all their care and effort that make school an enjoyable experience for our children.'

Children make a good start in Reception, where they receive lively and creative teaching that meets the needs of young learners well. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average and sometimes even better. Variations from year to year generally reflect the particular strengths of different groups of children, but whatever their starting points, they make good progress. The school is very committed to the arts and standards in art, music and drama are high. The award of an Artsmark recognises the school's good provision in these aspects of its work.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Recently introduced strategies to involve pupils more in their own learning and assessment are starting to have an impact on learning, but are not yet consistently implemented. Where these strategies are used well and linked to high levels of challenge, lively pace and creativity, teaching is outstanding. Where teachers make less effective use of these strategies, pace tends to be slower and expectations are not so high. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils well. It is particularly strong in its provision for pupils' personal development and there is an excellent range of enrichment opportunities, including visits, visitors and participation in sporting and cultural activities. This is a very caring school that makes good arrangements for the well-being of its pupils. A recently introduced system to track pupils' progress helps teachers plan the next steps in learning more accurately.

The headteacher, who is coming to the end of her first year in post, has a good understanding of the needs of the school, a clear vision for the future and the drive to carry it forward. She has forged good relationships with all stakeholders in the school and staff, parents and governors are working well as a team. Subject and phase leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Governors are committed and contribute well to the school's development. As a result, a good school is getting better and its capacity for further improvement is good. The school maintains good partnerships with other schools and agencies that contribute well to its development. For example, its participation in the School Sports Partnership Programme is improving provision and raising standards in physical education. The school is making increasingly effective use of checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, greater rigour is needed in identifying and following up any areas for development to ensure that the quality of teaching further improves. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils more consistently in evaluating their own work and setting targets for improvement.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring to raise the general standard of teaching to that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The level of skills and knowledge that children have on entry to Reception vary from year to year, but are broadly average. Children make good progress, thanks to good teaching, to reach standards that are above average by the end of Reception. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher achieving pupils achieve better in reading than in writing and mathematics, but this discrepancy is being reduced as a result of the school's focused work to increase the proportion of pupils achieving well in these subjects. At the end of Year 6, attainment varies in relation to pupils' starting points, but standards in English, mathematics and science are generally above average and occasionally exceptionally high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and as a result, make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

In judging pupils' personal development to be good, the school is too modest. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Personal qualities, such as pupils' behaviour and their social skills, for example, their ability to share and cooperate are excellent. These skills are particularly evident at playtime, when pupils play and mix together very harmoniously. The school's strong ethos, underpinned by its Christian values, contributes well to pupils' moral development. Assemblies and opportunities to participate in all branches of the arts enhance their spiritual awareness. Pupils are very aware of what is necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle. They make appropriate choices in their diet and are keen to take up the many opportunities to take exercise and participate in sport provided by school staff and parent helpers. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and talk sensibly about the dangers of some drugs. They have a well-founded confidence that if there were a problem, adults in school would give them the support they need. Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly teaching which involves them actively and the wide range of enrichment activities. They enthusiastically take up the many opportunities to exercise responsibility, as 'helping hands', and confidently undertake a range of jobs and support younger pupils. School councillors play a very effective role in school life, taking the lead in decision making. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning and move on to secondary school with considerable confidence. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and staff treat them with fairness and respect. In response, pupils' behaviour is excellent and their constructive approach to learning

contributes well to the progress they make. While the quality of teaching overall is good, it ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Better teaching makes exemplary use of a range of strategies to involve pupils more actively in their own learning. These include involving pupils in assessing their own work, marking that gives them specific guidance on how to improve and setting targets that help them make the next steps in learning. Where learning is outstanding, pupils are involved in setting their own targets. When these strengths are combined with a lively pace and engaging teaching methods, lessons are motivating, challenging and have high impact on learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, pace is not so lively, lessons are not conducted with the same flair and strategies to involve pupils more actively in their own learning are not consistently implemented. Teaching assistants give good support, for example, when they help pupils in class or teach them in separate groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff have successfully created a lively and stimulating environment that promotes effective learning. This is evident in classrooms, public spaces such as corridors and the entrance hall and outdoors, where particularly rich provision enhances pupils' play. In Reception, a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities promotes children's learning and personal development well. Provision for English and mathematics throughout school is good and enables pupils to develop their basic skills well. The school is implementing a well considered curricular plan to enhance the teaching of other subjects for Years 1 to 6. This includes engaging pupils in more practical work in science. The school gives pupils many opportunities to participate in music, drama and art. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities, including visitors to school, offsite visits and a good range of extra-curricular activities, which involve a high proportion of pupils. For example, residential visits make a good contribution to developing pupils' personal and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school, which gives the welfare of pupils a high priority and this contributes well to their personal development and well-being. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are thorough and well managed. An effective system to track pupils' progress has been introduced. This ensures that teachers know if pupils are making the progress expected of them and this information is well used to plan appropriate provision and help pupils meet challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support. A new initiative to improve identification of and provision for able, gifted and talented pupils is beginning to have an impact. Although the school has initiated good arrangements to help pupils know how to improve their work through constructive marking and the setting of targets, these are still in the early stages of implementation. There are good arrangements in place to support pupils when they join and leave the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives the school strong leadership and has the confidence and support of staff and governors. Working well together as a team the school's leadership and staff are implementing a broadly based programme of improvement. This is having a positive impact on

raising achievement and standards and enhancing pupils' personal development. Although the school's self-evaluation is accurate and provides a good foundation for further improvement, checks on teaching and learning by senior managers are not rigorous enough to help improve teaching even further. Arrangements for planning school improvement are well expressed in a concise document that clearly identifies the priorities for action. Governors are actively involved in school life. Through effective self-review they have identified how they might improve further their leadership of the school's strategic development and are implementing an appropriate programme of action.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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?	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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave me to your school. I enjoyed my visit very much. Here are some of the things that make Elvington a good school.

- The good progress you make in your work and the way you so clearly enjoy learning.
- Your excellent behaviour and the way in which everyone in your school is so kind and helpful.
- How well you respond to the many opportunities you have to contribute to school life, including participating in the school council and being a 'helping hand'.
- How hard the staff in school work, how well they teach you and the many interesting things they plan for you to do so that you can succeed in school.
- Your school is well run. Your headteacher, governors and staff know what to do to make sure that it is a good school and does lots of things really well.

I have suggested two things that your school should do to make Elvington even better.

- Help you judge how well you are getting on in lessons and be more involved in setting your own targets to improve your work.
- Work even harder to check that all teaching is helping you to learn as much as possible.

Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. I wish you all the very best for your future.