



St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Scarborough

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121615
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292178
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holbeck Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Scarborough
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire YO11 3BW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01723 360239
Number on roll (school)	254	Fax number	01723 351783
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Graham Scott
		Headteacher	Miss S Brown
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average school admits children from within the hundred square mile area of the Deanery of Scarborough. Attainment on entry has fallen to broadly average as the catchment has been extended. The majority of children are of a White British background, with relatively few from minority ethnic heritages. Even fewer are learning English as an additional language. A very small group is looked after in public care. The proportion of children that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Since the last inspection there has been a large turnover in staff and a deputy headteacher has been appointed. The school has been awarded the Special Educational Needs Quality Mark. It is also designated as a Dyslexia Friendly and a Healthy School.

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 in which children's personal qualities are first-rate. It has progressed enormously since it was last inspected in 2001. Standards, by the end of Year 6, are consistently above average and children achieve well. Parents, governors and staff recognise the striking changes in the school. The most common epithets used about the school, by all concerned, are warm, caring and professional. Leadership provided by the headteacher is praised highly for the strong balance it bestows between academic endeavour and personal values. Parents sum up St Martin's neatly by saying that it, 'is more of a community than just a school'.

Children are very happy and enjoy school life immensely. They contribute well to how it is run and respond eagerly to the advice given about healthy lifestyles. Moreover, their excellent behaviour, caring attitudes and superb sense of moral responsibility help to create a safe school in which calm and warm relationships prevail. Children and their parents are cherished. One older child, expressing the views of many, stated that the way the school, 'listens to us and acts on our views makes it an exciting place'.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate in virtually every respect. The headteacher and governors know how far they have come and what remains to be done. They have, for example, struggled hard to combat the limitations imposed by the cramped accommodation, particularly in Reception (Foundation Stage). They know that progress there was slow in many respects and now it is satisfactory. The new accommodation has not been in place long enough for its potential, for more productive educational play, to have been realised. The school is equipped to fulfil its ambitions for the Foundation Stage, but as yet progress is slow.

The quality of teaching is good. It is responsible for children's successful learning and improved standards, particularly for the more able ones who were not thriving so well in 2001. Recent improvements in teaching for children in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing, have resulted in a quicker rate of progress. There were some notable inconsistencies in teaching at the time of the last inspection. These have been tackled, but some variations remain. These are not being picked up quickly enough by the monitoring of lessons or the interpretation of information from tests and other assessments. The governors and headteacher understand the need to fine tune their monitoring to help them pinpoint exactly how teaching and children's achievements could be improved.

The good leadership and management, guided by the headteacher's drive and superb skills in team building, have had a positive effect. Pressing issues such as the accommodation, staffing, budget, children's personal development and the curriculum have been tackled with determination. The curriculum is good with some outstanding enrichment. Information and communication technology flourishes because the school has a brand new room for computers coupled with a large library. Teamwork among the staff has developed well after a major period of change. This collaboration manifests itself, for example, in the reading club for children who struggle with words and letter sounds. They get extra tuition in small groups at lunchtime from a dedicated band of

adults. This is over and beyond the bespoke help they receive in lessons. In a similar way the clubs for Latin, Spanish, French and philosophy satisfy a thirst for learning at a different level.

