

Easingwold Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121331
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	313949
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Hawksworth
Headteacher	Mrs I Marwood
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Thirsk Road Easingwold York North Yorkshire YO61 3HJ
Telephone number	01347 821282
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning especially in Key Stage 1; the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; observations of the school at work; discussions with pupils and representatives of senior staff and the governing body; and a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils come from the small market town of Easingwold and surrounding villages to this larger than average school. Almost all are of White British heritage. Most pupils come from socio-economically advantaged backgrounds. An increasing proportion of pupils, currently 15%, are vulnerable and the school has a parent support advisor and learning mentor to help these pupils and their families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average as is the number with a statement of special educational need. Half the teaching staff have changed in the last 18 months and a number of staff have had periods of long-term absence. The headteacher was appointed in January 2007. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status, the Activemark and the Leading Aspects Award 2007 Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and is at the early stages of providing extended school services.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Easingwold Primary gives pupils a satisfactory education. There are considerable strengths in the leadership and management of the school. These have particularly revitalised the Foundation Stage, improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are vulnerable and enlivened the curriculum. These pupils, as a result, make good progress and there are instances of outstanding practice within the improved provision. Stringent and accurate self-evaluation based on the thorough tracking of pupils' progress has highlighted underachievement and a downward trend in national test results at the end of Years 2 and 6. Swift action to improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations and improving resources is proving to be effective, especially in Key Stage 1. However, the school recognises there is more to do to ensure sustained improvement across the school, especially for the more able pupils.

While satisfactory on balance, teaching quality ranges from outstanding to inadequate. At its best, teachers question effectively and set pupils work that extends, challenges and excites them. When pupils are given a free rein, the more able pupils begin to show what they are capable of, with both boys and girls revealing considerable flair, for example, as they write imaginatively for different purposes. There are, however, weaknesses in some of the teaching and in pupils' learning across the school. Where teaching is less effective, older and more able pupils in particular have too few opportunities to work independently, make informed choices, ask questions and find out information for themselves. They are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets or measuring their progress towards them. As a result the pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve further and as a consequence the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 6 is not as high as it could be in all subjects.

Pupils' achievement is strongest in English. This is reflected in the consistently well above standards they achieve in the Year 6 national tests. Pupils write accurately and teachers ensure that they have a thorough grounding in the basic skills of reading, punctuating and spelling. The effect of shortcomings in teaching is more marked in mathematics, with results at the end of Year 6 slipping to just above average over a period of three years, particularly at the higher levels. There is improvement in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are now better at setting work that matches pupils' needs well. As a result, all groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. In Years 3 to 6, progress is picking up as a result of extra support directed at specific groups of pupils. However, achievement is patchier because not all teachers use assessment sufficiently well to ensure that their teaching fully matches individual pupils' needs and abilities. This means that the more able pupils in particular underachieve, except in those classes where they get extra challenges. This is one of the main reasons why the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good as the school judges.

In science, the recent focus on much more practical learning is having a good impact on standards, especially at the higher levels. It is a similar picture with reading. Massive investment, including developing the library and improving resources in information and communication technology (ICT), means that very capable readers extend their skills using skimming and scanning techniques to find out information quickly. Standards in reading are rising as a consequence.

The school is much better placed to meet the challenging targets it has set itself this year as a result of the decisive and effective lead given by the headteacher to raise standards. Using

simple and effective systems to check on the school's performance, leaders and managers have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have demonstrated in a very short time that their actions have had an immediate and effective impact. Effective leadership and management have broadened an otherwise satisfactory curriculum to include some innovative practice. This is particularly evident in linking subjects together and introducing a wider global perspective, such as using French through contacts with a school in Morocco. Greatly improved resources in ICT now mean that interactive technology enhances pupils' learning and adds a sparkle to some teaching. The strengthened classroom support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, using skilled and effective teaching assistants, has had an immediate and beneficial impact on their progress. The school has strengthened its financial position and eliminated a budget deficit by extending the use of teaching assistants throughout the school and regrouping classes to ensure that resources are used to their best effect. Good support and challenge from a recently appointed governing body contributes to the strong partnership which is driving the pace of change. This puts the school in a good position to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is good, with strengths in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development as well as in their awareness of health issues. Attendance is above average and pupils want to learn. They behave well and older pupils capably take care of younger ones, acting as 'buddies'. This is why pupils say there is no bullying. They show respect and concern towards each other and it is a measure of the school's inclusiveness that those with marked learning or physical difficulties enjoy school and have lots of friends. The lunchtime 'jellybean' club, learning mentor and parent support advisor give good guidance and support to those who need it and, consequently, pupils feel safe and secure. The school has robust systems to safeguard pupils and fully meets current government guidelines. Overall care, support and guidance are good, with considerable strengths in the support given to pupils' personal development but some shortcomings in academic guidance. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives and have a developing understanding of communities beyond their own. The school council gives pupils a voice in what goes on and their views are taken seriously and acted upon.

Parents fully recognise the mixed provision for their children but respond very positively to the recent developments, saying, 'The headteacher is very approachable, easily accessible and listens.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good with outstanding features in children's learning outdoors and in the use of assessment to determine what they should learn next. The new foundation team has brought considerable energy, enthusiasm and innovative practice to this key stage, transforming provision. Teachers' assessments show that children's achievement has soared recently because they are encouraged to be lively, curious, independent and extremely active learners. Activities are very well chosen to challenge the more able children and to excite their imaginations. Adults follow the children's lead. For example, the children's decision to pin up key words on the climbing frame and fence provides good evidence that their language development is as good outdoors as indoors. Teaching is good with adults playing with and questioning the children and noting down observations of their learning. This means that children learn basic skills almost unconsciously as they have free rein to explore and question. Perceptive observations are used to chart children's individual progress and to move them on to the next stage in their learning. The provision is well led and managed with a strong emphasis on children working things out for themselves. For example, if children need water in the water tray they have to

connect a series of large plastic pipes and hoses to the water tap: a process which is highly constructive as well as great fun. Standards are above those expected in all areas of learning, an improvement on previous years' achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement particularly for the more able and especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that teachers use information from assessments effectively in every class so that the work they set matches pupils' different ages, needs and abilities.
- Give older pupils greater opportunities to work independently, make choices, ask questions and find out for themselves.
- Involve pupils more extensively in setting targets and checking their learning so that they know what to do to improve their work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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	3
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

I very much enjoyed meeting so many of you during my short visit to your school. I found it helpful talking to a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 at the start of the day and looking at your work in English and mathematics. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well but there are areas it needs to improve. Because your school is well led and managed your headteacher, teachers and governors are fully aware of this and have made lots of changes in the last year to bring about some huge improvements. These include providing a new library, better equipment for ICT and in the outdoor area for the Reception children. As a result, your school is improving rapidly.

Your school looks after you very well and helps you to grow into thoughtful, caring young people. It is clear that you enjoy coming to school because your attendance is good and you behave well. You are well prepared for your future lives. Learning French through links with a school in Morocco is just one of the ways in which your curriculum is helping make your learning more exciting.

I have asked your school to do four things to help all of you be more involved in your learning and to help all of you to reach the highest standards you possibly can.

- Make sure those who find learning easier than most do as well as they can, especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that in every class your teachers use what they know about how well you are doing so that they can set work to match your different ages, needs and abilities.
- Give the older pupils more opportunities to work independently, make choices, ask questions and find out for themselves.
- Involve you more in setting targets and checking your learning so you know what to do to improve your work.