

# Whitby, Airy Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121345
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313958
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Les Schubeler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Agar
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jim Lidgley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Waterstead Lane Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 1PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01947 602688
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Airy Hill is a school of average size serving a coastal town and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of those entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Approximately 50% of the pupils live outside the immediate area. The headteacher has been in post for two years. The school has received the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Airy Hill is a satisfactory and improving school. It has notable strengths in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage and the standard of care that contributes to pupils' good personal development throughout the school.

Secure relationships, coupled with well planned and purposeful activities in the Reception class, prepare children well for the next stages in their learning. The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils. This draws effectively on the support and involvement of parents, carers and outside agencies. As a result, pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and develop good personal skills. They enjoy taking part in events such as the Eskdale arts festival and are enthusiastic about the wide range of after-school activities, which foster self-confidence and develop good social skills. Pupils behave well and are confident that school is a safe place to be in because they are cared for in a secure and supportive environment. Adults know them well and good relationships exist. Pupils develop a respect for, and a good understanding of, the needs of others. They make a valuable contribution to the school and wider communities through their involvement in, for example, the active school council, visits to local care homes and fundraising for a variety of charities.

Children enter the school with skills and abilities that match expectations for their age, although there is some variation from year to year. Language skills are less well developed than others. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is the rate of pupils' progress. There is some good classroom practice that ensures pupils are interested, active and engaged in their learning, but in some lessons the work is still not carefully planned enough to challenge pupils of all abilities and help them to reach their targets. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average, but they could be higher.

An effective process of self-evaluation has enabled the school to identify important areas for improvement and put into place appropriate action to remedy them. Whole-school procedures for monitoring and recording assessments have recently been introduced. The school's tracking of pupils' progress, as a tool for academic guidance, is good. It enables staff to identify pupils who need additional learning support and to take effective action to help them make up lost ground and achieve as well as their peers. However, not all teachers make the best use of assessment information to carefully plan the next steps in pupils' learning. As a consequence, although the rate of progress of the majority of pupils is beginning to accelerate, not all progress as rapidly as they might.

Much work has been carried out to meet more fully the needs of all pupils and put greater emphasis on raising achievement across the school. Improvements have been made to the accuracy of assessment of children in the Foundation Stage. Well led by the headteacher, the school's leaders analyse and monitor performance data with an increasingly sharp focus. The contribution of subject leaders to the process of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance is growing. Sustained impact of the measures introduced is yet to be seen. Therefore, leadership and management are satisfactory overall. However, with the headteacher's clear direction and the developing leadership team's common sense of purpose the school can look to the future with justifiable confidence.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision is well led and managed. Children quickly settle into school and have a good start. A well planned curriculum and good teaching help them to make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Reception, most children reach average levels in language skills, which tend to be below average when they enter the school. They reach above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Activities are carefully planned and resources are well chosen. Children are actively involved in a variety of stimulating experiences. As a result, they are enthusiastic, behave well and quickly learn to take turns and consider one another's needs. Basic skills are taught well and adults maintain an appropriate balance between developing children's independence and providing appropriate levels of care and support. The school works well with parents, who are well informed of their children's progress and successfully encouraged to be involved in their learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Years 1 to 6.
- Ensure assessment procedures are applied consistently.
- Ensure all pupils are suitably challenged so that they achieve as well as they can.

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

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been broadly average in recent years, representing satisfactory achievement by pupils. The school's leadership accurately identified a trend towards slightly lower standards, and appropriate measures have been put in place to arrest it. For example, writing skills are well developed at Key Stage 1, but the school recognised weaknesses in some aspects of the writing of older pupils that have adversely affected results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Action has been taken across the school and improvements are being made. Similarly, greater emphasis on pupils' investigative skills is leading to better standards in science. Assessment systems and procedures have also been improved and are now enabling the school to keep a closer check on how well pupils are doing. The actions taken to improve pupils' learning are starting to have a positive impact, resulting in faster progress for the majority. However, this is not yet a consistent picture throughout the school and some pupils could still do better. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Most pupils say that they like coming to school, and they steadily gain the basic skills needed for their future lives. Pupils are always courteous. Their behaviour is good and bullying is rare. They are very proud of the help they give to others less fortunate than themselves. They raise funds for schools in the Gambia and South Africa, for example, and entertain residents in local care homes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to take account of the feelings of others and to understand the difference between right and wrong.

