

Melsonby Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121543
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314032
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Melanie Jury
Headteacher	Mrs Alison McHarg
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Melsonby Richmond North Yorkshire DL10 5ND
Telephone number	01325 718318
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Melsonby is a very small village school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has been awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark and an 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 that plays a pivotal role in the local community. Standards have improved in the past two years because of the determination of the headteacher that all pupils will achieve their potential. Parents put their trust in the school, value the approachability and friendliness of all who work there and appreciate that their children thrive and make good progress. They are well informed of their children's progress because they know what their individual targets are. The upheaval and disruption caused previously by extensive flooding and currently by the building of a hall in the playground are not impacting adversely on pupils' learning. In fact, quite the contrary, as parents commented, 'This is a great learning opportunity for our children as they photograph and learn about building.'

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school in Year 6. All pupils achieve equally well because of the well targeted support for each individual pupil. Progress in lessons is generally good because pupils enjoy a wide range of exciting and innovative learning, such as in science when investigating electric circuits. Teaching is generally good because of the skills with which the needs of a wide age range in each class are met. Very effective support staff work well alongside teachers and pupils. Pupils are keen, enthusiastic learners who enjoy school and are well equipped for their future personal and economic well-being. A high priority is given to promoting basic skills. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported because the school's robust arrangements are followed carefully. Assessment data are comprehensive and track the progress of individual pupils through school. However, analysis of this data does not always identify small levels of underachievement and seek out the causes of this.

The good curriculum is enriched by links with nearby schools, visits and visitors as well as a comprehensive range of outdoor activities that promote the health and well-being of all pupils. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher successfully balances the demands of her teaching commitment with those of managing and leading the school. Leading by the example of her good teaching is a particular strength. Currently day-to-day management, although well supported by administrative staff, falls mostly to the headteacher. Teamwork is strong but the role of other staff in shouldering some of the leadership responsibilities is underdeveloped.

Improvement since the previous inspection is good, especially in the quality of marking. The school has a good capacity to improve because of the challenge and support provided by the governing body, the commitment of everyone to raising the profile of the school in the community and the unrelenting passion of the headteacher to ensure all pupils achieve their potential.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children start school with skills which are frequently below those typical for their ages. There is a wide variation year by year because of the very small number of children in each year group. Children make good progress so that, at the end of the Reception class, standards in all areas of learning are generally in line with national expectations. They work in harmony alongside Year 1 pupils in a relatively small area that lacks easy access to an outdoor environment. Good steps are taken to compensate for this so that pupils do not miss out on outdoor activities. A high priority is given to this phase by the school. Parents are particularly happy about the

