



Swainby and Potto CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121617
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292179
Inspection date 5 March 2007
Reporting inspector Ross Parker

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Claver Close
School category	Voluntary aided		Swainby, Northallerton
Age range of pupils	4-11		North Yorkshire DL6 3DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 700518
Number on roll (school)	42	Fax number	-
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Rosemary Taylor
		Headteacher	Mrs L Light
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This primary school is much smaller than most other primary schools. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and all have English as their first language. There is a below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but an above average number with statements of special educational need. Most of the pupils come from advantaged homes and few are eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good standard of education. Parents are very pleased with the secure and enjoyable experience it provides for their children and the high level of individual attention. Achievement is good and standards have been average over recent years. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above average standards in national tests.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they find it hard to identify features that they would like to be better. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, underpinned by strong links with the church, which ensures a strong focus on spiritual and moral values. In this small community everyone cares for everyone else and individuals of all ages are equally important. Making your contribution is second nature. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles through their understanding of how to eat and drink sensibly and being active and lively. They develop independence, initiative and a good awareness of other people's strengths and needs. They talk well together, playing with words, for example, as they plan an anti-smoking poster. All of this is preparing them well for success as adults.

Teaching is satisfactory with some well-established strengths: learning is challenging and exciting in small mixed-age classes. Staff recognise the need to support each other's development and are currently working on how to challenge every pupil all of the time as well as absorbing new skills and techniques to keep learning brisk and stimulating. However, the pace of learning and challenge for all pupils, at present, is not consistently high across the school.

The quality of care, support and guidance is good. Adults know the pupils very well and are highly committed to their welfare and pupils know this. They are conscious that adults prioritise their safety, but grateful that this does not restrict their enjoyment. There are also rigorous systems to track pupils' progress and identify wherever additional support is needed.

The curriculum is good, although the small number of pupils and staff puts some constraints on the breadth of experiences available to pupils. However, the school makes effective use of a varied range of outside partnerships to compensate for this. For example, a link with a school in Madrid provides additional motivation as pupils learn to speak Spanish. The provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good overall. Provision for outdoor learning has been improved, but remains limited.

Leadership and management are good. Governors have given outstanding support to cope with fluctuations in the number of pupils. Their rigorous challenge has helped the school to explore just how well pupils have been progressing. They have also helped to ensure that the school gives good value for money. All aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) have been significantly improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and the staff team work together well to evaluate their own performance. They demonstrate a strong commitment and capacity to continually improve the range and quality of experiences available for pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching to share the best practice in different areas so that the pace of learning and the level of challenge are high for all pupils all of the time.
- Improve the outdoor learning and play facilities for the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils join the school with average skills, settling well into Reception where they make good progress. They benefit particularly from brief but challenging periods of work alongside Years 1 and 2. Over recent years standards have been above average by the end of Year 2, particularly in numeracy. By the end of Year 6 standards have been average with better results in science than in mathematics and English. The school identified and corrected a lapse in progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 and 4, which had prevented pupils from building effectively on the Year 2 performance. Although the school's self-assessment rated achievement as satisfactory, current data show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet challenging targets. Pupils in other years are also progressing well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported at school and at home so that they also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils show real concern for each other's welfare, for instance in the way older pupils are happy to share hymn books with Reception pupils in assembly. Older pupils have been trained so they are effective in encouraging younger ones to play actively. Pupils express their views clearly through the school council, by talking matters through together and completing questionnaires about their learning. One group of older pupils produces a termly school newspaper. The school council recently volunteered to create a leaflet giving parents guidance on healthy packed lunches. They also initiated a campaign to add to extra-curricular activities by exploiting the skills of local volunteers. Thoughtful assemblies and visits to places such as York Minster prompt them to be strongly conscious of spiritual values. They have a good knowledge of other cultures: recent topics have included the Greeks and Romans and a collaborative exploration on Indian life with a nearby school. They also work actively to support charities, both locally and in Africa and South America.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching and support staff make effective use of a wide range of skills and experience. Strong relationships and good behaviour management ensure that pupils are busy, motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were really excited inventing alliterative phrases to improve their poems. Well-informed teaching assistants collaborate discreetly with teachers to ensure that pupils with additional needs make good progress. Carefully organised assessment and marking support good progress. Pupils know how well they are doing, what their next targets are and how to reach them. It is a challenge for teachers sometimes to devise activities to challenge older or more able pupils without intimidating the younger ones. This is because they are not sufficiently aware of how effectively the work is stretching individual pupils.

The same brisk pace of learning is not always maintained as teachers experiment with new technologies and skills, especially since they have introduced Spanish and more advanced ICT into the curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has worked effectively to extend the range of experiences available to pupils. This has reduced some local cultural isolation as well as enhancing contacts with other adults and children. Imaginative drama work has improved creative writing as pupils have learned to visualise other people's experiences. Pupils cheerfully recall cowering in the wild area, dreading the arrival of a mythical monster. The use of themes such as ancient castles effectively increases pupils' enjoyment whilst developing skills. Residential visits extend pupils' independence and teamwork in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have access to expert music tuition and the support of a fluent Spanish speaker. Extra-curricular sport includes a Saturday Skills session run by former pupils who are keen to improve football results. A school council initiative has recently met a demand for a wider range of after-school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Statutory arrangements to safeguard pupils' safety are fully in place. Governors maintain a careful scrutiny of health and safety. They also keep a close eye on pupils' progress and require teachers to explain any apparent problems. Individual pupils' needs are very well known and there are high levels of supervision for all activities. From Reception through to Year 6 there are a coherent series of measurements to assess pupils' progress. These are well supported by evidence which show that the judgements are secure. Teachers use this information to follow each individual's progress and spot any hesitation in their progress. Teaching assistants provide a good range of additional

support to help any underperforming individual to get back on track. All of this contributes to high levels of security amongst pupils and parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has given a very clear lead and responded quickly to changes in circumstances or performance. Governors are fully involved through observing lessons and questioning data. They play a major role in securing the school's future. Together they maintain a detailed and realistic picture of the school's performance, prospects and priorities. The school has established a culture of self-evaluation and maintains a continuous programme of improvement. This is typified by the way in which the teaching staff monitor and constructively criticise each other's performance. They have worked energetically to build effective links with local schools, the community and the playgroup. This has ensured a smooth transition for local children between the different learning providers. It has also broadened pupils' experience and ensured that the school has kept pace with regional and national developments. Above all they have maintained a climate in which each individual child is equally important and has an equal right to succeed.

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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	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?	3
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	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	1
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 all for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and having the chance to talk to you.

The school gives you a good education.

Here are some of the really good things about your school.

I was impressed by your considerate behaviour and the way that you look after each other. You have lots of opportunities to help the school to run smoothly, as play-leaders and through the school council. The school has developed lots of new opportunities for you to learn in different ways. The drama work has really improved your writing, for example. You work hard and try your best in lessons and the adults look after you well. The governors and headteacher are working hard to keep the school lively and successful, even though there are fewer pupils.

What I have asked the school to do to make it even better.

The school now needs to make all the teaching as good as it is in the very best lessons. Teachers need to make sure that each one of you has really challenging work to do all of the time. This is so that you can make even faster progress and reach standards that are better than anyone expected when you first came to the school. The school is also going to make even more improvements to the outside learning and play area for Reception.