

Sutton on the Forest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121518
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314020
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	90
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pamela Manners
Headteacher	Mrs Joyce Botham
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Street Sutton-on-the-Forest York North Yorkshire YO61 1DW
Telephone number	01347 810230

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Inspection number	314020

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small voluntary controlled school that serves the village of Sutton on the Forest and also attracts pupils from surrounding villages. The pupils come from a varied range of social and economic backgrounds. Nearly all pupils are White British with a small number of Traveller children with a Gypsy-Roma heritage. There are no pupils learning English for the first time. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average, although the proportion does vary from year to year. The school has received several awards in recent years. These include Activemark, Healthy Schools, Basic Skills and the local authority Highly Effective School award.

There is a playgroup on-site managed by a private provider, which did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features. It excels in the personal development of its pupils, the way in which it cares and supports pupils and in the learning and development of Reception age children. All parents agree that their children thoroughly enjoy school and make good progress. 'Our children are thriving in the caring, happy atmosphere of the school', is a typical parental comment. At the heart of the school's sustained improvement is the clear vision and fierce determination of the headteacher to provide a high quality of education. This can be seen in the considerable progress made since the last inspection, particularly in the improved quality of accommodation and rising standards. The school provides good value for money.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills that are broadly as expected for their age and make good progress throughout the school to reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. All pupils achieve well, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and Traveller children because of the effective support they receive. Standards in reading and writing are exceptionally high, however, they are not as high in mathematics and science. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve problems in these two subjects to help them achieve as highly as they do in English. The overall quality of teaching is good because individual needs and talents are well met, occasionally, teaching is outstanding. In these lessons pupils' thinking is constantly challenged. What pupils are expected to learn is shared with them and learning is carefully reviewed at the end of the lesson, for example, analysing the emotions and feelings of Romeo and Juliet. Sometimes, not enough demonstration is used to help pupils acquire and apply knowledge, for example, in science. An imaginative range of first-hand experiences makes learning enjoyable and enriches the good curriculum. For example, the use of visiting authors and poets to enhance imaginative writing has been particularly effective.

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school life. As a result, attendance is exceptionally high. Pupils display a desire to learn and behaviour is excellent. They are keen to develop their experiences beyond village life. This is evident in the interest they show exchanging news with their partner school in Morocco, their sponsored African pupil and their enthusiasm for their residential experience. As a result, pupils are well prepared for later life in a diverse world. Excellent pastoral care and good quality guidance helps pupils develop the confidence and independence they need to achieve well. Pupils are aware of the many benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables and taking regular exercise.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's drive has maintained a strong focus on raising achievement and standards. She benefits from a dedicated and talented team of staff and a committed governing body. Excellent use is made of a wide range of partnerships to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. The school's judgements on its effectiveness are accurate, although modest, when judging the quality of the EYFS provision. Strategies adopted by senior leaders have successfully led to a rising trend in standards, although they recognise the need for all pupils to achieve more consistently across all subjects. Together, this results in a very good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children achieve very well and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. At the end of Reception the large majority of children reach the expected goals with a significant number exceeding them. On arrival the children settle well and very quickly gain confidence and independence. They get off to a flying start and really enjoy their work. They happily explain exactly what they are doing whether painting an owl or exploring how water flows in their network of gutters. Parents are delighted with the gains their children make and the progress reports they receive from staff. Despite limited classroom floor space, they flourish in the vibrant and rich learning environment, both outdoors and indoors. Excellent relationships with pre-school provision and parents ensure that all staff are aware of children's individual needs. Excellent relationships with each other and staff help them respond positively to the high expectations set for them. Consequently, they behave exceptionally well and adopt considerate and responsible attitudes whether riding in a pedal car outside or helping to tidy up. This all contributes to a strong sense of security and happiness. Staff plan and teach extremely well together to ensure that all children make good progress. Children's welfare and well-being is especially well promoted. The EYFS provision is excellent because it is particularly well led and managed. The staff use their close knowledge of each child to make certain all are included and talents and skills successfully nurtured. Excellent use is made of resources, including the remarkable range of outdoor learning which is used successfully to inspire learning through opportunities to explore and investigate in all weathers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and science to boost their achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Over the last three years the achievement of pupils shows a clear trend of improvement. Rising achievement is the result of a pattern of effective teaching and encouragement throughout the school. Standards in English are exceptionally high, above average in mathematics and broadly average in science. The numbers of pupils in each year group are small with quite a range of ability. Consequently, this makes comparisons year-on-year difficult. Nonetheless, the school's painstaking checking of progress shows that more able girls are now achieving more consistently in mathematics and science catching up with their performance in English. The rate of progress of all pupils in mathematics particularly in Years 2 and 3 is steadily improving. Despite these marked improvements, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to solve problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils' thoroughly enjoy their school life and talk enthusiastically about their work. The excellent relationships between pupils and staff and the genuine respect they have for each other mirrors the school's positive family ethos in which Christian values are evident. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a respect for difference and have a good understanding

