

# Selby Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 121586          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | North Yorkshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 314048          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 16–17 June 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Ross Parker     |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary controlled                            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 331   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                              |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Jane Harland                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs J Jennings                                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 26 April 2004                                   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | New Lane<br>Selby<br>North Yorkshire<br>YO8 4QB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01757 703817                                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01757 703817                                    |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Set in the centre of Selby, it serves an area with higher than average levels of unemployment and social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from a White British background, but there are a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom speak English as an additional language. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Mark and the National Healthy Schools Standard. The headteacher joined the school in January 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards throughout the school and to the quality of teaching and learning. The school provides inadequate value for money.

Children join Reception with skills below those expected for their age. A significant number of pupils join the school at a very early stage of learning English. Pupils make inadequate progress in Years 1 and 2 and so standards have been exceptionally low by the end of Year 2 in the last two years, with a particular weakness in writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 declined for the previous three years until 2007, when they showed some improvement. This decline is a result of pupils' limited progress in lower years. Progress is significantly weak in English and girls have made less progress than boys. Therefore, achievement overall is inadequate.

This underachievement has been due to inadequacies in teaching and assessment. The recently appointed headteacher quickly identified this and has made changes that are bringing about improvement. Currently, these improvements are at an early stage. Though much teaching is satisfactory or better, there is still too much weak teaching. Recent staffing instability means that the current team is not providing strong enough teaching to overcome the effects of pupils' earlier underachievement.

Pupils' personal development is good overall, although their attendance is poor. An important early improvement introduced by the headteacher was to the management of behaviour. Parents, who appreciate the school's safe and welcoming environment, recognise that behaviour has improved and fewer lessons are disrupted. Pupils say that their enjoyment of school has increased as lessons have become less rigid and more interesting. They appreciate the interesting activities such as the Year 5 visit to a specialist sports college. Assemblies and links with the church enhance spiritual development and pupils benefit from a strong focus on developing social and emotional awareness. These personal skills contribute well to pupils' readiness for secondary school and employment, but their influence is undermined by significant weakness in basic skills and poor attendance.

Personal care for pupils' welfare is strong. The extended curriculum and support for pupils who face barriers to learning are strongly focused on ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. This includes good links with parents, though this partnership is not yet well enough established to prevent inadequate attendance. Despite some hard work from the school, too many parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly. Academic tracking and guidance to monitor pupils' progress and give them clear guidance on how to improve is not yet fully in place. Consequently, care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall.

Recent improvements to behaviour management, provision in the Foundation Stage, and the start made to establishing tracking systems to improve academic guidance are evidence of a satisfactory capacity to improve. The reorganised governing body is closely involved with the school and quickly improving its ability to challenge and support the headteacher. Leadership and management at all levels, including governance, are satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

There have been many changes recently that have improved the curriculum and its resources. Children make satisfactory and improving progress because of this good provision and the satisfactory and improving teaching. The new coordinator, well supported by the local authority, has achieved a great deal in a short time, and is leading the team well. Children do best in their personal development and in their speaking and listening. They do less well in calculating and writing. Children love the variety of interesting activities, inside and outside the building. All children are well supported, including the minority who are new to the country and to the English language. Even in the Foundation Stage attendance is not as high as it could be to ensure that all children get full value from all this exciting development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in Key Stage 1, especially in writing, and in the upper years in English generally in order to improve the achievement of all pupils, and girls in particular.
- Improve attendance to enable all pupils to make at least satisfactory progress.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that there is sufficient good or better teaching to overcome pupils' previous underachievement.
- Improve teachers' use of data to track and improve pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

The school is not confident that assessments in the Foundation Stage have been accurate until very recently. However, children who are about to move from Reception into Year 1 are currently working at levels which are not far off those expected for their age. Standards assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen in each successive year since the last inspection report. They were exceptionally low in 2006 and 2007 and the school's own data shows that they are likely to be even lower this year. Standards are weakest in writing and pupils have made the least progress in this subject. Standards had also fallen for a number of years in Key Stage 2, especially in English. They were below average in 2006, with English exceptionally low, but improved to broadly average in 2007. The school's data predicts that English and science will have dropped back again this year and the 2008 school targets are likely to be missed, particularly for the most able pupils. The school feels that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to speaking English make better progress than their peers because of the additional support they receive, but the improved tracking system has not yet reached the stage where it can provide evidence of this.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and promotes the caring ethos that parents and pupils value. Behaviour is satisfactory because all adults are using a consistent approach to behaviour management. Too many pupils are not yet sufficiently independent as learners so they become restless in lessons where the teaching lacks pace and tasks are not stimulating enough. As a result of the school's good attention to promoting healthy lifestyles, pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and physical education, and take good advantage of the healthy food on offer. The school has clearly identified the link between the inadequate

attendance and poor achievement. Support staff are working hard with parents to change this and have significantly reduced absence and minimised its impact on learning over the last six months.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

