



Embsay Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary
School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121559
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292158
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Doug Lowes

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pasture Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Embsay, Skipton
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire BD23 6RH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01756 793426
Number on roll (school)	172	Fax number	01756 798840
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Margaret Harrison
		Headteacher	Mrs Judith Holliday
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	31 January –1 February 2007	292158

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This Church of England voluntary controlled primary school serves a rural community on the edge of Skipton. The proportion of pupils who take free school meals is much lower than in most schools. There are very few pupils from an ethnic minority background or whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

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 many outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, governors and senior leadership team, provides clear vision for the school. The headteacher is passionate about her school and determined to provide the best possible education for all pupils. In this and other features of the school's leadership, the inspectors' view is shared by the overwhelming majority of parents. Her direction has established a culture where pupils are motivated to succeed. She has created a positive ethos whereby staff work very effectively together and pupils demonstrate very good behaviour and attitudes. Extremely effective self-evaluation has resulted in clearly identified areas for improvement. As a consequence the school has made very good progress since the last inspection.

From their earliest starting points, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress and achieve well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Although there was a fall in the 2006 Year 6 test results, the school has set challenging targets to reverse this in 2007. The school makes good use of information about pupils' performance and has good systems in place to analyse their progress. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Comprehensive assessment of these children ensures that work is well matched to their individual needs, allowing them to make good progress. Very good leadership ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well and their progress is further secured through the positive impact of effective teaching assistants. Subject leaders demonstrate a very good level of expertise and they are effective in their support of colleagues.

Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned and stimulating. In response, pupils make good and at times very good progress. However, in some classes work is not sufficiently matched to the wide range of pupils' abilities and as a result the pace in these lessons is slower, restricting learning. The curriculum is outstanding. It is planned very effectively to promote a broad range of skills and knowledge that will equip pupils for the future. An extensive enrichment programme, including educational visits and a wide choice of after-school activities, sustains pupils' interest and makes learning fun. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly towards pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Pupils say that they enjoy school and like their teachers. This is evident in the very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils throughout the school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely well and know what it means to be safe and how to live healthy lives. Most of all, they know that they are achieving well and this gives them increasing confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers match work closely to pupils' learning needs in order to raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment when they start school is broadly average with some having above average skills and knowledge. By the end of the Foundation Stage children have made good progress as a result of good teaching.

Pupils make very good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the 2006 assessment outcomes, where pupils did particularly well in writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good and sometimes very good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is despite higher than average numbers of pupils entering Key Stage 2 other than at the normal starting time. Despite the variation in pupils' recent test performance, the current Year 6 pupils are very well placed to meet their challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons because tasks are adapted well to suit their needs and they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. All groups of pupils achieve well.

A key feature of the school's consistently good performance is a systematic approach to collecting information from tests, accurately analysing strengths and priorities for improvement, and then taking robust action to secure better results in future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Relationships are excellent and as a result, pupils are very well behaved, welcoming to visitors and very positive about school. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in the many outstanding learning opportunities and activities that the school provides. This helps to explain the high attendance figures, which are well above the national average. Bullying is very rare, but when it occurs it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Staff actively seek the views of pupils and record their views. School council members are proud of their involvement in making decisions which benefit all children, such as by helping to promote an awareness of environmental issues and by overseeing the use of suggestion boxes in all classrooms. Community involvement is embedded in the school's work, for example through its participation in village activities and Skipton Music Festival. Successful assemblies help promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop positive self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, such as by being nominated as 'star of the week' and through the celebration of their 'special work'. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe and having a healthy lifestyle. These significant benefits along with their good achievements prepare them well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff motivate pupils, exhibit good subject knowledge and generally have high expectations. Secure relationships, effective management of pupils and positive levels of care successfully underpin the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and learning. For Reception children, a good balance is struck between practical activities and the teaching of key skills. As a result, children are interested, involved and sometimes excited, and know what they must do to succeed. Pupils throughout the school find most lessons interesting, challenging and fun. Teaching is especially successful when time is used to good effect and tasks are demanding, ask a lot of the pupils and bring learning to life for them. Where work is not matched carefully enough to the wide range of pupils' abilities, learning is not so effective. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and contribute significantly to the quality of pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers are skilled at telling pupils what they must do to succeed, which provides a clear focus for their learning, but in some classes they do not give enough time for pupils to work independently. Where the pace of some lessons is a little slow learning can be restricted. Very effective procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has a curriculum of outstanding quality which instils positive attitudes in its pupils and offers opportunities for so many of them to achieve success. Links between subjects stimulate learning and enable pupils to apply an array of skills. For example, information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning in all subjects. Pupils' work is valued and contributes to a very stimulating learning environment. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. It is well designed to meet their needs and, through targeted support, helps them to make good progress. High achievers are set challenging work and this leads to above average levels of attainment. Gifted and talented pupils are clearly identified and effective programmes of activities help them to further develop their skills. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

An outstanding programme of enrichment is available to pupils of all ages. Educational trips, along with visitors to school, provide very good first-hand experiences and add interest to pupils' learning. In addition, there is a vast range of high quality sporting, artistic and musical activities. The numerous awards gained by the school exhibit commitment by staff, and rightly give pupils a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pastoral care is of high quality with many successful initiatives established to keep pupils safe and happy. Health and safety systems are good. Procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are rigorous and embedded in the school's work. The school has effective arrangements for ensuring that all new staff are appropriately checked. Staff have a very good reputation among parents for caring for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as supporting pupils with special talents. The school provides very good information for parents, who express much confidence in the school. One parent commented: 'Teachers are always approachable and go the extra mile to know their children well.' The school does all it can to ensure a smooth transition when pupils move to or leave the school. Teaching assistants make a very important contribution to the high quality support that all pupils receive.

Guidance to pupils about their academic performance is very good. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. Teachers' marking is celebratory and tells pupils what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. Teachers are increasingly using steps to success and checklists to involve pupils more fully in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. As a result, the school has established an excellent curriculum, personal development, well-being, care, guidance and support. As a result of consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching, and despite above average numbers of pupils joining the school after the normal time, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress and attain above average standards. Excellent self-evaluation procedures and effective planning have enabled the headteacher and deputy headteacher to direct the next steps in the school's improvement journey. As a result the school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Caring leadership supports the work of staff and they are encouraged, through professional development, to further improve their skills.

Subject leaders demonstrate a very good level of expertise and use it effectively to evaluate how subjects are being taught and to support staff in their work. Thorough analysis of the most recent test results has identified key areas that require further improvement. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life and are particularly active in its work and direction. They are extremely well informed about school priorities and, through regular monitoring, contribute significantly to school improvement, providing both support and challenge to the school leadership. The capacity to improve is outstanding.

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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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?	1
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?	1
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	1
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	1
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 the very warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed listening to you singing in assembly and seeing you take part in lots of exciting activities. In particular, we enjoyed being in your lessons, seeing how hard you work, talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that you do at school.

We have judged your school to be a good one and the way you work in lessons has helped us make that decision. We could see that you like your teachers and really enjoy coming to school.

We think that these are good things about your school:

- you help to make your school a happy and friendly place where everyone is welcome
- your behaviour is very good at all times and you work hard in lessons
- your headteacher and staff help you to make good progress in your learning
- all of your teachers and support staff care about you and want you to do well
- the school is bright with lots of your very good work on display for everyone to see
- teachers plan work that really interests you
- there are lots of activities for you to get involved in
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good school leaders.

Your headteacher and all the adults want you to do well so we have asked them to do something different to help:

- Make lessons even more interesting and challenging so that you can improve further.