The value for money provided is good because children achieve well by the end of Year 6. What the school has accomplished since it was last inspected demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of the Foundation Stage accommodation to make play more productive in quickening children's progress.
- Analyse information from assessments more effectively to improve achievement.
- Check on teaching and learning more closely to make sure that progress is at least good in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well. Until this year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average by the end of Year 2 and those in English, mathematics and science were above average by the end of Year 6. Satisfactory achievement in Years 1 and 2 left room for better achievement, typically in writing. This year, children's progress is good in Years 1 and 2, partly because achievement is now satisfactory in Reception, so there is a smoother start in Year 1. Moreover, children's writing is improving quickly and this has a positive effect on achievement overall. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is mostly good until Year 6 when it shifts up a gear to compensate for any slow patches earlier on. Achievement in reading is consistently good, but in writing and mathematics it slows to satisfactory in some classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children enjoy school hugely and take great pleasure in contributing to the school community in as many ways as possible. They are very aware about healthy lifestyles both in the food they eat and the exercise taken. Their understanding is greatly enhanced by the residential visits that accentuate not only physical development, but also team and social skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, indeed the moral dimension is outstanding. Children give careful thought to ways of behaving and relating to others. Good academic achievement, regular links with the church and a global perspective within the curriculum result in children who are well prepared for their next school. Attendance is average, but without the variation, caused by holidays in term time, due to parents' seasonal work, it would be good. This would more closely reflect the children's enthusiasm for school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching has a positive influence on progress throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage where children's progress has quickened of late. Lessons in literacy and numeracy, in Years 1 to 6, are often designed for children who are grouped by similar attainment. This helps them to make good progress. Children who find learning difficult keep up well owing to all the extra support they receive. The school has a good system of assessment which measures what children can do. The information is not yet evaluated deeply enough to identify gaps and lapses in progress. As a result some average and higher attaining children do not always achieve their best. Some outstanding teaching is counterbalanced by satisfactory practice. The best lessons provide tasks that match precisely children's ability and, unlike the satisfactory ones, engage children in thinking about how successful their learning has been.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is successful in helping to boost achievement in English, mathematics and science, although there is more to do in ensuring a good match of tasks to ability in some lessons. The programme to teach information and communication technology skills is much improved of late. The use of computers elsewhere in the curriculum has begun, but it is at an early stage. Computers are used very well by children who needed daily practice in the basic skills of mathematics. The curriculum is enriched by plenty of creativity, which stretches children's imaginations and broadens their horizons well. This kind of learning spills over into after school activities such as the Around the World Club where children gain an international perspective. Provision for fostering personal development is woven in very well: it has most beneficial results. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It lacks, as yet, the play dimension which the large accommodation is designed to provide.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support that children receive is tremendous: academic guidance is satisfactory. Care is built on very supportive relationships and mutual trust. A feeling of well-being generated underscores the recent improvements in personal development. Arrangements for health and safety are working well. The very strong guidance about keeping fit, healthy and safe has a powerful effect. For example, children are able to email the headteacher if anything is worrying them knowing that their concerns will be treated sensitively. Guidance about how to improve work is helpful in many respects, but varies from class to class. This is not a major weakness, but it prevents care, guidance and support from being outstanding, as the school suggests.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Very successful leadership and management have transformed this school into a good one where children's personal development is outstanding. The headteacher is very skilful at leading from the front while making everyone feel they have a stake in the process. The deputy headteacher, senior teachers and other staff all play their parts well. Governors are central to developments. They are very supportive, but also challenge the school to do better. Parents agree wholeheartedly that there have been some notable results recently stemming from the effective leadership. There is a harmonious atmosphere everywhere, children are more confident and teaching has strengthened, particularly in creating better progress in writing. The school's self-evaluation has been effective in changes so far. It is the lack of a sharper analytical edge to monitoring, among leaders at all levels, that stops it from being even more successful in improving achievement.

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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	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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.

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	3
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 your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly.

You go to a good school, which has a strong family feel to it. That is one of the reasons why we liked it so much. These are some of the things that we found to be particularly fascinating.

- Teaching for children who need extra help gives them confidence and boosts their skills.
- The vast array of interesting things for you to do outside lessons.
- The fabulous new library and information and communication technology room and the facilities in Reception.
- The way that you all take part in running the school even by helping to choose the staff.
- Your superb behaviour and first-rate attitudes with regard to health and safety.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested three things that we think will help. Your headteacher needs to see that:

- the new Reception facilities are used in the best way to help children make good progress in their first year
- the results from all the tests you do and assessments made of your work are used well to point out where you and your teachers could do even better
- lessons are checked regularly to see that you are all making good progress as often as possible.

You can all help by trying very hard to make good use of your teacher's advice about how to improve. The school council will, we believe, relish the idea of helping the school to improve in all three areas. We know you can do it.