

Skidby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117992
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	312772
Inspection dates	16–17 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	
School	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Theodorou
Headteacher	Mr Steve Honey
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Main Street Skidby East Riding of Yorkshire HU16 5TX
Telephone number	01482 846169
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school in the diocese of York. All pupils are of White British origin. A small percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals and a small percentage has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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, where the majority of pupils make good progress. It has an outstanding Foundation Stage and provides effective teaching and learning, a high standard of care and an interesting curriculum, which develops all interests and abilities. Parents are generally supportive and praise many aspects of the school. These include 'the innovative teaching,' 'the very approachable headteacher and staff' and 'the highly successful residential visits and regular communication.'

Although individual levels of entry vary, most children enter Reception with many skills typical for their age group, although lower in literacy and numeracy. Their progress in Reception is very good and most children leave exceeding the expected targets for this age. This is the result of excellent teaching and learning, a stimulating environment both indoors and out and a vibrant curriculum, which engages and develops all children's interests. Standards at Year 2 and Year 6 are currently above average and achievement is good. In the last three years, national assessment results have been erratic because of small numbers of pupils, variation in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staffing instability. Since September 2007, however, pupils have benefited from staffing continuity, consistently good teaching and the school's rigorous assessment system. This system has been successfully used to set challenging targets for pupils in order to raise standards. It has also been used to identify specific learning needs and to match provision to those needs. Academic guidance has improved and is now good; pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Further modification is needed, however, if pupils are to make more progress in writing. Teachers' guidance needs to be more specific if pupils are to communicate fully, precisely and with the necessary variety and coherence.

The school's pastoral care is very effective and the school does everything it can to ensure pupils' safety. As a result, pupils feel happy and enjoy coming to school. Although there have been incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the past, positive incentives have reduced their number considerably and behaviour is now good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and to taking responsibility. They appreciate the stimulating activities teachers provide for them and the excitement of special celebrations, visits and visitors. They are keen to participate in church and community events and are most enthusiastic about the many extra-curricular opportunities the school offers. These positive attitudes and very secure basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

The leadership and management of headteacher, staff and governors are good. This team has grappled effectively with some difficult issues over the last few years including falling rolls, staffing issues, limited and uncertain finances. Throughout this period, they have, nevertheless, had the foresight to plan strategically for the future by improving resources and securing an independent pre-school setting within the school. This is already providing a more continuous curriculum and better liaison between staff to ease transition into Reception. Currently, the school is much more settled, staffing arrangements for the new term are in place and staff confidence has grown because hard work and commitment to raising standards has secured pupils' progress across the school. The school is now in a good position to make further improvements and currently provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding because of excellent teaching and learning, an attractive environment both indoors and out and a happy and relaxed ethos, which successfully encourages respect, cooperation and independence. Staff work very well with the independent playgroup setting to ensure a smooth transition and seamless curriculum. Exciting activities for Reception extend children's interests and abilities very effectively. Staff are particularly good at extending language and learning with questioning, commentary and encouragement. Levels on entry do vary considerably but because of excellent provision, including a high standard of care, the majority leave Reception exceeding the targets expected across the full curriculum. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent. Relationships with parents are well developed through regular communication. Assessment is effective and continuous; its findings are incorporated into planning. The school has systematically reviewed all aspects of its work to ensure requirements of the new Foundation Stage document are effectively met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve writing across the curriculum so that pupils communicate their ideas fully and precisely when answering questions and use variety, cohesion and style when writing extensively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the previous few years, national assessment results have fluctuated because of the very small cohorts, variation in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staffing instability. In 2007, Key Stage 1 results were broadly average with no pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and mathematics and only a few in reading. Key Stage 2 results in 2007 were below average in English and mathematics and exceptionally low in science. There was an average percentage of the higher levels in English and mathematics and an exceptionally low percentage in science.

Recent action has improved the position substantially. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made good progress since September 2007. This is partly because pupils have clear targets resulting from a rigorous progress tracking system but mainly because most pupils have benefited from staffing continuity for a large part of the year. As a result, standards have risen. Teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 are above average overall, average for mathematics but above average for both reading and writing, thus halting the decline over the past 3 years. Key Stage 2 teacher assessments are similarly positive, overall above average, with above average standards for mathematics and English and average standards for science. Improvements in science have particularly benefited from an increase in practical work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good as are spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes to learning and help each other. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when the behaviour of a few pupils was identified

