

Long Marston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121575
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292163
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Ralph Higgs

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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Abbey
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Adamson
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Angram Road Long Marston York North Yorkshire YO26 7LR
Telephone number	01904 738352
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small school serves a village and its surrounding area in the Vale of York. Pupils come from a variety of family circumstances, although most are from relatively advantaged homes. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average but is increasing. There are no pupils currently with a statement of special educational need. Two large classrooms have been added and extensive improvements made to the internal accommodation and to the school grounds since the last inspection. The number on roll had been stable at around 40 pupils but there has been a large increase in the intake in the last 12 months because the school is attracting pupils from outside its usual catchment area. The school holds a silver Eco-School award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. A new headteacher took up post in April 2006.

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 do well both personally and academically. The school is popular with children and parents alike. Pupils rightly say that it is, 'a family school', and it has begun to attract pupils from further afield because of its friendly and inclusive reputation. The new headteacher provides good leadership in partnership with an experienced and effective governing body. Between them, they know the school well. As a result, a clear direction has been established for school improvement which is being successfully pursued. A number of recent changes are having a positive impact on standards and progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. These include the appointment of an additional teacher, refinements to the curriculum and the introduction of an effective system for tracking pupils' progress. These changes have the full support of the staff, who are pulling together to ensure the success of the school. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection has been good, as is the school's capacity to further improve.

Pupils make good progress throughout their time in school because teaching is lively and effective in all stages of their education. Pupils say, 'Teachers are all very encouraging,' and, 'We always feel OK to ask if we don't understand something.' Children get off to a flying start in Reception and benefit from being taught alongside older children in a mixed age class. They respond very well to activities which encourage them to learn for themselves. There have been significant improvements made since the last inspection to the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage, which is now good. Children stay in the same class and continue to enjoy stimulating and well-organised indoor and outdoor activities throughout Key Stage 1. As a result, standards have risen strongly in recent years and are now being sustained across Key Stage 2. This year, the school has taken effective action to improve the teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6. It has also introduced 'catch-up' classes for pupils who fall behind and very able pupils are stretched by doing extra work on a computer learning package. Standards fluctuate between year groups because numbers are small and the mix of abilities varies. However, standards are above average overall by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their positive attitudes, very good behaviour and above average attendance. Pupils play and work together harmoniously. They have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles, and how to keep safe. These qualities are fostered effectively by a good, rich curriculum and by the effective support and personal guidance provided by a very caring staff. However, pupils do not always have a confident understanding of how to improve their work. Although teachers are consistently supportive, the quality of marking and the feedback given in lessons are inconsistent. Whilst pupils' work hard in lessons because teachers set clear expectations, the presentation of older pupils' work is not sufficiently careful and undermines the quality of their writing. There is not enough emphasis on developing good work habits in this respect in Key Stage 2.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' written work in Key Stage 2 so that it reaches a consistently good standard.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. When children first start school, their attainment overall is usually what is expected nationally of four year olds. Skilled teaching by an effective staff team in the mixed class of Reception and infants ensures that pupils make good progress. As a result of significant improvements since the last inspection, the standards of pupils entering Year 3 have improved considerably overall since that time. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years but, following recent changes to class organisation and the curriculum, pupils are now making good progress across Key Stage 2 and standards are above average. The school sets challenging targets which it adjusts accurately to accommodate recent admissions. This is because pupils' needs are identified as soon as they enter. Extra support is quickly provided as needed by a skilled team of support staff. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils mature into confident young citizens during their time in the school. They all agree that school has, 'a really nice atmosphere and everyone is friendly'. This is reflected in their regular attendance and good punctuality. Pupils feel secure in school and say there is very little bullying. They are confident to deal with any behaviour they find discomforting by saying, 'Stop it! I don't like it.' Pupils clearly understand the importance of healthy eating as they have their own vegetable plot and enjoy baking for one another. They enthusiastically participate in the wide range of sports on offer and play energetically together.

