

# Sicklinghall Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121415
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313984
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ross Parker

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	58
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Gaunt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Pascoe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Wetherby West Yorkshire LS22 4BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01937 582494
<b>Fax number</b>	01937 582494

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a very small junior and infant school situated in a country village three miles outside Wetherby. Approximately one third of the pupils live in the village. The remainder travel some distance from outlying areas, including other villages, Wetherby itself and Harrogate. Year groups vary in size, but the overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. There are currently no pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Silver and the Healthy Schools Standard. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Sicklinghall Primary School is sustaining the good standard of education that has been recognised by external awards over recent years. Parents appreciate that pupils achieve well, particularly if their children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They recognise that the family atmosphere and outstanding personal care have a very positive impact on pupils' self-confidence. This secure and enjoyable environment is reflected in pupils' good personal development and excellent attendance.

Imaginative leadership and good links with outside partners have enabled the school to sustain above average standards. Teachers have taught across different age groups to make the maximum use of their expertise. This flexibility has enabled all year groups to benefit from high quality provision for the arts and music, particularly over recent years. Well established teaching skills have supported consistently good progress. The teaching team has recently undergone substantial changes but good quality remains. Pupils are enjoying the new opportunities offered by recently introduced learning approaches including electronic whiteboards and the combination of thinking skills and physical activity. These give good preparation for future success. More rigorous systems for assessing pupils have been introduced, but teachers do not yet make full use of the information to track their progress or to decide what needs to be done to improve it further.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They are active in their support of a range of charities and help at playtimes distributing the 'fruity booty'. They also take good care of younger pupils at meal times and show a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. The new headteacher has been careful to involve her full team in reviewing provision and identifying priorities for the future. They recognise that pupils are over-reliant on adults and do not yet have enough opportunities to exercise independence or responsibility. Some pupils have recently completed training as play leaders and will soon be using these skills to promote further healthy exercise at breaks and lunchtimes. Elections to the school council are imminent and pupils are proud of the grown-up approach they are being asked to take.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has quickly developed a clear picture of the school's strengths and potential for development. The governing body has been supportive during the recent staff changes, maintaining stability whilst securing a clear vision for the future. However, other staff are not involved enough in leading the school as they do not have management responsibilities devolved to them. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, as well as careful financial management, so that the school provides good value for money. The school's positive ethos, along with the headteacher's vision and the staff team's readiness to embrace change gives the school good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is well managed and gives children a confident and secure start to their learning. The school turns the small numbers in year groups to advantage. Children enjoy learning together through a continuum of creative play and structured learning. This gives good scope for pupils to develop independence, and adults encourage this well. A detailed

