

Appleton Roebuck Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121378
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	313967
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2007
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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Dodd
Headteacher	Mr D Angood
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Main Street Appleton Roebuck York North Yorkshire YO23 7DN
Telephone number	01904 744236
Fax number	0

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school serves the village of Appleton Roebuck and the surrounding rural area to the west of York. The majority of pupils come from advantaged backgrounds. It is a popular school and has grown considerably in size in the last five years. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small proportion from ethnic minority or traveller backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average; the number with a statement of special educational need is above average. The nearby playgroup is in partnership with the school. The headteacher spent three months in Namibia last term and the school was managed by the teaching staff in his absence.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Appleton Roebuck Primary School gives pupils an outstanding education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer and are extremely enthusiastic about learning. This shows in their exceptionally good attendance and exemplary behaviour. Pupils agree that the very best things about their school are 'friends and the many different sports'. Parents think highly of the school, commenting on 'the lovely family atmosphere where older children willingly look out for the interests of the younger ones'. The school provides high quality care for all groups of pupils. As a result, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Older pupils set an excellent example to younger ones for the school sees this as a priority. Because of these features the school is a happy, harmonious community where youngsters learn tolerance and respect and grow into poised young people. The school fully meets its aim 'to provide a safe, cheerful and stimulating environment whereby each child's intellectual, social and physical potential may be reached'.

Standards are very high, exceptionally so in mathematics where a large number of pupils far exceed nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. This is because pupils are taught in sets according to ability and teachers are skilled mathematicians with extremely high expectations. Standards are high in science and well above average in English. Over half of the pupils usually reach the higher Level 5 in both subjects and in some years it is a larger proportion, depending on the mix of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or vulnerable pupils make excellent progress because they are given outstanding support. Most reach expected standards by the end of Year 6. Achievement is outstanding for all groups of pupils. This is because they are exceptionally well taught in each class. Teaching assistants are used extremely effectively to promote learning. A notable feature is the use of up-to-date technology both by staff and pupils. This undoubtedly sharpens pupils' learning in mathematics and science where they have ample opportunities to use and apply what they learn using information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool. It is a similar picture in English. As a result, reading is exceptionally strong and writing is of a high standard. Teachers' marking encourages pupils but also makes quite clear what they need to do to improve their work and sets high standards.

The curriculum is extremely well planned in English, mathematics, science and ICT and makes good provision for the creative arts, especially music. It is less strong in linking subjects together creatively and so opportunities are missed to make connections so as to enhance pupils' learning. The range of extra-curricular activities, especially sports and music, is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils take part successfully in local competitions and one third of pupils play in the school band. They are extremely well equipped to cope with life in a larger community such as high school.

Pupils have outstanding awareness of why it is important to lead healthy lives. They relish the opportunities to take part in different sports and agree school dinners are healthy because, 'we always have vegetables and there is a salad bar.' Many walk to school and playtimes and lunchtimes are energetic occasions because pupils have lots of different playground games. Pupils are extremely well cared for and so they feel safe. They have close links with the local community and elderly residents, for example, regularly attend school performances. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives because they learn to be self-aware, knowing that, 'The more you work cooperatively the better you do'.

Outstanding leadership gives extremely clear direction to promote high quality care and highly effective education. Governors are closely involved in school and provide outstanding support as well as challenge. The school underestimated itself when it evaluated its work as good for it is outstanding in most areas of its work. It has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

