

Gunnerside Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121542
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314031
Inspection date	18 January 2008
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	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Professor David Hill
Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Gunnerside Richmond North Yorkshire DL11 6LE
Telephone number	01748 886321
Fax number	01748 886321

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Gunnerside Methodist Primary School is a very small school serving a rural community. In the last three years the number of children in the Reception class has varied from one to seven. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. In 2005, the school joined with a slightly larger school to form a confederation on two separate sites. The schools share the same headteacher. Pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) are organised into two classes with their peers from the other school. They spend two days per week on one site and three on the other. Gunnerside's mixed class of Reception and Years 1 and 2 children spends the whole week on the one site. Owing to the absence of the headteacher, an acting headteacher has been in post since the end of November. The school has received the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark.

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. During the last three years major changes caused by the confederation with another school have been managed well. Positive effects are seen particularly in the opportunities for pupils to learn and mature alongside a larger number of children of their own age than would otherwise have been the case. Pupils and staff have coped well with the development. The achievement of pupils is good overall and their above average standards at the previous inspection have been maintained.

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and contributes well to pupils' good personal development. There is a family atmosphere that enables children to settle in easily when they arrive at the school. Pupils feel safe, behave well and benefit from the good nurturing of their physical and emotional health. They are confident that they have adults to turn to should any problem arise. Above average attendance indicates that pupils like coming to school, although some of them say that the travelling from one site to the other can detract from their enjoyment. They have developed a good awareness of the need to eat healthily. They understand the importance of exercise and eagerly take part in sporting activities in spite of the shortcomings in the facilities at one of the school sites. They willingly take on responsibilities and treat them seriously both in school and in the wider community.

Effective academic guidance is still in its infancy. Good systems to track pupils' progress have recently been put in place, but as yet not enough use is made of them to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers know the pupils very well and relationships in the classroom are secure. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, teachers do not always use their assessments of what pupils know and can do to plan work that sufficiently challenges or stimulates the most able pupils.

The confederation has enabled the school to provide an interesting well balanced curriculum. It includes a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that contribute valuably to pupils' learning and personal development.

The good quality of leadership and management is a major reason why the confederation is continuing to develop successfully. Some parents undoubtedly feel that less attention has been paid to the smaller school in the confederation and say that relationships with the school have deteriorated. The school's leaders recognize the problem and are taking action to repair the damage. The absence of the headteacher resulted in the loss of some impetus, but the acting headteacher has taken up the reins and parents appreciate and respect the efforts being made.

The school's performance is carefully monitored and there is among all staff a strong commitment to improvement. The management team has been strengthened recently and, as a result, a firmer focus is being placed on identifying strengths and weaknesses in the progress of individual pupils. The acting headteacher has quickly established good relationships with the staff and governors and reinvigorated the momentum of planned change. Consequently, morale in the school remains high and all adults work together well to ensure pupils mature and that most make good progress. The capacity for further improvement is good. Governors are committed, perceptive and skilled. They are resolute in their support of the school, rigorous in holding it to account and help it to provide good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The very small class size allows children to settle quickly into school and make a good start. When they enter the Reception class children's skills and abilities generally match expectations for their age. Good teaching enables most children to be working securely within the early learning goals in all areas by the time they enter Year 1. Some children manage to exceed them, particularly in their language, mathematical and personal development. The curriculum is planned well to ensure that children are actively involved in a variety of stimulating activities. Systems to assess children's progress are good and children's welfare is promoted well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the systems for tracking pupils' progress are used effectively
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.
- Ensure that teachers provide sufficiently challenging work for all of the most able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards vary from year to year because of the very small number of pupils, but they are above average overall and most pupils achieve well. Generally children enter the school with skills and abilities that match expectations for their age. In most recent years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average. During Years 1 and 2, pupils tend to develop their literacy skills more successfully than their mathematical skills. As a result of continued good teaching, they maintain their good progress during Years 3 to 6. At the end of Year 6 the standards reached by most pupils exceed the national average. Standards in English and mathematics are usually higher than those in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are considerate, friendly and polite. They are keen to help one another and cheerfully take on responsibilities in the school, locally and in the wider community. Their understanding of multicultural aspects of society is successfully enhanced by a link with an inner-city school and specially arranged workshops. They respect their environment and take part in projects that have involved planting trees and developing a wildlife garden on the school site. They take full advantage of opportunities to raise funds for charities. Pupils are well prepared for future life by being involved in team work. They make democratic decisions on which actions will be of most benefit to the school population, such as voting on the new school uniform and logo.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school teachers ensure that lessons have a clear focus. They give clear explanations and instructions and manage pupils' behaviour well. Their work is further strengthened by skilled teaching assistants, who liaise closely with teachers and provide good

quality help for individuals or groups of pupils during lessons. Lesson objectives are clearly understood by pupils, who enjoy their learning and apply themselves well. However, there are occasions when the more able pupils are not given tasks suited to their particular needs. Teachers set time limits for the completion of tasks, which ensures that pupils concentrate well. Pupils and teachers in Key Stage 2 overcome the drawbacks of having to move between the two school sites well. Classrooms are well organized and provide a positive learning environment for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is organized well so that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in two classes, using both school sites. Attractive displays illustrate pupils' creative and imaginative skills. The inclusion of modern foreign languages in the curriculum also helps to broaden pupils' horizons.

The curriculum is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that adds excitement to pupils' learning and provides them with many opportunities to develop their personal qualities. Pupils speak highly of the annual musical productions, as well as their visits to the theatre and art galleries, the Life Centre at Newcastle and of their involvement in the Rural Arts festival.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school works effectively to ensure that pupils work and play in safe and secure surroundings. High levels of care are evident in the effective routines and practices to ensure pupils' health and safety. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported so that they make good progress from their starting points. Good arrangements are in place for the transfer of pupils entering and leaving school. Pupils' academic progress is beginning to be tracked carefully. However, the procedures are not yet deeply enough rooted in everyday practice to enable all pupils to have a clear understanding of their progress or of the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good improvements have been made in tackling the issues from the previous inspection. Effective checks on the quality of teaching have led to an improved system of target setting and a developing focus on the progress of individual pupils. Targets set for school standards in English and mathematics are realistic yet appropriately challenging.

The confederation has not met with unstinting approval from all parents, but the school's leaders and all staff have been unwavering in their determination to improve the educational opportunities they offer. Pupils have benefited from the sharing of resources and from more focused teaching in classes where the age range is no longer so wide. The school acknowledges that improvements in communication with parents are necessary and are actively planning a way forward. There are strong and productive links with other schools that extend pupils' learning, for example, in music, modern foreign languages and physical education. The school's view of its performance is modest in places, but all staff work with a common sense of purpose that puts the school in a good position to plan further developments with confidence.

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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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Gunnerside Methodist Primary School, Richmond, DL11 6LE

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 finding out 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. Gunnerside is a good school.

I think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you well, keeping you safe and healthy. I know, too, that you are proud of your school and that you have worked hard to make sure that the school is an attractive environment.

It was very pleasing to see that you cope so well with the travelling between the two sites. I know that some of you do not enjoy moving from one school to the other, but it is to your credit that you do not let it affect your work. I think that you are working well and making good progress.

To help your school to improve further, I have asked your teachers to help you understand more clearly how to improve your work. You can help yourselves, too, by knowing your targets and listening carefully to the advice that your teachers give to you on how to reach them. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that the work you are given in all lessons really stretches you.

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 Gunnerside an even better school in the future.