

South Otterington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121603
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292172
Inspection date	6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Keeler HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Cherrett
Headteacher	Mr Colin Dolman
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002
School address	South Otterington Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 9HD
Telephone number	01609 776273
Fax number	-

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, personal development and well-being, and leadership and management. Evidence was collected from the analysis of the school's tracking and assessment data, lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher and chair of governors, and discussions with pupils and teaching staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the schools' own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school. Pupils are predominately from a White British background. No pupil has English as an additional language. The pupils' families reflect a range of occupations, including professional, skilled and rural. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. The school was awarded Healthy School status in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South Otterington Church of England Primary is a good school with outstanding aspects. At the heart of the school is a high regard for pupils' personal development and well-being and their care, guidance and support, both of which are outstanding. This is acknowledged by parents who feel that each pupil is valued and supported within an ethos that reflects Christian values and promotes a strong sense of community.

Pupils start school with standards that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 standards are above the national average. This good rate of progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 and by Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are well above national expectations. This level of performance has been a consistent feature for some time. In 2007, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was particularly good; performance in science was also impressive but not as strong as the other core subjects. The school was disappointed with the number of pupils attaining Level 5 in writing and acknowledges that this is an area for development, particularly in respect of boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress.

Effective teaching is the reason why pupils do so well. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all learners in mixed-age classes. Teachers are particularly skilled in asking questions that are designed to challenge pupils and make them reflect before articulating their answers. This enhances understanding and accentuates progress. Classrooms are well resourced and support staff make a valued contribution to pupils' progress. Pupils benefit from teachers who have high expectations and are acutely aware of what both they and their pupils must do in order to achieve high standards. This is evident in all classes but to a greater extent in the Foundation Stage/Year 1 and in the Year 5/6 class. It is here that pupils flourish because the teaching is challenging and imaginative. However, the relationship between the marking of pupils' work and the setting of individual pupil targets for improvement in the short term has yet to be established.

The headteacher and staff are successful in meeting the school's aims to provide all learners with a broad and balanced curriculum. It is kept under constant review as they are conscious of meeting the needs of all learners in the mixed-age classes. Emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy to good effect. However, pupils require more deliberately planned opportunities to apply these basic skills in other subjects in order to access knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and a residential experience that helps pupils realise personal goals as well as supporting their social and emotional development.

The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school; they like and respect their teachers. Behaviour is exemplary, both during lessons and play times. The exceptional relationships between adults and pupils is one of the reasons why pupils display good attitudes to learning and this helps them to progress. The school goes to great lengths to promote social skills and, as a consequence, pupils relate very well to adults, often displaying high levels of maturity and self-confidence. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. While the school gives pupils a good insight into other cultures, they are planning to do more to make pupils aware of what it means to live in a multi racial society. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and what constitutes a healthy

lifestyle. They know how to keep safe. For example, while bullying is not an issue, they know what to do if the occasion arises and are secure in the knowledge that it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Although, there is no school council, each year group is involved in regular discussion groups that enable them to make a contribution to the organisation of the school community. They take this very seriously and are learning about the democratic process, especially the need to listen to and respect the views of others, even when these differ from their own.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. It is a strength of the school and underpins the sense of family that is so apparent. Parents recognise that this aspect sets this school apart and is why it is such a happy place. All staff, under the direction of the headteacher, believe that 'every child matters' and work hard to provide a caring environment in which the individual can prosper both academically and socially. The role models provided by staff are reflected in the way the older pupils look out and care for those younger than themselves. Child protection procedures are in place and good links with a variety of external agencies result in effective support for vulnerable pupils. Good systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school and school targets are set in relation to attainment.

The headteacher leads and manages the school to good effect. He is well respected by the staff and pupils and held in high regard by parents. Under his direction the school is providing a good all round education for its pupils that will contribute to their future economic well-being. Staff work well together, meeting regularly to share good practice and tackle new initiatives. Recent staff changes has meant that curriculum responsibilities have had to be re-designated and some teachers are in the process of establishing a clear whole school view of their subject in terms of teaching and standards. The quality of the schools self-evaluation is good and the headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and the areas for development. The school governors are very supportive of the work of the school. They are equally challenging and hold the headteacher to account in order to secure the best educational provision for the community. The school provides good value for money and the capacity to improve is also good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children achieve well in Reception due to good teaching. Expectations of children are high and the carefully constructed curriculum reflects a balance of teacher driven activities and opportunities that encourage children to explore and work creatively. The children enjoy their work and demonstrate good levels of concentration. Careful monitoring based on accurate assessment enables the teacher to track children's progress and ensure that activities are well matched to their learning needs. The school is working hard to develop early reading and writing skills to good effect. On entry to Year 1, they achieve and often exceed the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning and this represents good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish the relationship between the marking of pupils' work and the setting of individual pupil targets.
- Provide more planned opportunities for the application of basic skills in other subjects.

Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of South Otterington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, North Yorkshire, DL7 9HD

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly, polite and helpful. I particularly wish to thank the pupils that I spoke to during lessons and who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to me. You and your parents think that South Otterington is a good school and I agree.

These are some of things that I particularly liked.

- Your headteacher, staff and governors provide good leadership.
- You work hard, make good progress and attain good standards.
- The teachers teach you well and this is why you make good progress.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- Everyone at the school cares about you and will do anything to make sure that you are safe and happy.

I have asked Mr Dolman to:

- make sure that the marking of your work helps to set you goals to get better
- give you more opportunities to apply your basic skills in other subjects.

Thank you again for all your help and I wish you well for the future.