For the first term children attend part time, which gives them an excellent start as they continue to attend the playgroup too and their playgroup worker comes with them. The provision is exceptionally well led and managed. Staff provide lively, interesting activities both indoors and outside that arouse children's curiosity so they cannot wait to get going. Routines are established quickly so that children learn to organise themselves, checking they have moved their names on the 'activities board'. Children move freely from indoor to outdoor activities, delighting in exploring frosted grass or creeping into the workshop, which is filled with exciting writing materials in different colours, shapes and sizes. Lively, expert teaching makes learning fun. Outstanding organisation and scrupulous assessment ensure that children receive the help they need and allow those who are more able to leap ahead. As a result, children learn almost without realising it. Adults question skilfully, developing children's understanding, for example, that weight and size do not necessarily equate as they weigh Christmas parcels that they have wrapped. By the end of the Reception year, most have met the goals expected of them and a good number exceed them, especially in mathematical development. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well provided for and make outstanding progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan better connections between subjects so as to enrich pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are comfortably above average at the end of Year 2 with strengths in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are high, with continuing strengths in reading and mathematics and high standards in science. Standards in writing are well above average and pupils write interestingly, accurately and at length. A large proportion of pupils exceed nationally expected levels at the end of Year 6 in English. Pupils make exceptional progress in mathematics. The school sets and meets challenging targets and has a long-standing record of high standards. The occasional variation in the school's results in national tests is owing to the capabilities of individuals, which in small year groups has a disproportionate effect on overall results. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because work is outstandingly well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The sound of happy voices and laughter rings from classrooms as pupils quickly settle to work. Excellent relationships between each other and adults mean they work confidently and enthusiastically. Pupils are happy to ask for help for they know if they do not understand something 'teachers will explain it in an easier way'. They know their targets and work hard to reach them. Bullying is not a problem because as pupils say, 'Everyone looks out for each other and teachers encourage you to make friends again.' Pupils have a strong say in what goes on.

Older pupils have a great deal of responsibility. They take the lead on matters that concern them, mirroring the teamwork of the leadership of the school. They set younger pupils an excellent example in their thoughtful attitudes and behaviour.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils learn exceptionally well because teachers match work very carefully to individual needs. This ensures that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as the more able do work that challenges and interests them, ensuring high rates of progress. Lessons move at a good pace with pupils spending the greater part of their time working independently or in groups as they find things out for themselves or practise new skills. Teachers' questioning is highly skilled, ensuring that no one group of learners misses out. Imaginative touches such as writing by candlelight enthral pupils and maximise their concentration. ICT is used extremely well to demonstrate teaching points and as interactive technology. Best of all, pupils have many opportunities to take charge of their own learning as in 'mental maths, where you test your brain!' when they set their own challenges. Marking is excellent so that pupils know what to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school makes outstanding provision for literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits and visitors to school successfully widens pupils' educational opportunities. Provision for learning a modern foreign language is at an early stage. The school currently misses opportunities to make connections between subjects. While this does not have a negative impact on pupils' academic achievements it does mean that some of what they study is unduly narrow.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's systems to safeguard pupils and to ensure that they receive suitable guidance both academically and personally are outstanding. Child protection procedures are in place. Consequently, pupils feel safe at school. The systems to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are vulnerable are outstanding. Talented or gifted pupils are also catered for extremely well. The systems to support academic progress are outstanding and lead to highly effective learning. Pupils are fully involved in assessing how well they are doing and take responsibility for checking whether they have met their targets. The effectiveness of these systems shows in the high standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher leads by example and has a heavy teaching commitment. Other staff are equally strong leaders of their subjects and areas of responsibility so that the school runs extremely efficiently as they all work together. During the headteacher's absence there was

no detriment to pupils' achievement because of this strong teamwork. Matching work to pupils' abilities and gauging their readiness to learn underpin all that the school does. Pupils definitely come first. The school improvement plan makes that clear too, with plans to include a global dimension to the curriculum. Systems to check teaching quality and learning are robust and points for improvement are suitably practical, which helps inexperienced staff especially. Governors effectively lighten the load of the headteacher, taking charge of consulting the wider school community and offering a high level of support and challenge.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Thank you for talking to me so readily about your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and hearing all about your school from your point of view. Your school gives you an outstanding education and you are right to be so proud of it. Your teachers and other adults take exceptionally good care of you, helping you to learn and to turn into mature young people who stand up for what they believe. I was impressed at how much responsibility older children have for looking after younger ones and I think you set an excellent example to little ones. I could see and hear how much you enjoyed your lessons! Your school has a very happy feel to it because you all get on so well together. Your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance much higher than in most schools.

You achieve high standards in your work because you are exceptionally well taught. I was particularly impressed at how much you use laptops. Standards in mathematics are exceptionally high because you all do work that is at the right level for you. In short, you achieve outstandingly well. Your school is extremely well led and managed and this is why you enjoy learning so much because your teachers are able to concentrate on giving you interesting and challenging lessons.

I agree with your teachers that the curriculum you follow could be less narrow. While it gives you lots of opportunities to use your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, it could be improved if your teachers made more connections between different subjects so as to broaden your experience.

I wish you all the very best for the future and when I next light a candle I will think of you writing in candlelight.