

Kirkby in Malhamdale United Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121629
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292185
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2006
Reporting inspector	Brenda McIntosh

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under the Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	70
Day care	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr D Ellis
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Benson
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2001
Date of previous day care inspection	2 October 2001
School address	Kirkby Malham Skipton North Yorkshire BD23 4BY
Telephone number	01729 830214
Fax number	01729 830602

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2006
Inspection number	292185

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average and serves a rural community in North Yorkshire. Pupil numbers have remained reasonably stable in recent years. All pupils are of White British heritage. On entry to the Reception class, children's attainment varies from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group, but it is broadly average overall. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. However, the pupils are not evenly spread throughout the school and currently the proportion is well above average in one class. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The current headteacher was appointed in February 2004, the fourth since 2001.

The school provides wrap-around care for up to 20 children from Monday to Thursday during term time only. This provision was inspected as part of a pilot project for Single Inspection Events and carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kirkby in Malhamdale is a good school. This agrees with the school's evaluation of itself and more to the point what the pupils think of it. 'It's easy to make friends here', 'We are lucky to come to a school in the Dales with such peaceful surroundings', and 'Our teachers are very helpful' are just a few comments which reflect pupils' opinions about this good school. It is a caring community where pupils are valued highly and, as a result, they make good progress in their academic and personal development. Pupils flourish here and by Year 6 grow into very confident, mature young people. A key reason for its success is the dedicated leadership of the headteacher and the commitment she receives from the teaching staff who are willing to take on additional responsibilities in order to bring about change and secure improvements. Other significant factors include the support from governors, parents and the local community and the positive attitudes of the pupils themselves.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well due to high quality teaching. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are well provided for in a mixed age class. As a result of recent improvements to the provision for these pupils they are well taught and now make good progress in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build well on their previous learning and attain standards that are above average. Test results at the end of Year 6 vary due to the make-up and size of the cohort. In 2005, results were broadly average, reflecting the higher than average proportion of pupils in this group with learning difficulties. In 2006, pupils attained highly in science and mathematics. Their performance in English was not as good. Throughout the school, improvements have been made in the presentation and content of pupils' written work but there is more to be done and standards could be higher. Pupils have individual targets in mathematics and science and generally have a good awareness of how well they are performing and what they need to do next to improve. This good practice is not yet developed to help pupils improve their writing. Furthermore, pupils in Years 3 to 6 persistently make too many mistakes in the use of basic punctuation and in the spelling of common words, even though the teachers constantly remind them about this when marking their work.

