

Ainderby Steeple Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121471
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314000
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adrian Dixon
Headteacher	Miss Fiona Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Station Lane Morton-on-Swale Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 9QR
Telephone number	01609 773519
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is well below average in size. The majority of pupils come from the local villages around Northallerton, with an increasing number coming from outside the immediate area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is very low. The proportion of those requiring support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing, but broadly average. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, who has been in post for one year. The school has the Financial Management Standard, Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ainderby Steeple Church of England Primary School is a good school. It fully meets its aim to ensure that children's experiences are 'rewarding so they look forward to each new school day'.

There is a real sense of 'family atmosphere' in this supportive and caring environment, where teachers value the importance of each child and where increasing emphasis is being placed on academic achievement. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They say they 'feel really lucky to have a great local school' and that their children 'are fortunate to have such dedicated teachers'.

The Reception class gets children off to a good start because of the stimulating activities and the good quality teaching of early communication skills and constructive play. Pupils progress well to reach well above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but achieve less well in science. Here, overall standards are broadly average; teaching does not challenge pupils fully, particularly at the highest levels.

Pupils are involved well in school life. Their experiences encourage them to develop very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. They know that they can make mistakes, without fear of failure. 'Teachers are great! They're always there to lend a hand,' they say. Good teaching provides a firm foundation for learning. However, not all teachers use information from assessments as effectively as they might to guide pupils in understanding how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further their work. Good opportunities exist for pupils to extend their knowledge through a good curriculum that enables them to develop competent information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as offering cultural, music and sporting opportunities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They take delight in their time in school and attend well. Self-confidence is developed, largely as a result of the friendly relationships with all staff, and the many activities and visits outside normal school hours. Pupils derive a real sense of pleasure from looking after the younger children and from helping each other extremely well in their work and play. Their enthusiasm for sport helps them to live healthily. Improving literacy and numeracy skills and competent use of modern technology prepare them well for their future lives.

The school provides high quality personal care and support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents welcome the attention shown by staff, 'to help make things go as smoothly as possible'. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress now allows staff to set clear targets for sustainable academic achievement, although procedures to provide pupils with guidance tailored to their individual learning needs are at a very early stage of development.

Ainderby Steeple enjoys a positive reputation within the local community. Good leadership and management by the headteacher and staff, coupled with good governance, provide firm direction for the school and highlight its good capacity for further improvement. The school has an accurate view of itself, and provides overall good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and happily into Reception and get off to a good start. The vast majority enter school with skills that are generally in line with national expectations, although their

speaking and listening aptitudes are more advanced. Good teaching enables them to make good progress, particularly in mathematical concepts, language acquisition, and personal and social development. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1, most are working very securely within all of the early learning goals. Good indoor and satisfactory outdoor provision encourages children to make choices, learn to share with others and become independent in their work and play. Children enjoy and are enthusiastic about their learning. Systems to assess children's progress are good and their welfare is promoted very well. Those who find learning more difficult make good progress because of the many opportunities to play actively and interact with adults who are good role models. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff enjoy very good relationships with children and teaching assistants make a good contribution to children's learning and personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in science across Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that teachers use information from assessments well enough to let pupils know how well they are performing and how they can improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress overall and standards are well above average in English and mathematics by the time they leave school. Progress has picked up in Years 3 to 6 of late, particularly in English and mathematics, to match the good progress elsewhere in the school. However, progress is only satisfactory in science, where few pupils reach the highest levels. The school is working hard to improve pupils' understanding of scientific concepts and investigative skills. Standards in reading are a strength of the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Teachers' assessments in 2007 and current Year 2 pupils' work show that standards in writing and mathematics are rising, following a decline in recent years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the extra support they receive. The school sets increasingly challenging targets to raise attainment and is making good progress towards reaching them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Nevertheless, the school recognises the need to broaden further pupils' understanding of different cultures. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school with its warm and welcoming atmosphere and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They are proud to belong to an inclusive school, where every child really does matter, and where there are good opportunities to explore different faiths and cultures. They have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy, as a result of the school's strong emphasis on the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. Behaviour is extremely good. Pupils are confident, polite and sensitive to the needs of others. 'We all look after each other here,' they say. They believe bullying is not an issue at their school and say that 'there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem.' They know that their views matter and see their school council as a real forum for change. They talk proudly of introducing the 'Huff and Puff' equipment at lunchtimes. Pupils make extremely valuable contributions to the community, for example by raising funds regularly for charities. The older pupils set a very good example for the younger ones by taking on dining room