They are fully aware of the importance of diet and exercise in staying healthy. They enjoy physical exercise. After-school sports activities are very popular. Attendance during recent years has matched the national average, although in 2007 it fell to below average. In the current year, rates of attendance have improved and are now above average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff know the pupils well and relationships in the classroom are good. Teaching assistants are used effectively in classrooms and ask challenging questions to make pupils think. They work effectively with lower attaining pupils to support the range of learning needs in the school. The quality of marking is variable. In the best examples, teachers provide clear feedback on how pupils are doing and make suggestions for further improvement. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance. However, these good practices are not seen consistently across all year groups. More effective procedures for monitoring progress are enabling teachers to identify the needs of learners more accurately in their lesson planning. In some lessons careful planning ensures that activities match pupils' needs and enable them to make good progress. However, this is not always the case. In other classes activities and expectations are more limiting. Here, satisfactory progress is made.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

In a determined move to raise achievement and standards, the school has made well considered changes to the curriculum. It has put in place, for example, sound initiatives to improve writing skills at Key Stage 2 and to extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in science. However, the new systems are at an early stage of development, and there has not been enough time to see the impact of all the changes that have been made. The numerous enrichment and extra-curricular activities are a strong feature of the school and the wide range of clubs and activities are well attended. Themed weeks, which add to pupils' enjoyment, are given over to science and the arts. Opportunities are provided for pupils to broaden their horizons by taking part in residential visits to outdoor activity centres and in activities such as sword dancing and poetry speaking. Good use is made of specialist teachers to extend pupils' skills in French, music and sports. All this work has a positive impact on the personal well-being of the pupils, developing their confidence and self-esteem.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's good quality care, guidance and support are appreciated by parents and pupils. There are good induction procedures for pupils on arrival in Reception and for those who join later, sometimes involving close links with outside agencies. This helps them settle quickly and focus on learning. Those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities are supported well by teachers and other assistants. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary school are a good feature of the school. Staff ensure a personal approach is taken and that each pupil feels well equipped to move on to the next stage in their education. Safeguarding arrangements and health and safety procedures are in place. The school's new procedures for tracking the progress made by pupils are helping to highlight areas where additional support or challenge

is needed, although they are not yet consistently applied. Good practice in self-assessment is developing and some pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work in order to understand how to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leaders have taken effective steps to remedy weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Senior leaders have worked successfully together to bring about important and necessary change, showing the school's good capacity to make the required improvements. Pupils have responded positively to new forms of target-setting, which are based on the implementation of good systems that track their progress regularly. A stronger focus on the progress of individual pupils is helping to reverse a trend towards slightly lower standards, although these are not yet high enough. Action has also been taken to promote the professional development of the middle managers, who show a strong determination to strive for more improvement. They now play a bigger role in monitoring the performance of their subjects and are developing the curriculum well. The school recognises the need to enable them to disseminate good practice more widely and has plans to furnish them with more opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas. Productive use is made of links with other schools, agencies and consultants to provide good support for pupils' learning and personal development. Governance is satisfactory and governors are holding the school more to account for its performance and helping it to provide satisfactory 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?	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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3

### 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	3
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	3

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
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	3
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

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

Inspection of Whitby, Airy Hill Community Primary School, Whitby, YO21 1PZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the other inspector when we visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and other staff. Airy Hill is a satisfactory school with a number of good features.

We think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you very well. This helps you to keep safe and healthy. We know, too, that you enjoy all of the out-of-school activities that are arranged for you. It was very pleasing to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. We were impressed by your involvement in activities to support local and global charities as well as your willingness to visit, entertain and talk to people in care homes in the surrounding area. We found that most of you are making satisfactory progress in your studies. You told us that you are becoming familiar with your targets in English and mathematics. We are sure that this is now helping you to make faster progress than before.

To help your school to improve even more, we have asked your headteacher and the other staff to see that the new assessment systems are used well in all classes. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you are suitably challenged in your lessons so that you all reach higher standards and achieve as well as you can.

We are sure that you will carry on enjoying school and continue to build on the improvements that you are making now. Most of all, we hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make Airy Hill an even better school in the future.