

Sharow Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121588
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292167
Inspection date	26 June 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	44
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Thompson
Headteacher	Miss L McKinney
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2005
School address	Berrygate Lane Sharow Ripon North Yorkshire HG4 5BJ
Telephone number	01765 604362
Fax number	01765 600449

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small primary school serves several villages close to the city of Ripon. It admits pupils from a wide range of family circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is around the national average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties fluctuates but currently is average. At present, no pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has recently been successful in gaining several awards for its work including the Healthy Schools Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school is organised into two mixed-age classes; the Key Stage 2 class is taught by two teachers on a shared basis.

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. The headteacher, governing body and staff are pulling together effectively to raise pupils' achievement and enhance provision. This produces pupils who enjoy their education and make good progress in their subjects. Parents fully recognise these qualities and the school is becoming increasingly popular.

The attainment of children when they first start school varies from year to year. After a period when entry groups had above average skills, the most recent Reception class intakes have generally been below average. However, no matter what their starting points are, children make good progress in Reception and Key Stage 1. Children stay in the same class throughout these years and benefit strongly from a vibrant curriculum and stimulating teaching, which builds well on the good provision made for the Foundation Stage. Currently, their levels of attainment are broadly average by the time they move on to the next stage of learning. This good progress is sustained in Key Stage 2. Since the recent reorganisation of teaching groups in order to target areas of weakness, progress has been rapid, especially in English. For example, older pupils have quickly caught up lost ground to reach standards which are average overall by Year 6, although there is a wide spread of attainment in these small year groups. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and play and work together harmoniously. This is reflected in their well above average attendance and good punctuality. Behaviour is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school sets clear guidelines, which pupils understand and respect, and quickly rewards their successes. Strategies such as 'worry bags' and discussion times have been used effectively to resolve problems and create a positive ethos for learning. Pupils get on well with their work, readily share ideas and collaborate well. They are proud of their achievements in gaining the Healthy Schools Award. They play energetically and safely at breaks. These qualities are promoted well by good relationships with staff, a well organised and rich curriculum, and good systems of care and support.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, although there are inconsistencies in marking and in the teaching of mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2. Children in the Reception/Key Stage 1 class enjoy the very good new facilities which staff exploit well. They rapidly learn to be independent and apply their skills to the interesting tasks, both indoors and outdoors, which are carefully planned for them. The school has successfully raised expectations and introduced new teaching methods at Key Stage 2 to overcome weaknesses in previous provision. However, it accepts the need to improve pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems. At both key stages, pupils are aware they are working towards targets, but older pupils in particular are not always sure what they should do to improve their work.

The headteacher provides good leadership in partnership with an experienced and effective governing body. Between them they know the school well and are vigorously pursuing clear and appropriate development priorities. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to sustain the high momentum of improvement since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of problem solving in mathematics so that pupils achieve well, particularly in Key Stage 2.

- Involve pupils more in the assessment of their work so that they clearly understand what to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is improving in comparison to recent years, and is now predominantly good. Overall standards are broadly average. They fluctuate from year to year because the mix of abilities in each entry year varies widely and there had been some underachievement in Key Stage 2. However, the school has successfully provided additional support for those pupils who have needed extra help or challenge this year, which has brought about good overall progress. For example, several pupils who entered Key Stage 1 from another school have made rapid gains in learning. Also, more demanding work for the most able has ensured that pupils currently in Years 3 and 4, who had reached well above average standards in Year 2 national tests, are reaching the level of Year 6 in their reading. However, there remain some areas of relative weakness in the learning of mathematics in the school. Slower progress is evident in pupils' ability to tackle more difficult questions requiring problem solving skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is an inclusive school where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's involvement with the church and the local community is profitably used to promote pupils' development so that they mature into confident young citizens. Pupils contribute well to decisions that affect 'their school' such as planning new outside activity areas. Links with schools in Uganda and Czechoslovakia, and involvement with charities for adults with learning difficulties, extend pupils' horizons. They show concern for and tolerance towards people who lead different lives to theirs. Their attendance is very good and they look forward to school because they say, 'everyone is friendly' and 'there are lots of interesting things to do'. Many participate in activities outside of normal lessons at the 3.15 club, and in sporting and other events. Pupils feel safe and secure and know what to do if there are any disputes or if any bullying occurs. They say that since they have had more opportunity to talk openly about their feelings and relationships that school is a happier place and they concentrate more on their work. They are generally prepared well for the next stage of their education as they make good progress in their basic skills and are beginning to experience opportunities to develop their economic understanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good and ensures that pupils learn well. Teaching is well informed and relationships are good. Effective use is made of computers for presentations to the class and for individual work. Good classroom organisation and effective teamwork with teaching assistants provides groups of differing ages and abilities with good levels of support. In the Foundation Stage/ Key Stage 1 class, the combination of good focused teaching and constructive play promotes enthusiastic learning. Changes made this year to the teaching of the Key Stage 2 class have brought more consistency and raised expectations for learning, with