as inappropriate. Progress has resulted from more secure staffing and a variety of incentives to encourage responsibility and consideration. Pupils enjoy school and this is shown in their good attendance. They know how to keep healthy and safe and feel confident, approaching staff for help. Responsibilities are popular; pupils are proud to help in assembly and to act as 'buddies.' They appreciate their views are heeded in school council meetings and are delighted with the improvements to resources this has effected. Pupils enjoy the welcoming family atmosphere, 'where everyone knows everyone.' They think teachers make learning fun and are particularly enthusiastic about their sporting opportunities. Pupils look forward to church events and are keen to participate in fundraising for the Sheepfold charity and a school in Soweto. They are also knowledgeable about British cultures and creeds. These positive attitudes, together with good basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. Staff have good subject knowledge and prepare interesting activities, which sustain pupils' concentration. They use stimulating resources and ensure all pupils have success, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Explanations are very clear and pupils are encouraged, but not over-directed. They therefore develop their own ideas and become independent. Staff are particularly skilled at asking questions which make pupils reflect on their work and check it against set criteria. Staff model examples very well and use pupils' work for positive reinforcement. This raises self-esteem and improves performance. Teachers build on previous learning and consolidate skills by a variety of strategies. Staff have good, constructive relationships with pupils, as a result pupils are relaxed about volunteering because they are well supported. Teachers' marking is generally constructive but more specific guidance is needed to improve pupils' effectiveness in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Regular review ensures pupils' needs and interests are met. The Basic Skills and BECTA (Bringing Educational Creativity To All) Awards recognise that mathematics, reading and information and communication technology (ICT) are well taught and pupils now make better progress in science because of increased practical work. Ideas for writing are well developed but clearer direction is needed if pupils are to communicate these effectively. Sometimes answers lack precision and fullness; sometimes lack of variety, coherence and style limits their effect. Cross-curricular themes linking subjects provide meaningful projects for pupils, whilst visits and visitors add to their interest and depth of study. By working closely with the secondary school and by development of the school grounds, pupils have many sporting opportunities. These are recognised by the Activemark Award. Special days for French, creativity and the Teddy Bears' picnic add excitement and children enjoy working with different staff and different age groups. Extra-curricular provision is particularly good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met; health and safety are kept under regular review and security for pupils is paramount. Training for all staff is regularly updated and a number of staff have first aid qualifications. Provision for pupils' pastoral development is effective and the school gives good academic guidance and support. The school tracks pupils' progress continuously and uses this information well to identify specific groups of pupils in order to provide appropriate resources. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access catch-up programmes and the services of outside agencies to meet their needs. All pupils receive targets for literacy and numeracy from tracking information. These generally inform pupils how to improve their work so that they reach the next level but need to be more specific in writing so pupils communicate their ideas more effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school has had a difficult three years due to fluctuating numbers and staffing instability. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked tirelessly throughout this period, successfully managing scarce resources to meet changing needs, developing strategies to secure the school's future and improving the quality of resources to meet the needs of modern education. Currently the school is in a good position to make further improvements because staffing is stable, resources have been enhanced and achievement has been raised across the whole school. There are also effective strategies in place to ensure these improvements are sustained, namely a rigorous tracking system to identify strengths and areas for development, an accurate self-evaluation system and a highly committed headteacher and staff who are already working on the school's next priorities. Communication within school is very open and effective but leadership and management does not always communicate or explain the many features of school life, often positive, to parents and community. Overall, staff keep up to date with current initiatives and work well together. They use their excellent knowledge of children and their families to secure personal development and progress. The school currently provides good value for money.

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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	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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**

Age group

4–11

Inspection date(s)

16–17 July 2008

Inspection number

312772

18 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skidby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, East Riding of Yorkshire, HU16 5TX

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school during the recent inspection. I was most impressed with your friendliness and your willingness to share your opinions with me. I agree with you and the views of most of your parents that Skidby Primary is a good school and a happy one. You enjoy your learning and feel safe in the school. That is why your attendance is good. Reception is excellent and gives you a good start to school life. All your staff work very hard to make lessons interesting. They also take great care of you. I was fortunate to visit you during your Creativity Day. I loved it and would like to have joined in with your interesting activities. I notice how well younger pupils worked with older ones. It was a lovely family atmosphere and you helped each other so well. Most of you have made good progress this year. I discovered this by looking at school records and by analysing your books.

I also found one way in which your school could be even better and have asked your school to:

- help you improve your writing so that you explain yourself well and fully. This will ensure that the very effective answers you speak in class also appear in your written work. Sometimes when you are writing a longer piece, such as a story or a letter, you do not include different sentences, descriptions, connectives or openings. These would make your good ideas read so much better.

I am confident your school will develop your writing skills in this way because everyone is very keen for you to succeed.

Have a wonderful summer holiday.

My best wishes to you all and your families.

Yours sincerely

Joan Elton

Lead inspector