sensitive ways their children are inducted into school and their enjoyment of learning. Fun in learning was very well exemplified in the children's enjoyment of the story 'Handa's Surprise' and the exciting investigations which followed observing and tasting various fruit and vegetables. Right from the start, children begin to understand the need to eat healthily and to stay safe. Teaching is good; teamwork is a strong feature and relationships are strong. As a result, children become confident learners. Very detailed records of progress are kept and parents appreciate the information provided for them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse the school's tracking data so that any underachievement can be quickly rectified.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that key leadership and management responsibilities are more equitably shared.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good achievement of pupils in the Foundation Stage is built upon at Key Stage 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good and most pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties. In the school's national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were above average. The latest results for 2007 show that overall standards are above those of previous years. School data show there is a dip in the progress made in Year 3 which is rectified in the class of older pupils, so by the time they leave school, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. All pupils make good progress, including those with learning difficulties, because of their effective support by talented teaching assistants. At regular times throughout the year, external support is provided for more able pupils. This, along with the challenging teaching they receive in class, helps them make good progress. The school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils expected to reach the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents are very happy with the arrangements made to welcome their children into school. Pupils enjoy school and particularly value the exciting activities provided. Despite temporary building works and a reduction in their outdoor area, they understand the need to keep healthy and are very safety conscious. Older pupils are currently exploring ways to have daily fruit at break times as well as their wholesome and nourishing daily lunches. Safety is of prime importance and well monitored by the local authority because of the extensive rebuilding programme and the long daily walk to the dining hall at the end of the village. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school, which makes a strong contribution to their rapid learning. There are times when a small number of pupils are less respectful. This is being tackled by the school with external support. Pupils collaborate well and welcome newcomers to school. The school council effectively ensures that representatives liaise with their classmates to gather the pupils' views and wishes. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They develop mature attitudes to healthy lifestyles in relation to awareness about drugs, for example. Pupils contribute with confidence and clarity in lessons which is helping to develop good workplace skills. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils have positive attitudes and work hard in lessons. A good feature is secure subject knowledge leading to confident teaching, especially for the older pupils. Lessons are brisk and purposeful and involve pupils' explanations in helping develop understanding in mathematics, for example. Teaching assistants provide exemplary support for pupils with learning difficulties. Whiteboard technology enriches learning; for instance, in Key Stage 1, vibrant illustrations helped pupils enjoy reading a story together. Practical activities are used well to promote language skills; for example displays of key mathematical vocabulary assisted pupils learning to subtract three digit numbers. Teaching is adept in providing for the wide age range in each class because of generally comprehensive planning. However, on occasion learning objectives are not sufficiently clear. Day-to-day assessment and the marking of pupils' work give pupils clear guidance on how to improve which is a good development since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the good curriculum. This is captured well in their enthusiasm for information and communication technology (ICT), and the care and attention given to promoting healthy living, for example, making fruit kebabs in Year 1. A wide range of out of school clubs, such as drama, dance, art and gardening enriches the pupils' learning and personal development well. The needs of particular groups are met through well targeted external and school-based support. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are given a high priority. The school is working hard and with some success to increase pupils' involvement in the local community. For instance, the village allotment association work with pupils in school and this broadens pupils' understanding of healthy eating and economic well-being. Concerts for the community and invitations to various events have all helped to raise the profile of the school in the community. Pupils and staff contribute to the local parish newsletters. There are good links with other primary schools to share resources and enable pupils to be well prepared for their next stage of education. The facilities for physical education are currently very limited, but should be considerably enhanced when a newly built hall is completed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are very committed and ensure a good level of care, guidance and support to maintain pupils' enjoyment and safety in school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements. In their safe and supporting environment, pupils meet their targets and make good progress. Arrangements for the support and involvement of parents of pupils with additional needs are exemplary. These pupils are identified and prompt arrangements are made to involve specialists if required. The systems to monitor the progress of pupils year by year are in place and up to date. However, the data have not been used well enough to tackle some underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. A high priority is given to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching through up-to-date training. Target setting is completed, although the very small numbers of pupils in each cohort and the impact of additional pupils or pupils leaving may have on this process reduces its reliability. Nevertheless, this does not deter the headteacher and governors from having high aspirations. Governors provide an equally effective balance between supporting and challenging the school. The chair is very knowledgeable and has usefully restructured the governing body to increase its efficiency. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate in identifying what needs to be done to raise standards and successfully involves a range of stakeholders in the process, including parents and pupils. Links with parents are good and well echoed in their positive comments about the professionalism and understanding of the headteacher. A recent promotion of a key member of staff has left a void in the leadership team that has yet to be filled to ensure there is a more equitable distribution of management responsibilities. The role of subject leaders is underdeveloped. The school has a deservedly good reputation that is reflected in the increasing numbers of pupils. The school includes all its pupils in its work and ensures that all pupils are treated with the same level of care and respect.

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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?	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	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 Melsonby Methodist Primary School, Richmond, DL10 5ND

Thank you all for making my day in your school so enjoyable. There was so much to see and to talk about with you. No wonder you all say you enjoy school and feel very safe. I agree you go to a good school that cares for you all very well. Your teachers work hard to ensure you are safe. I know you will agree with that because of how they keep you safe around all the building works and the long walk you have each day to the canteen for lunch.

Most of you work hard and do well in lessons and in the tests you take at the end of each year. You say you enjoy science. The lesson I saw where some of you were involved with control technology looked fascinating. Sorry, I could not stay for longer to see this. You know what needs to be done to stay healthy and are keen to have fruit provided for the older children in school. Your school council has an important job to do. Those of you involved in this are very privileged.

I have asked your school to look carefully at the records they keep of your progress to make sure everyone is working as hard as they should. You can help by telling your teacher if you do not understand what you have to do, if you find the work too easy and by behaving well in lessons all the time. Now that one of your teachers has a job in another school, your headteacher needs to have other people on the staff to help her with some of the extra paperwork that headteachers have to deal with. You can all help by continuing to act responsibly when you have jobs to do around school.

Thank you again for making me welcome in school. You will have a super school hall very soon that will make it even better for you at Melsonby School.