

Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Staxton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121534
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314027
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr G Elliott
Headteacher	Mrs Cecily Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Ings Lane Staxton Scarborough North Yorkshire YO12 4SS
Telephone number	01944 710273
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Hertford Vale is a small primary school that serves mixed local authority housing and private developments in the local village and its surrounding area. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average but varies from year to year. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools Awards.

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 notable strengths in the leadership of the headteacher, the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage and the excellent care, guidance and support that pupils receive. It provides good value for money and enjoys high levels of support and confidence from parents. 'The leadership, management and teaching are second to none in this school which sets a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere that is all the better for learning,' is a comment that typifies the views expressed by many parents. As a result of high quality care and support pupils confidently describe how they feel safe and secure. They receive much encouragement from teachers to do as well as they can. They are aware of their social responsibilities both in the school and in the local community. They have good knowledge of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Parents are quick to acknowledge and praise the high quality of care and support provided for pupils. They find all staff 'helpful, dedicated and approachable'. Staff work successfully to overcome barriers pupils may encounter in their learning. Effective work is undertaken with outside agencies to provide the right support and expertise for vulnerable pupils. The value of good attendance is firmly and successfully promoted.

Most pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Pupils continue to achieve well through the school, but their progress is faster in some year groups than in others. Relationships in all aspects of school life are positive. Consequently pupils work hard and cooperatively. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, ensuring that the very small minority of pupils who lack self-discipline do not disrupt the education of others. Staff make themselves available to give extra help and guidance when needed and pupils appreciate this. Teaching for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 does not always ensure that work is matched closely enough to individual pupils' needs. As a result, challenge and pace in lessons are not always sustained and progress slows.

Revisions to the curriculum have put a firmer focus on the acquisition of basic skills, and a thematic approach to subjects other than English and mathematics. This is having a positive impact in enabling pupils to understand how their learning links together.

Since the last inspection the school has progressed well. Self-evaluation is good and although at times it is too generous in its views, it accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses. Performance in mathematics has improved and the checks on all areas of school life are well established and robust. Realistic yet challenging targets are set for all pupils and are generally met. The headteacher is the driving force behind the improvements that have been made. With the senior teacher and governors, she has developed a cohesive management team that ensures the closely knit staff work with a common sense of purpose. The management team has a determination to make sure that the school provides the best education it can for all of its pupils. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage is founded on high quality teaching and outstanding levels of care. Strong links with the privately funded, on-site playgroup ensure that children soon find their bearings and settle quickly when they start school. Activities are carefully planned and checked to ensure that they meet young children's needs. Children enter the Reception class with skills that match the expectations for their age. They make good progress

and by the end of the Foundation Stage most reach the national goals expected of them and a good number exceed them. The curriculum provides an appropriately rich variety of experiences that helps the children to become more confident, communicate successfully and make speedy progress in all areas of their learning, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, reading, calculations and writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of progress for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 in order to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average overall and achievement is good. Since the last inspection, the school has developed and established more rigorous target-setting procedures, based on improved analysis of data. Consequently, the rate of progress has begun to accelerate. This is particularly marked at Key Stage 1, where achievement is good and standards are above average. Progress has been less even in Key Stage 2 because of staffing disruption and changes within year groups as a result of the high numbers of pupils joining the school at different times during the year. Progress slows for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 although, older pupils in the key stage achieve well. As a result of the uneven progress, current standards in Year 6 are broadly average although thorough tracking and analysis of pupils' progress shows an improving picture. This has been influenced by more stable staffing and a better understanding of target setting which has helped pupils to understand more clearly how to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are clearly identified and they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although some pupils find self-control difficult, there are good support systems in place and behaviour is good overall. Pupils work and play well together. Their enjoyment of school life is reflected in their good rates of attendance. They have confidence that adults in the school will listen to them if they have a concern or worry. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities through the work of the school council and by participating in fundraising events for their chosen charities. Older pupils support younger children by acting as buddies around the school and helping them with their reading. All pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and many take part in a variety of physical activities provided through after school clubs. They are mostly well prepared for later study and work by making good progress in basic skills. However, a small minority find it difficult to work independently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are common strengths in teaching and learning throughout the school. Lessons have a sharp focus with objectives that pupils understand clearly. Relationships are very secure and teachers know the pupils well. Teachers' marking is helpful and positive, ensuring that pupils know how well they are learning and what steps need to be taken in order to improve their

work. This encourages pupils to concentrate well on their tasks. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They use effective methods to support those pupils who need extra help and as a result, these pupils make good progress. Teachers use resources such as interactive whiteboards well and most take account of pupils' different learning styles when they are planning their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers pupils a good range of rich experiences. A focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology enables most pupils to progress well. The challenge to meet the individual needs of pupils in mixed-age classes is met well. The school enhances the everyday curriculum with an approach that enables teachers to excite pupils by linking subjects together within different themes, such as the Vikings or the Second World War. Attractive wall displays emphasise these links and promote pupils' creativity and literacy skills. Well planned activities that include musical concerts, visits to churches, museums and art galleries, as well as residential visits to outdoor centres, enrich pupils' learning and make a significant contribution to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very good care and support and effective guidance for pupils. Safeguarding procedures, including routines for child protection and health and safety, are in place. Highly effective links with external agencies ensure that pupils in need are supported very well. The school has good systems to check on pupils' progress and to help them to be aware of their academic performance, their individual targets and how to improve. Systems have been refined to enable staff to provide the carefully directed support that some pupils need. There has been significant success with programmes to overcome some pupils' weaknesses in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership is a strength of the school. She provides a very clear direction and ensures that a firm focus for improvement is at the heart of all that the school does. Her determination plays a key part in promoting a positive climate in which pupils thrive and enjoy their school life. Together with the highly effective senior teacher, she instils in all staff a reflective approach to their work and a deeper understanding of the management role that all individuals play. Because the school has a predominantly realistic view of its own strengths and weaknesses, it is able to plan pragmatically for improvement. An effective programme of lesson observations has led to teachers using a broader range of teaching and learning strategies. This has contributed to faster progress in most areas of the school, although the slower progress made by younger pupils in Key Stage 2 has yet to be fully addressed. Governors support the school well and act as effective, critical partners. They are well informed and are actively involved in checking on the performance of the school by, for example, going into the classrooms and interviewing pupils about their targets and progress.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
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	3

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

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	1
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 Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Staxton,
YO12 4SS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school recently. I would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school.

I spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. I agree with your parents that Hertford Vale is a good school.

I think your teachers and teaching assistants care for and look after you very well, keeping you safe and healthy. I think that you are working well and most of you are making faster progress than you did in the past. I was very pleased to see that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you.

To help your school to improve even more, I have asked your headteacher and the other staff to make improvements so that younger pupils in Key Stage 2 make as fast progress as all other children.

I am sure that you will carry on enjoying school and continue to build on the improvements that you are making now. Most of all, I hope that you will continue to work hard and help all the staff to make Hertford Vale an even better school in the future.