



# Fountains Earth, Lofthouse Church of England Endowed Primary School

## Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 121561  
**Local Authority** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 292159  
**Inspection date** 18 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ralph Higgs

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Fountains Earth
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Lofthouse, Harrogate
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		North Yorkshire HG3 5RZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01423 755289
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	17	<b>Fax number</b>	01423 755289
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Rev Peter Dunbar
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Candida Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This very small school is situated in an isolated rural location in an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are two mixed age classes. Pupils come from a wide range of circumstances and about half have farming backgrounds. All pupils are White British. The numbers of pupils joining the school fluctuate but are always very small.

## 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, which provides good value for money. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and the school takes full advantage of its small size to provide an excellent curriculum tailored to pupils' individual needs. These are two key factors that contribute to pupils' standards of achievement.

Pupils' attainment on entry ranges from below average to broadly average. In both cases, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage to mainly reach or exceed the national expectations for their age. This good progress is sustained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and has led to recent results in national tests in Year 6 that are above average. This represents good achievement, including for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Parents are rightly very pleased with the education the school provides and by its Christian ethos. One parent said, 'There is always a warm, welcoming atmosphere, and the children really enjoy going'. This enjoyment is shown by the excitement and curiosity often evident in lessons and by pupils' excellent behaviour. Their attendance is above average. Relationships are first class; 'We are all friends at this school', an older girl said. Pupils know how to keep healthy and stay fit. They are very alert to any potential safety risks.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Effective use of additional specialist teachers has raised standards, for example, in art and design, and in design technology. Many visits and visitors considerably extend opportunities for learning. Foundation Stage provision is good and improving. Pupils quickly settle in and enjoy the interesting activities in different learning areas. Teachers in both classes use their knowledge of individual pupils very well to plan activities to encourage learning. Lessons are effectively based on the learning needs of different age groups. Consequently, pupils respond very well. They listen carefully and eagerly answer questions. However, they lack confidence in expressing themselves in discussions. Teachers have recognised this but do not yet focus sufficiently on developing this skill. Pupils are cared for very well and they feel safe. They say there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Whilst there is a system for setting targets and tracking pupils' progress, there are limited opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning. This restricts their understanding of what to do to improve.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior leaders have a good understanding of which aspects of the school need development. Governors make a good contribution to the effective running of the school and have helped set a clear direction for improvement, which the new headteacher is pursuing vigorously. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and there is a good capacity to further improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' confidence and skills in speaking in order to further improve their achievements.

- Extend pupils' understanding of their learning and progress so that they will know clearly how to improve their work and meet their targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Reception class with variable attainment. By the time they start in Year 1, most have reached, and some have exceeded, the national expectations for their age and have achieved well. The standards reached by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in the national tests vary from year to year because numbers are always small. Standards in recent national tests in Year 2 were broadly average and in Year 6 had risen to above average. In both cases, these results represent good achievement from pupils' starting points. A similar picture emerges from the standards and progress seen in lessons and in current pupils' work. The few pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively to make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are quick to help one another, showing consideration for each other's feelings. Attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Pupils enjoy school a great deal. A fairly new pupil exclaimed, 'It's brilliant! The best school I have been to'. This is shown by their regular attendance and eagerness to participate in activities organised by the school and the community. Pupils mature very well during their time in school and older pupils feel confident about making the transfer to secondary school.

Pupils know which foods are sensible to eat and enjoy swimming lessons and team sports. They are very aware of potential dangers to their health and how to avoid risks on and off the school site. They have risen well to the challenge of participating in the new school council.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Christian ethos of the school is a strong, guiding influence on their relationships, and their attitudes towards the environment and the wider world. The school has made considerable efforts to extend pupils' cultural development so that they experience other ways of life and meet pupils from other backgrounds. Consequently, they have a growing awareness of life in a multicultural society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons well, taking good account of the wide range of ages and abilities in their small classes. They put their knowledge of individual pupils to good effect to provide more

support or to vary the activity as pupils are learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive specific work for their clearly identified needs. Teachers try hard to interest pupils by planning a good range of activities and by giving praise and encouragement. Consequently, pupils often show their excitement when a challenging task is introduced. This produces good learning, as pupils try to do their best. They willingly answer questions but responses tend to be brief and the reasons and opinions provided, even when pupils are asked to extend their answer, are usually underdeveloped.

Assessments of pupils' work are undertaken conscientiously to help future planning and identify additional support needs. These are based on detailed records of progress in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is an established system for setting targets but teachers recognise that it needs tightening up so that pupils have a better understanding of their progress and how to make improvements to their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. The school uses its size to advantage to provide a rich and varied range of work that takes account of individual learning needs whilst fully meeting national requirements. The teaching of basic skills is well established and the provision for the use of computers is good and improving. Lessons in personal development ensure pupils know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and have the skills and awareness to keep safe.

Very good use is made of the locality and the support offered by the community to extend learning opportunities. The school makes a very special effort to ensure that its relative isolation is not a barrier to learning. At the same time, its location in an area of outstanding natural beauty is exploited to benefit learning in many subjects and to promote pupils' personal development. Opportunities are eagerly sought to add to the school's rich provision. Very good partnerships with local schools have provided specialist teaching of the arts and have led to the introduction of French lessons. A new exchange programme is underway with a large inner city school to extend opportunities for personal and academic learning. The whole school is participating in this initiative. All pupils take part in two residential experiences between Years 3 and 6, which extend their knowledge of the wider world and contribute very well to their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. They are provided by a united and very caring staff team. All health and safety regulations, including those for child protection, are fully observed. All pupils are helped to feel special and to do their best. They get very good individual attention and strong links with their families and the community are used to benefit this support. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities in partnership with local agencies. As a consequence, all pupils enjoy their learning and this contributes well to their good achievement.

Pupils' progress is closely monitored and recent changes to the process are helping this to be undertaken more frequently. For example, the identification of weaker standards in writing compared to other subjects in recent Key Stage 1 tests led to effective intervention, so that good improvement is evident. Pupils are set targets to help them improve but they have limited involvement in this process.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good systems of self-evaluation have been established, involving all staff and the governing body. This means the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors have helped the new headteacher set a clear direction for improvement, which recognises the barriers and opportunities facing the school. The headteacher's good partnership with governors has ensured that important changes have been carried out in aspects such as performance management and curriculum development. The staff team has a strong commitment to the success of the school.

The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis and a tight budget is used well to extend provision. The school makes special efforts to help its pupils mix with others from farther a field. For example, partnerships with external agencies and other schools are used productively to extend opportunities for learning.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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 the warm welcome you gave me during my recent visit. I agree with you and your parents that everyone is friendly which helps make the school a very enjoyable place to be. These are the main things I found out during my visit.

- You do well in your work at school because you work hard and try your best.
- The school is helping you very well to grow up into mature young people. Your behaviour is excellent and you take on responsibilities very willingly. You clearly know how to stay safe and how to make sensible choices to keep healthy and be fit. You clearly get on very well with each other.
- You are right to say you find lessons interesting and that your teachers are helpful.
- Everyone has worked hard at the school to help give you a wide range of interesting things to learn and do.
- All of the staff take very good care of you and, as they know you very well, they know how to provide help if you need it.
- The headteacher and governors know what to do to keep improving the school.

Your teachers will be trying to help you learn even better by:

- helping you to become more confident when you are speaking; you can help one another in doing this as well
- making sure that you understand your targets better, but you will have to concentrate hard on this to help them.

I enjoyed meeting and talking with you and I wish you every success in the future.