

Amotherby Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121370
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	313964
Inspection date	25 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Clark
Headteacher	Mr R Audsley
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Meadowfield Amotherby Malton North Yorkshire YO17 6TG
Telephone number	01653 693675
Fax number	01653 691417

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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: achievement and standards, the effectiveness of the use of assessment information to promote pupils' learning, and the impact of actions taken by the school's leaders and staff to improve pupils' achievement and personal development. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils, and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Amotherby Community Primary is a smaller than average school serving a village and its surrounding area. Approximately 40% of the pupils live outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of those entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Children in the Reception class and in Year 6 are taught in single-age classes. The other four classes comprise mixed-age groups, each spanning two years. Three of the six classes have been affected by staffing changes in the last two years. The skills and understanding of children when they enter Reception vary from year to year, but on average they are typical of what is expected at this age.

The school has received a School Achievement award, the Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Amotherby Community Primary is a good school which offers a rich, stimulating environment for its pupils, helping them to do well academically and exceptionally well personally. Committed and effective leadership has maintained high standards of care that promote pupils' personal development and meet parents' high expectations of the school.

Pupils in all age groups achieve well and make good progress as a result of consistently good teaching and a well planned curriculum. When children leave the Reception class their standards are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress and by the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. In 2007 a high proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in English. However, test and assessment results in mathematics and science at the higher level fell to average, as a result of some disruption in staffing that affected both key stages. The effective steps that have been taken to stabilise staffing have resulted in standards in these subjects being once again above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive high quality support.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are typified by lively, interesting activities, excellent and often good-humoured relationships and thorough planning that takes account of the different needs of pupils. The school has shrewdly invested in high quality teaching assistants. They are deployed well and skilled at pitching questions at levels that make pupils think. These staff contribute significantly to pupils' learning in lessons. Teachers have developed well the use of interactive whiteboards to broaden their teaching strategies and to improve and support learning. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and typically think that, 'Teachers make it fun and come in with lots of good ideas.' Consequently, they respond with relish to the challenges set by their teachers and develop positive attitudes to learning. The school has implemented good systems to track the progress of pupils and identify those who may be in need of extra support. This is helping teachers identify more closely the needs of individual pupils. However, the use of the information is not as fully established as part of everyday routines to enable all pupils to have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Pastoral care is exceptional, leading to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. This is seen in the excellent maturity and responsibility pupils show towards one another and the community. They are taught to accept responsibility for their actions and respect the freedom this brings, behaving very safely in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils' good attendance is testament to their enthusiasm and enjoyment of school. They take part enthusiastically in local village affairs. They stage musical productions for the school and local communities and engage in fundraising activities for a diverse range of charities. Pupils' respect for the school environment, including its excellent outside areas, is enhanced by the contribution they are able to make. For example, pupils successfully used the democratic processes of the school council to acquire extra play equipment. The very rich curriculum supports pupils' personal development in a host of ways, particularly in showing them how to lead very healthy and safe lives. A high proportion partake of the healthy school dining menus while the many and varied physical activities that include cross-country running, tag rugby, dance, multi-skills tournaments and swimming, are very popular. There are very good links with other schools, and parents say the school 'goes the extra mile' in ensuring that activities are exciting and interesting for pupils. Residential trips, many visits, and lively projects such as the

development of a wildlife garden contribute valuably to pupils' learning and their personal development.

There are good relationships with parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They appreciate the 'high standards and excellent values promoted to children whilst at school' and feel that the school 'pulls out all the stops to welcome the children and make them feel part of the school community'. The strong leadership of the headteacher provides clear direction for the school. Through careful monitoring and rigorous analysis of data there is a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Effective action has been taken to redress issues identified as needing improvement, such as the fall in standards in mathematics and science. There is a firm commitment to the professional development of staff, evident in the well qualified teaching assistants, which ultimately enhances pupils' learning. The recently appointed deputy headteacher and the subject leaders have formed a cohesive team that acts with a common sense of purpose to drive the school forward. Although more time is needed for the full impact of the relatively new assessment procedures to be seen on pupils' understanding, the good progress that has been made in restoring standards to their former level shows good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Reception class is effective in helping children to attain the expected goals in all areas of their learning. Children make good progress. When they enter Year 1 their mathematical skills and personal, social and emotional development are at a higher level than their language skills. This reflects the pattern on entry to Reception.

Teaching and learning are good and all learners are valued, cared for and supported extremely well. Parents are at pains to acknowledge that, 'The school places the child at the centre of education and cares for their safety and development of social skills'. Children quickly settle into routines, they behave well and enjoy their learning. They work and play happily together. Secure relationships and constructive guidance provide a solid foundation for children's personal, social and emotional development. They learn to share and take turns. They follow school routines and enjoy taking responsibility.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to be active in their children's learning and as a result are well informed as to their progress. Provision is managed well. There is a smooth transition between Reception and Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment procedures are used effectively to enable pupils to understand clearly how to improve their work.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Amotherby Community Primary School, Malton, YO17 6TG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I inspected your school recently. I would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out your views about the school. I spent a lot of time discovering how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. I came to the conclusion that Amotherby is a good school.

I think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you extremely well. I was impressed also by the maturity of so many of you in looking after one another around the school. This helps to keep you safe. I know, too, that you enjoy all of the extra activities and experiences, such as the residential visits to Edinburgh and Robinwood, that are arranged for you. I found out, too, that you also like using the school council to express your views and put forward suggestions.

It was very pleasing to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. I think that you are working well and making good progress. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you understand very clearly what you need to do next in your work in order to improve further. You can help yourselves, too, by regularly checking the progress you are making towards reaching the targets you have been set and by making good use of your teachers' advice when it comes your way.

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