good overall results. However, planning is not always sharply focused on the needs of all pupils and learning is sometimes not checked effectively. The teaching of mathematics has not been consistently challenging. Teachers' marking is generally done conscientiously but, despite recent improvements, is inconsistent in the guidance it provides to pupils about how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, promotes positive attitudes to learning and meets the needs of pupils well. It reflects clearly the aims of the school, enhancing pupils' personal development, promoting their enjoyment of education and extending their knowledge of the wider world. There is a good emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. However, the school has recognised that pupils have not had enough opportunity to apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. Good planning for the Reception/Key Stage 1 class enables children to take the initiative, and to move freely between different areas of learning. The school has overcome the narrowness of the curriculum identified in the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to explore the links between subjects through imaginative projects and there has been a rapid expansion in the use of information and communication technology. In conjunction with other schools, provision for sports is good, and pupils also learn French. An extensive programme of enrichment and after-school clubs and activities adds significantly to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pupils are safe and well supported because the procedures to safeguard them are properly in place and staff are highly committed to their well-being. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning. They welcome the better information they are now receiving about how well their children are progressing. The school dealt well in the last year with the problems caused by a small number of disruptive pupils by working closely with external agencies to support individuals and their families. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support and are encouraged to play a full part in lessons and other activities. The school has established a robust system for tracking academic progress and pupils have personal targets to achieve. However, their use is not consistent or frequent enough for all pupils to have clear insights into how to improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There are comprehensive systems for self-review which ensure that the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has experienced significant change in staffing in recent years. However, a steadfast governing body which has a clear vision for the success of the school has ensured a consistent focus on continuous improvement. Hence, the new headteacher has been able to quickly influence the direction of the school, especially by promoting innovations to the curriculum and opportunities for pupils to express their views and feelings. Other staff provide good leadership of their subject and key stage responsibilities. For example, the detailed analysis of

pupils' achievements in English and mathematics tests is being used increasingly effectively to tailor the curriculum to their individual needs as they move through the school.

The positive engagement with the local authority and a network of local schools helps this small school evaluate its work and extend its provision. For example, these contacts have been beneficial in implementing changes to the curriculum in Reception and Key Stage 1. The difficult budget situation of recent years has been managed well: expenditure has been put on an even keel and the quality of accommodation and resources has been significantly enhanced. The school now has additional refurbished accommodation in the old school house in the grounds, and a new library.

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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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I recently visited your school. I really appreciated the discussions I had with you in the library and in lessons. You expressed your views clearly and this helped me a lot to understand your school.

These are the good things I found out about your school, which provides you with a good education.

- You make good progress in your work as you try hard in your lessons.
- You become good young citizens because of the good guidance you receive.
- Your attendance is very good.
- You are right to say that school is enjoyable and that staff help you a great deal.
- You behave well and are friendly towards one another.
- You know which foods to eat to stay healthy and that exercise is good for you.
- The school provides you with interesting things to learn as teaching is good.
- The staff take good care of you and keep you safe from harm.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to give you a good education.

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

- help you do better in working out problems in mathematics, but you will also have to try hard at this.
- improve how teachers help you understand how to reach the next level in your work.