of other faiths and cultures. Pupils understand right from wrong, take responsibility for their actions and show caring attitudes towards younger pupils. The pupils do not see bullying as an issue. Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. Pupils are helpful and friendly towards visitors. They know that they are safe in school and that staff are always on hand to share a worry or concern. Pupils value their role on the school council where they are able to make positive contributions to school improvement. Economic well-being is well fostered, for example, managing the enterprising Fruit Bar at playtime and the Kitchen Garden. Pupils have an excellent grasp of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy the many opportunities they have to join in village and parish events and festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good and, at times, outstanding. Additional support for learning in the classroom is highly effective. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and delivered to meet the needs and interests of pupils. More settled staffing combined with new accommodation has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching. Expectations of what can be achieved by pupils have been raised. Opportunities to enjoy a wide range of first-hand learning are also provided both indoors and outdoors. Nevertheless, the full impact of these improvements has yet to be seen, especially in mathematics and science. In the outstanding teaching, effective use is made of questions to probe understanding. Pupils are then encouraged to apply what they have learnt to new situations and are taught to think analytically when solving problems. On these occasions, much is achieved because their thinking is constantly challenged. Pupils' work is regularly and positively marked. They are given guidance as to how to improve, although the quality of advice given is occasionally variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum has some excellent features, which helps contribute effectively to pupils' learning. It is well coordinated to provide pupils with a broad range of experiences and develop their basic skills. There is excellent provision for personal development which results in mature, confident pupils with a thirst for learning. First-hand learning experiences add to the challenge of learning to stimulate imagination, and interest. Opportunities are arranged to enrich learning through subject theme days and gifted and talented workshops in partnership with other schools. Yet, not all opportunities are taken to promote problem-solving skills to boost pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics and science. A wide variety of activities and sport further enrich the curriculum during or after the school day, for example, learning to play an acoustic guitar, playing netball and football and using a broad range of information and communication technology (ICT) applications.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are outstanding and academic guidance is good. The excellent pastoral care builds a high level of trust between the pupils and their staff. Parents appreciate the high quality of care the school provides on a day-to-day basis. This reflects the strong caring school ethos. Policies and procedures for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils are thorough

and meet recent requirements. Excellent transition arrangements exist for children arriving in Reception and transferring to secondary school. A rigorous electronic system is in place to check pupils' progress and provide teachers with an accurate basis to plan lessons and intervention, for example, identifying when more able pupils need more challenge or when pupils with learning difficulties require additional support. As a result, challenging learning targets are set for individual pupils, although opportunities are not always taken to involve pupils in the setting of them. Pupils receive good feedback from staff about how to improve their work, although occasionally, the quality of this is not always consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher provides a crystal clear vision and very strong direction for school improvement. The Victorian village school has been transformed. Despite shortcomings in the EYFS classroom space, the school provides a high quality learning environment in which pupils flourish and the village community can share. Patient and professional approaches have successfully tackled past inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and, therefore, pupils' progress. The headteacher is ably supported by an effective team of staff. Their talents and skills are adeptly nurtured, for example, the ongoing strengthening of subject leadership is adding to the successful drive to tackle any hint of pupil underperformance. This helps to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. Excellent evaluation of strengths and weakness lies at the heart of the school's push since the last inspection to improve the quality of education and raise achievement. However, the full effects of the improvements made have yet to be seen in a consistent pattern of very high achievement in all subjects. Governors play a full part and have a good knowledge of school developments. They work well with staff holding the school to account and providing a significant amount of expertise and support. The school's promotion of community cohesion is highly effective.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Many thanks for making me so extremely welcome and at ease in your school. I thoroughly enjoyed observing you in lessons, at play, in your assembly, talking to you, your staff and governors about your school and looking at your work. Now I want to tell you what I thought.

Sutton on the Forest is a good school with some things that are outstanding. It has a happy family atmosphere. Here are some of the many things I really enjoyed about your school.

- You told me that you always look forward to the thought of coming to school.
- You also told me that you enjoy your lessons and value the excellent relationships with your staff. I can see why; you have some very caring and talented staff who make most of your learning challenging yet good fun.
- Your achievement is good and the standards you reach are above average. Your standards in reading and writing are even higher. This is because your teaching is good and, at times, outstanding.
- The children in the Reception class make an excellent start to their learning.
- You behave exceptionally well in classrooms and around school. You work hard in lessons and show responsible, considerate attitudes when working with classmates or helping younger pupils.
- Your school staff take excellent care of you and guide and support you well. They are really keen to make sure you are happy in all aspects of school life.
- You take responsibility seriously, for example, when running the Fruit Bar or in your school council role helping to improve your school.
- Your headteacher, who is well supported by governors and staff, works especially hard to make certain your education is of the highest possible quality.

I am confident that your staff know what to do to make your school even better. However, I have asked the school to make certain you have more opportunity for solving problems in mathematics and science to help you do even better in these subjects. Thank you for helping with the inspection and best of luck for the future.