Pupils' involvement in gaining an Eco-School award contributes greatly to their good understanding of environmental and global issues. For example, they show a good understanding of 'Fairtrade' as a means of overcoming world poverty. Their concern for others is also expressed through successful fund raising events, such as for Diabetes Care and Comic Relief. They take their responsibilities in their own community seriously and the pupil council has a positive impact on life in school. Older pupils show good leadership when caring for the younger pupils in their 'milestone groups'. Pupils' good basic skills prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching across the school ensures that pupils learn well. Teaching is well informed and enthusiastic, so pupils find learning enjoyable. Teachers plan skilfully for the wide range of individual needs in their classes so that all pupils can participate effectively. Teaching assistants also contribute well to the quality of pupils learning, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers are positively embracing new approaches that have been recently introduced. For example, they are making creative links between subjects which are helping pupils to make better sense of their learning and to produce good quality work.

Whilst there are good features to the assessment of pupils' work, there are also inconsistencies. This is partly due to the introduction of new systems of assessment which have not yet taken

firm root. Although teachers set clear expectations for learning, these are not always followed up effectively so that pupils' understanding is thoroughly checked. Teachers mark books conscientiously but some comments are too general. As a result, pupils do not fully understand their targets or what to do to improve. Not enough attention is paid to ensuring pupils present their written work well in Key Stage 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum effectively meets all pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy the rich and varied curriculum which benefits from a strong focus on improving standards in English, and mathematics. The recent strong emphasis on using computers for learning in different subjects is enhancing pupils' skills. Similarly, the reorganisation of the curriculum into themes is enabling skills to be developed in a more natural and effective way. For example, a visit to the Goole Waterways Museum inspired a detailed study of rivers as well as creative pieces of art. There is good provision for physical education, including for sports and for personal and citizenship education. Educational visits, such as a residential visit for older pupils to Bewerley Park, and a wide variety of visitors provide good enrichment. An extensive choice of after-school clubs extends pupils' enjoyment and helps them develop new interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pupils feel safe and well supported because the school puts a high priority on their well-being. Parents typically say that they are very pleased with the education and care that their children receive. Procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are securely in place. Pupils appreciate that they can bring any worries out into the open as staff are friendly and helpful. Consequently, pupils who have had difficulty settling elsewhere quickly find a home here. Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties so that they can play a full part in lessons and activities. The ready availability of fresh fruit and water shows the school's commitment to pupils' health. Parents are kept well informed about their child's education and the school is quick to respond if additional advice is requested.

A new system for tracking pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is working well. It is leading to a faster rate of progress because the school keeps a close eye on any unexpected changes and intervenes accordingly. Pupils also have personal targets in English and mathematics. However, their use is not sufficiently consistent for all pupils to have clear insights into what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There are effective systems for self-review which ensure that the school has an accurate overall view of its success. All established teaching staff make a good contribution to this process, taking account of the number of responsibilities they have in this very small school. However, the judgements made about teaching and learning, and about leadership and management were too modest. Involvement with a network of other small schools helps inform the school's evaluation of its work and to advance its provision. Also, a rigorous analysis of performance data has sharpened understanding of where improvements

need to be made. Performance management is applied effectively to promote school as well as professional development. New staff receive a thorough induction and quickly become part of the team. Consequently, all staff successfully work together to move the school forward. For example, the new theme-based curriculum has been implemented creatively to enrich learning. Governors provide good support and are appropriately involved at all stages of planning school developments. They were influential in bringing about the greatly improved accommodation that opened in 2004. The budget has been astutely managed to provide additional staffing to split the Key Stage 2 class into two for much of the school week, which has promoted higher achievement. The school also makes good use of professionally qualified volunteers from amongst its parents to provide additional opportunities that its budget would not otherwise allow.

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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
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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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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.

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 for the cheerful welcome you gave me when I recently visited your school. I really enjoyed the discussions I had with many of you, which were very helpful. I wish I had had more time to watch your talent contest. What I did see was great fun! I hope you raised a lot of money for Comic Relief. These are the good things I found out about your school, which provides you with a good education.

- The youngest children make a good start to their school life.
- You are right to say that school is a friendly and happy place to be.
- The school is helping you a great deal to grow up to be mature young citizens.
- You work hard and are keen to take part in what the school offers.
- Your attendance and punctuality are good.
- You behave very well and are helpful to each other and to adults.
- You clearly know how to keep healthy and to keep safe.
- You have lots of interesting things to do in and out of lessons and so you make good progress in your work.
- The staff really care for you and are always on hand to be helpful.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are all working hard to make your education even better.

To help you even more, I have asked the school to:

- give you more help to understand what to do to further improve your work
- make sure that you present your work neatly - but you have a large part to play in this, too, and must always try your best.