supervisory roles and mentoring the children in Reception. Their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills mean they are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Central to the pupils' progress in this school is the good work of their teachers and teaching assistants. There is a tangible feeling of everyone working together as a tightly knit team. Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically. Pupils say they really appreciate the way in which teachers make lessons interesting. For example, in Reception, pupils enjoyed making snakes out of reusable modelling clay and, in Year 1, trains using wooden blocks, to compare measurements. In Years 2, 3 and 4 they relished writing 'rap poems' to develop an understanding of rhyme and rhythm. In Years 5 and 6 they used laptop computers enthusiastically to produce spreadsheets to plan for a Christmas party. Across the school, pupils are motivated to develop as independent learners. A range of activities encourages them to think for themselves and to collaborate effectively in small groups. The use of whiteboards and digital projectors stimulate their learning. Those with specific difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well and make good progress. Teachers value all pupils and relationships are excellent. However, work does not always extend and challenge the highest attainers, for example in science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well and makes a strong contribution to their personal development. The school has adjusted the curriculum well recently to meet pupils' particular needs. For example, teachers have successfully introduced a number of bespoke programmes to improve individual pupils' writing and mathematical skills. There are good opportunities to use computers and modern technology to enhance learning and, in particular, to encourage financial and enterprise skills. Pupils appreciate the many extra-curricular activities, including sport, art, French, music and the production of the termly newspaper, which broadens their learning. Good use is made of visitors to the school and visits within and beyond the community. The effective personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to explore their feelings and relationships with others, as well as to understand how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have support programmes and work that are well conceived. The school acknowledges the need for more challenging work in science, particularly for high-attaining pupils, and is developing more opportunities for pupils to predict and evaluate their findings.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The commitment of all staff to pupils' pastoral care and support is a distinctive feature of this school. Health and safety procedures are robust and child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet government guidelines. This high quality care forms a strong foundation to the school's ethos. Children settle down quickly into school and transfer smoothly in Year 6 to the local secondary schools. As a result of the efforts of all adults who work in school, pupils feel safe and happy. Good quality individual education plans and extensive support from

an industrious team of teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for. A comprehensive system to assess and track pupils' is now in place. To date, pupils' progress has not been checked rigorously enough, nor have they been set individual targets to aim for. Currently, few are able to assess how well they are doing and what they need to do precisely to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has created an inviting and friendly environment in which the needs of the child are of paramount importance. Staff share her passion for high quality education and care. They speak very highly of her leadership and the way in which she involves them in all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher's enthusiasm and energy for change has ensured effective improvements since the last inspection, and an increasing focus on high levels of achievement by all pupils. Teachers are encouraged to reflect and share good practice. Subject leaders feel empowered and accountable for raising standards. Ainderby Steeple enjoys a positive reputation within the local community and good links with the adjacent special school, and the cluster of primary and partner secondary schools. Self-evaluation is detailed and the school knows itself well. However, although systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are in place, the analysis of the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning is not as effective as it could be. Governors are supportive and ambitious for the future of the school. They know what the school does well and how it needs to improve.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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?	3

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

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

Inspection of Ainderby Steeple Church of England Primary School,
Morton-on-Swale, Northallerton, DL7 9QR

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed joining your lessons and was very interested to hear about all the things that you do and what you thought about your school. I was particularly impressed by the school council and how conscientiously council representatives carry out their roles.

Your behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding, and you get on so well with each other, and with the adults. Your school takes very good care of you and you take really good care of each other, particularly in your roles as mentors for the younger children. You said that you feel safe and happy and I could see that in your smiling faces, as you arrived each morning.

Children in Reception do well and enjoy all the exciting activities the adults plan for them. Higher up in the school you are willing to work hard and do your best. You know a lot about healthy and safe lifestyles and make the most of the range of art, music and sport activities during and after school. It is very clear how much you all enjoy being a part of Ainderby Steeple.

You told me how much you enjoyed your lessons and I agree that they are interesting and fun. The standards that you reach in English and mathematics, by the time you leave school, are well above average. This is because your headteacher and all the staff care about you and want you to do as well as you can. I did notice that not many of you are confident about your targets and what you need to do specifically to improve your work. I have therefore asked your teachers to use the information they have on your progress to build even more carefully on what you already know, making clearer what you are doing well and how you can do even better. I have also asked them to make sure that you make more progress in science and attain as well as you do in English and mathematics. You can help by working extra hard and making sure you know what the teachers are asking you to do to reach your targets.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. I really do hope that you continue to enjoy your time Ainderby Steeple.