

Kirk Smeaton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121573 |
| Local Authority | North Yorkshire |
| Inspection number | 314042 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Carmen Markham |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 83 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs M Young |
| Headteacher | Mrs R Hanney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 October 2004 |
| School address | Main Street Kirk Smeaton Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 3JY |
| Telephone number | 01977 620497 |
| Fax number | 0 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small village school that admits pupils from age 4. It serves an area of mixed social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. All pupils are of White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has recently been awarded the Financial Management Standard

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kirk Smeaton is a good school that provides good value for money. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils say that they love school. They are very well cared for and provision for vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs is good. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility towards each other. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school is well led by the headteacher who is supported by effective governors. They share a vision of a school where every child matters. With staff and parents they work to implement this vision and to develop a strong school ethos based on care, learning and enjoyment. However, the headteacher has a part-time teaching commitment in school and does not have anyone to share leadership responsibilities with. Subject leaders are not effective enough in ensuring that agreed policies and initiatives are consistently implemented. Nevertheless, systems to check on the progress of all pupils are strong and help pupils to meet challenging targets by the end of Key Stage 2. The governors and the headteacher have a broad understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have good plans to improve the provision for pupils. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection indicating the school's good capacity to improve.

During their time in the school pupils achieve well in relation to their skills on entry to the Reception class, which are in line with the nationally expected levels for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, where limited opportunities for independent play inhibit more rapid progress. However, from Year 1 onwards progress is good and by the end of Year 6 standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Pupils' needs are identified accurately and their work is generally well planned. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. Good resources, including the very good use of information and communication technology (ICT), motivate pupils to learn and to enjoy their education. Teachers make very good use of personal targets to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Parents value these targets and report that they 'are very impressed with how well teachers know each child and target learning to individual needs'. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to learn.

The good curriculum helps pupils develop many skills through an exciting range of experiences and makes a strong contribution to their progress. It also makes a very significant contribution to their good personal development and well-being. Work on Fair Trade has contributed to pupils' economic understanding, while persuasive writing enables them to consider the impact of smoking and drug addiction. Good links with other schools enable pupils to develop a range of interests including music and sport.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

On entry to the Reception class children's skills are in line with the national expectations for four-year-olds. Overall, they make satisfactory progress so that by the end of the Reception

year they attain standards that are in line with the national average. While most girls achieve well the high proportion of summer-born boys do not make as good progress. They make satisfactory progress in their mathematical, personal and social development but their language skills are below expectation. The management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It has been affected by staff absence. Teaching is satisfactory. The needs of all children are regularly assessed and those found to require additional help are supported well in their learning. Good records are kept of children's progress. Resources are generally well used by staff and the accommodation is significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, organisation and planning is very formal and play opportunities are limited. Children do not have sufficient opportunity to direct their own learning and to develop as independent learners. They are kind and thoughtful to each other and behave well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage to provide children with a full range of learning experiences and resources in the classroom and outdoors.
- Develop the management role of curriculum leaders.
- Ensure that marking is consistent throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are mostly as expected for their age, but boys are below that expectation in English. All pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, and by the end of Year 6 standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Lesson observations and teachers' assessments indicate that Year 6 pupils are exceeding their challenging targets. Across the school as a whole, higher attaining pupils achieve well and particularly in mathematics and science. The work set challenges them to think hard and they attain standards that are well above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to the good provision for their learning and make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal, social, moral and cultural development is reflected in their positive attitudes and outstanding behaviour. Their attendance is good. They value being part of a harmonious school community that has a strong respect for people of other faiths and cultures. Typically parents write, 'Pupils of all ages mix well and take good care of each other around school and particularly in the playground.' Pupils show a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They say that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and that they always have adults to turn to for help. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They enjoy taking responsibility in school as council members, librarians and playground patrollers. Their many community links include the local church, other schools in the area and particularly the local village community. They have a growing awareness of local and global issues. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of education and the world of work is good. They have good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They use ICT very proficiently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress and above average standards are the result of good teaching and the very effective use of well chosen resources, including computers and other technologies. Pupils' work is frequently assessed to monitor their progress and to identify learning needs. Teachers use this information to plan activities that effectively meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. This enables pupils to progress at a good pace. The specific needs of higher attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met effectively. Careful planning to meet the needs of boys ensures that they are well motivated and most make good progress. Additional learning programmes are introduced for pupils who require additional support. However, although the good use of personal targets helps pupils to improve their work, the quality of marking across the school is not consistent and does not reflect the marking policy. Consequently, pupils are not always given additional guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The skills and talents of teachers ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a good range of experiences, an enjoyment of learning and basic skills that will support a safe and healthy lifestyle. It also provides the foundation for their future economic well-being. Pupils gain much from their regular music lessons and opportunities to play at festivals, while the use of drama to improve writing in English is raising standards. The broad curriculum promotes many opportunities for pupils to apply their newly learned English, mathematical, scientific and ICT skills to a variety of situations. This motivates and interests pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very proud of the digital films they have made on a range of topics, including anti-smoking.

A good range of extra-curricular activities, visitors, visits and after-school clubs support learning effectively and contribute well to pupils' personal development. Key Stage 2 pupils all have the opportunity to attend an annual residential team-building experience while the school enjoys success in a number of inter-school sports competitions. Extra-curricular activities have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff have very good relationships with pupils and pay close attention to their care and well-being. Procedures for child protection and safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Strategies for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities function well and help them to make good progress. The school keeps a careful watch on pupils who may be vulnerable and makes good use of outside agencies to support these and other pupils when necessary. Effective activities help pupils recognise the dangers associated with drugs, tobacco and alcohol. The school is rigorous in its promotion of good attendance. Very good systems to track pupils' progress enable the school to target support where it is needed. Pupils are regularly set targets for improvement so they know what they need to do to improve their work. These targets are shared with parents. However, the quality of marking has shortcomings, resulting in some pupils receiving less clear and effective guidance than others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the governors share a vision of a school where every child is important and has their needs met effectively. Together with school staff they work towards this goal. The headteacher is well supported by governors and good administrative staff. However, because subject leadership is less effective she is unable to carry out all elements of school monitoring. Nevertheless, the headteacher is very aware of everything that is happening in school and this helps her to be constantly alert to its strengths and areas for development. The school's evaluation of itself is broadly accurate and the areas identified for improvement are helping the school to develop the effectiveness of its provision. Resources are used very well and the school accommodation is rapidly improving to support good standards and achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| 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

I would like to thank you for making me so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite and helped me to find my way around. Your behaviour is outstanding. I really enjoyed looking at the work that you are doing and I thought that the films that Years 5 and 6 are making are excellent. You told me that you love your school and I can understand why you do. You have the opportunity to use and enjoy lovely school grounds and your school lunches are healthy.

Your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school successful. You go to a good school. The staff look after you very well and you feel safe. You make good progress in lessons because your teachers make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting topics and activities. They encourage visitors to school so that you can learn and practise new skills and improve your understanding of the world and other cultures. You also have good opportunities for out-of-school visits. Key Stage 2 pupils particularly look forward to their annual residential visit to Robinwood where they learn about the environment and how to work together.

You attend school regularly and arrive on time. You think school is important so you want to learn. You all know your targets and how to improve your work. You take very good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. Parents told me how well the older pupils look after the younger pupils. You know about staying healthy and enjoy the good sporting and musical activities that the school offers you.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school could improve. I have asked some of your teachers to improve their marking to make sure that you know how to improve your work. I have also asked the school to provide more play opportunities to help children learn in the Reception class. Finally, I have asked that teachers who are responsible for the subjects you are taught do more to check the quality of the work you are doing.