assessment process builds an accurate picture of children's starting points and progress. Teachers have introduced a themed approach to learning. Here, the development of basic skills underpins all the play activities that run alongside more formal learning. It includes a lively programme which is designed to engage boys more effectively in developing literacy. Provision for outside learning is well used.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make full use of the data available about pupils' attainment to track and improve their progress.
- Spread leadership responsibilities across the whole staff team to give all staff a stake in making the school even more effective.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to exercise independence and responsibility.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the Reception class with skills broadly in line with national expectations. There are more weaknesses in communication skills than would usually be expected. Some parents have moved children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the school from other settings so as to benefit from the small numbers. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end most children meet expectations and a significant number exceed them. Standards by the end of Year 2 are generally above average. More recently boys' writing has been a weaker feature, but this is being tackled. Pupils sustain the good progress, and standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 have generally been above average. A strong year group reached exceptional standards in 2007. Pupils who had struggled earlier in the school because of learning difficulties and/or disabilities were able to make up lost ground. High attaining pupils maintained their good progress. The current picture indicates that pupils of all abilities are continuing to achieve well and are on track to reach above average standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Lessons and assemblies provide specific time for reflection which pupils respond to well. The curriculum has a growing emphasis on promoting social and emotional development. This enables pupils to consider their own attitudes and values in the light of other people's experiences. Religious education and partnership with an ethnically diverse school help them to appreciate different faiths and cultures. Social development is a particular strength. The small numbers in each year and the numerous adult volunteers who complement the teachers and support staff create a close family ethos where everyone's personality and strengths are fully appreciated. Pupils behave well. They are cooperative and feel that the new 'golden rules' for behaviour have given them clearer expectations. As yet pupils, especially older ones, are too reliant on adult guidance and show too little independence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers manage pupils well and warm relationships ensure that classroom behaviour is good. Support staff and teachers collaborate well to ensure that all pupils have good access to learning opportunities. The school is well equipped with information and communication technology facilities and teachers are beginning to use these well to engage and challenge pupils. Teachers mark work carefully and give good guidance about how pupils can improve. In the best examples, teachers and pupils discuss these comments together and pupils take steps to improve their work. There are pockets of particular expertise across the school, particularly in music. These strengths include specific skills in questioning to draw pupils into more reflective thinking. The range and variety of activities is especially enjoyable, using drama really effectively to illustrate how to use more lively vocabulary, for instance. These strengths are not yet common across the school but action is being taken to share them more widely across the whole staff team, including the support staff.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The breadth of the curriculum extends pupils' outlook and experiences effectively. Some innovations are enhancing this further. In addition to early opportunities to study French, pupils have access to a range of high quality arts and music projects. These include regular concerts and drama productions. The focus on social and emotional education is being sharpened and pupils particularly enjoy the 'brain gym' and thinking skills. Teachers are beginning to develop a themed approach to learning so pupils can maintain a focus on developing their basic skills while practising them with a practical purpose. An example is the way they are beginning to refine their computer skills whilst developing their understanding of Victorian social attitudes. There is a popular range of extra-curricular activities, including some sports coaching by visiting specialists. Outside play facilities are attractive, but there is scope for more structured games at playtimes.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of personal care is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. Pupils are very well known by staff and the school maintains very close links with parents. Pupils' additional needs are fully understood and the school provides a very inclusive response to individual circumstances. A more rigorous assessment system has recently been adopted. However, although the headteacher and assessment coordinator are using this to devise challenging targets for individual pupils, it is not yet used fully by all staff to track and improve pupils' progress.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has very quickly gained an accurate picture of the school's strengths and potential for development. She is working sensitively with well informed and supportive

governors to improve the school further. Not all staff are involved in evaluating the school or in taking on leadership roles. This is beginning to be tackled and individuals' strengths and expertise are being identified and shared, but there is more to do to ensure they play a fully effective role. Staff are embracing the changes and there have already been improvements in aspects of the school's work such as behaviour management, assessment and curriculum planning. There are good links with parents and the local church which enhance pupils' day-to-day experience. Similarly positive links with local schools provide additional expertise as well as helping staff to keep abreast of emerging good practice.





## 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 <sup>1</sup> 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	1
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

<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>	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**

Inspection of Sicklinghall Community Primary School, Wetherby, LS22 4ED

Thank you all for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and having the chance to talk to you. The school gives you a good education.

Here are some of the really good things about your school

You make good progress and by the time you are in Year 6 you are reaching above average standards. I was impressed by the friendly atmosphere in the school. You all get on well and enjoy being at school, and this gives you confidence that will be helpful when you go to secondary school. Your attendance is outstanding. The teachers work hard to make sure that you learn effectively and you commented on the way they are introducing more interesting ways for you to work. The way the adults know you and look after you is outstanding.

I have asked the school to do some things to make it even better

Although you are achieving well, some of you could do even better. I have asked the school to check everyone's progress more carefully so they know what to do to improve it further. I have also asked teachers to give you more opportunities to improve your work after they have marked it and to get more feedback from you about how difficult you found the tasks. You can help here by thinking about teachers' comments and getting involved in a conversation about how you can make your work better.

I have asked the adults to give you more opportunities to take on responsibility and be independent, so you do not rely on guidance from adults so much. For example, the 'golden rules' have helped to improve behaviour on the playground, but it would be better if you did not rely on yellow cards to tell you when you have overstepped the mark.

Finally, I have asked the headteacher and governors to give the other adults more responsibility for organising aspects of the school's work.