

Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121532
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314026
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Keeler HMI

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Chelo Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Carr Lane Escrick York North Yorkshire YO19 6JQ
Telephone number	01904 728570
Fax number	-

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leadership and management; pupils' personal development and well-being; the curriculum; and provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons; discussions with school staff, governors and pupils; and scrutiny of pupils' work, school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were justified.

Description of the school

Escrick Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary. The school serves the village of Escrick on the outskirts of York; however, 30% of pupils come from beyond the immediate locality. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school achieved the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Quality Mark and Activemark in 2006, followed by Investors in People and Healthy Schools Award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Escrick Church of England Primary School is an outstanding school. A typical parental comment was: 'I feel that this school has something special and am very grateful that my children have the opportunity to attend. They, in my opinion, are being given a wonderful foundation both academically and socially for the rest of their lives.' The school's success can be attributed to the excellent quality of leadership, the outstanding quality of teaching and to the effort put into promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. The combination of these elements ensures that pupils leave this school as well rounded, responsible, self-confident and independent young people. As such, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children start school in the Reception class with skills that are in line with, and often above, those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress throughout the school. Standards are very high. For many years, attainment in the Key Stage 1 tests has been above the national averages in all subjects. Standards in reading are particularly high. Nationally held data clearly indicate that the progress pupils make from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is above the national average in all subjects and for all groups of pupils. In 2007 the percentage of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher Level 5 exceeded the national average in all core subjects and was significantly higher in respect of mathematics and science. A noteworthy feature of this school is that this trend of outstanding progress and high standards has been sustained over a long period.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and this results in the excellent progress made by pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic, have very good relationships with pupils, make classrooms exciting places and above all, ensure that learning is fun. It is hardly surprising therefore, that pupils enjoy school and this is borne out by attendance which, at 97%, is well above the national average. Characteristics of teaching evident at the time of the inspection included: good subject knowledge leading to clear explanations; activities that involved the pupils in their learning; and excellent support from teaching assistants. Furthermore, planning for Investors in People status in 2007 was based on accurate assessments which resulted in work being well matched to pupils' needs. A key feature of teaching is the high level of pupil-teacher interaction. This is particularly evident through questioning when teachers give pupils time to think before articulating a response. This challenging, reflective approach enhances pupils' understanding.

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, allowing for intellectual growth as well emotional development through exploration of the creative arts. The school is developing a curriculum that makes links across subjects in order to make learning more interesting and challenging. Much good work has taken place; however, further work is required in respect of planning for the development of pupils' key skills within subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent, aided by close and purposeful links with the local church, and their cultural development is good. However, the school is currently working on plans to make pupils aware of what it means to live in a multiracial society. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visits and visitors. Residential experiences in Years 5 and 6 help to develop pupils' social skills as well as increasing their self-confidence through a range of challenging activities. Pupils appreciate the many after-school activities on offer, which successfully encourage pupils to achieve personal goals and ambitions.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and impact positively on the progress they make. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary during lessons and when at play. Attitudes to learning are excellent; they listen carefully to their teachers and work very effectively with their peers. Pupils of all ages are respectful, polite and well mannered. The school council provides pupils with a good opportunity to appreciate the democratic process and allows them to make a worthwhile contribution to the school community. Members are learning to appreciate the views of others and becoming aware of the art of compromise and decision-making. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are happy because they get on well with each other and trust and respect the adults that work in the school. There is no bullying but pupils are confident that, if an incident was to occur, it would be dealt with effectively.

The headteacher knows the school well. She has high expectations of pupils and staff and has a clear educational vision. A key feature of her leadership is her very good understanding of how pupils learn which drives initiatives designed to improve provision in relation to the curriculum and teaching and learning. This is why pupils are attaining high standards and making excellent progress. The school improvement plan is based on accurate self-evaluation and contains appropriate actions to take the school forward. Subject leaders have a firm grasp of what needs to be done and effectively monitor and evaluate standards in relation to their respective responsibilities. Governors are very supportive of the school. They have a good understanding of what is going on and are not afraid to challenge the headteacher in order to clarify the purpose of initiatives. There is a high level of shared responsibility and teamwork that underpins the leadership and management of this school. Staff are fully involved in the school improvement process. They feel valued and, as a result, make a significant contribution to improving and sustaining the school's effectiveness. This is not a one person show; it is team work at its best!

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children commence school in the Reception class with skills that are in line with and often above those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in all areas of learning, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils have attained the early learning goals and many have exceeded them. Children make outstanding progress as a result of a curriculum that is well matched to their needs, combined with excellent teaching. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent. The stimulating learning environment is well organised. Children work happily and purposefully because of the very good pastoral care. By the time they enter Year 1 their social skills and attitudes to learning are developing well and this helps them to settle very quickly and continue to make excellent progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan for the development of pupils' key skills within all subjects.

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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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, York, YO19 6JQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and talking to many of you. It was good to see how much you enjoy school.

I believe that Escrick Church of England Primary is an outstanding school. These are some of the things I particularly liked.

- Your headteacher, staff and governors provide excellent leadership. They are determined to provide the best possible education for you and are succeeding in doing so.
- You work hard, make outstanding progress and attain very good standards.
- You are taught exceptionally well and that is why you make excellent progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent, as is the way you listen in class and respond to questions.
- The way that you care for each other, especially those younger than yourselves.

I have asked Mrs Brooks to:

- provide more opportunities for you to use skills that you are learning in literacy and numeracy in other subjects as you move from class to class.

You play an important part in making Escrick Church of England Primary School an outstanding school. You have every right to feel proud of yourselves. Keep it up!

I wish you well for the future.