Each pupil is at the heart of the school's work and clearly they enjoy being at school as shown by their very good attendance and the high number who participate in all the activities the school offers them. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and are polite to adults and each other. Pupils of all ages mix well together and older pupils are tolerant and very supportive of the younger ones. They take on a wide range of duties and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. Buddies have an important role on the playground ensuring that everyone has someone to play with. Pupils feel their points of view are listened to but the school council has not yet been developed well enough for them to voice their opinions in a formal way. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. They clearly enjoy running around and getting plenty of exercise out in the fresh air at playtimes. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe in school and well cared for. Pupils' progress is tracked well and the information gained is used effectively to provide additional support for those who need it or are at risk of falling behind. The curriculum is good; it has been reviewed to ensure continuity in pupils' learning as they move through school. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of mixed age classes and pupils of different abilities. Creative links are made between subjects that add relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The school is outward looking in the way it uses the expertise of other people, many of them volunteers from the community, to broaden the range of learning opportunities for the pupils.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Systems for monitoring and evaluating performance are good; they are used to confirm strengths and to put into place effective strategies for improvement where weaknesses have been highlighted. Improvements in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum and pupils' achievement in science are positive results, although strategies to raise achievement in writing have yet to be fully successful. The school has improved well since the last inspection and is in a good position to improve further. Financial management of the school and value for money are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are fully aware of how they are performing in writing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- In Years 3 to 6, improve pupils' skills in the use of punctuation and their spelling of basic words to raise achievement in writing.
- Establish the school council to give pupils a real voice in school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Improvements to the Foundation Stage curriculum ensure that pupils make good progress in all areas of learning. Children start from an average level of attainment and most now exceed expectations for their age at the end of the Reception year. The numbers of pupils taking part in assessments and national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are too small to make reliable comparisons with national figures. The school's data and work in books show that pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress as they move through the school. They achieve well relative to their starting points. Over recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been fairly consistent and above average. In 2005 at the end of Year 6, test results were broadly average, reflecting the high proportion of pupils in this cohort with learning difficulties. In the 2006 tests, attainment was high in mathematics and science and much better than in English. All pupils attained the higher level expected of them in science, a very good achievement for these pupils. Currently pupils' progress in writing lags behind that in reading, mathematics and science and could be better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The strong caring ethos permeates the life of the school and underpins the gains pupils make in their personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand the economic differences in the world around them and are mindful of those who are less fortunate than they are. Pupils of all ages were able to discuss their views about looking after the environment through the knowledge they gain by working with the National Park. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning and towards others are good and contribute to the good progress they make in lessons. They are tolerant and understand how their actions may affect others. Pupils take part in music and drama performances that are enjoyed by the school and wider community and have many opportunities to mix socially with pupils from other schools through various sporting activities. Pupils are gaining an insight into life in a multicultural society through visitors into school. They are prepared well for their future lives given that the school is situated in a relatively isolated community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class, including those with learning difficulties. Lessons run at a good pace and skilful questioning encourages pupils to think hard. Teaching assistants are used effectively and they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Relationships are good and ensure a pleasant learning environment. Throughout the school there is a focus on the teaching of writing. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to write creatively and they are beginning to use some good descriptive vocabulary in their written work. However, even though pupils are taught basic grammar they persistently fail to use this in their work and this limits their achievement in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve well academically and in their personal development. It is planned carefully for mixed age classes to avoid any omission or repetition in learning. There are good links between subjects that add interest and bring a relevance to learning. The improved provision for information and communication technology is effectively developing pupils' skills and is used well to extend learning in other subjects. The curriculum is enhanced in a variety of ways, for example, themed weeks, modern foreign languages, visits, visitors and instrumental music tuition. Pupils benefit from the expertise of external coaches and teaching in a range of sporting activities. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and these are well attended by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The benefits of a small school are clear as all pupils and their families are well known by staff. Pupils are happy in school and speak enthusiastically about how their teachers help them if they have any difficulties. Arrangements for child protection are in place. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a safe environment. Effective procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils are in place and ensure that additional support is provided where needed. Pupils generally know how well they are doing in mathematics and science and what to do next to improve the standard of their work. This is not the case in writing and this slows the progress they make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The clear and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has led to improvements in provision and standards since her appointment. All staff work hard and very well as a team. Together they set a clear direction for the school. There are few teaching staff to take on responsibilities but they are all willing to do so and contribute effectively to school improvement. School self-evaluation is good and accurate and is leading to improvements. Governors are effective and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. They maintain clear oversight of

capital projects, enabling the headteacher to carry out her management duties and teaching commitment well. The school has a number of effective partnerships in the local area to support pupils' learning.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

There is good provision for the wrap-around care of children. The before-and after-school care is organised well and provides a wide range of motivating indoor and outdoor activities. Staff work well as a team to meet the children's individual needs. Consequently, relationships are good and children play happily together and enjoy their activities. They move freely from one activity to another and staff effectively promote their independence in making their choices of activities. Children respond very well to the expectations of the staff. They behave well and are confident and articulate. The staff pay good attention to the health and safety of the children. Good hygiene and health is promoted well. This contributes well to children's understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, staff are not sufficiently aware of emergency evacuation procedures. There is a good partnership with parents, who are kept well informed and appreciate the care given to their children. Although any accidents are communicated to parents, parents do not sign the accident forms as required. Mandatory policies and procedures are in place.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of procedures for emergency evacuation.
- Ensure that parents sign accident forms.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------

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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	No
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit to your school and would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave me. Some of you told me that you are lucky to go to a school in the Dales and I agree with you. The countryside around your school is quite special and I can tell that you appreciate it. I would like to share with you some of the main things I found out during my visit.

- You behave well and work hard in lessons.
- Everyone gets on well with each other, making a good learning environment.
- Lessons are interesting and you are making good progress in most of your work; you are doing particularly well in science.
- Your headteacher, governors and other staff all contribute to the smooth running of your school and work well together to bring about improvements.
- Your school is helping you learn the skills you need to grow into mature young people.
- The staff take good care of you.

The headteacher and staff have already spotted some things that need to be done to make your good school even better. Here are the things I have asked the school to do.

- Make sure you know how well you are doing in your writing and give you a target to work towards so you know how to improve to the next level.
- Get the school council up and running and meet regularly so that you can voice your opinions about the school.
- Help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to improve your skills in the use of punctuation and spelling of basic words. I know from looking at your work that teachers are constantly reminding you to use full stops, paragraphs and capital letters in your written work. If you are to improve the standards of your writing then it is important that you try hard and remember to do as they ask.