When investigating girls' underachievement the headteacher quickly identified weaker teaching approaches which were also contributing to the weakness in writing at Key Stage 1, and in English in Key Stage 2. Opportunities to talk so that pupils can consolidate their understanding have been limited, partly because of past poor behaviour. To avoid disruption to lessons, teachers have felt the need to supervise lessons closely rather than to give pupils enough freedom in their learning. This has meant that there have been too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Consequently, individuals have not moved on quickly enough as they waited for the whole class to move together. The lack of an effective tracking system has also meant that teachers are unable to use data to match the challenge of work to individual pupils' needs. The concern over behaviour management also reduced opportunities for pupils to work in ways most suited to how they learn best. Marking has not given consistently clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work. All of this is improving and there is a core of high quality teaching, but in too many lessons teachers are at an early stage of developing the skills needed to raise achievement. It is this inconsistency that remains a barrier to improved learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets requirements. There is an appropriate emphasis on basic skills and pupils have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language. There is an extensive variety of before-and after-school activities aimed at pupils' enjoyment and to support children and their families. There is also a popular range of extra-curricular activities. These include residential visits and enrichment activities such as an 'Inspire Day' when parents come in to school and work alongside their children on different creative activities, for example. The school has identified how it can redevelop the curriculum to improve pupils' enjoyment and achievement. This includes linking subjects to make them more relevant, strengthening the emphasis on all subjects as well as literacy and numeracy and focusing on developing skills as well as knowledge.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Personal care is extensive and effective. Pupils and parents value highly the care provided by the school. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet current requirements. There is a new range of well organised support to help pupils who are falling behind to catch up. Recent support for writing and mathematics, for example, has enabled the small number involved to make, within a four week period, the progress that might be expect in six months. The learning mentor and home-school liaison worker collaborate very effectively to reduce the effects of the barriers faced by the significant number of vulnerable pupils and their families. An effective start has been made on improving academic guidance and support and pupils are beginning to understand their targets and how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Though improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate overall, there has been considerable progress and a focused sense of urgency over recent months. The headteacher has developed a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The causes of underachievement have been identified and significant changes appropriately aimed at removing them have been put in place. Newly formed middle leadership teams clearly understand the extent of their responsibilities. Reorganisation of staffing arrangements has created appropriate potential for further improvement. Improvements to the Foundation Stage have quickly re-established satisfactory provision as a minimum. Initial actions to raise pupils' achievement already show signs of effectiveness, although it is too soon to evaluate their full effect. Staff morale has improved over recent months and they display a justified optimism and a clear determination to improve. There are good links with partner secondary schools, and the school provides extensive and highly valued support for parents to ensure that pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds have equal opportunities to succeed.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 4  |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 3  |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage  | 3  |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 3  |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 4 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 4 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 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  | 4 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 3 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 4 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 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  | 4   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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?  | Yes |

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## Annex B

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to tell you how very much we enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for your warm welcome. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and how safe and happy you feel there. We enjoyed coming into your lessons and looking at your work.

We think you show a good understanding of how to be healthy. Your school council wants to make a difference and you are all playing your part. Your teachers have worked very hard to make your school a caring and welcoming place and to help you to develop good personal skills.

Now we want you all to turn your attention to improving the standards you reach. We think there are some very important things that your school needs to do better so we have given it a 'Notice to Improve'. This means that inspectors will visit your school again quite soon to see how you are getting on.

To help your headteacher and teachers to make the improvements needed, we have asked them to:

- help you to reach higher standards, particularly in English, by the time you leave the school
- make sure all your lessons are of good quality so that you make the progress you need to reach these higher standards
- check closely how well you are learning to make sure you are doing as well as you should
- work with your parents to make sure you all attend school regularly.

We are confident that your headteacher, your staff and governors can do what is needed for your school to improve. You can help by attending school regularly, working hard and taking advantage of the opportunities that you are given in lessons to find out things for yourselves and to talk about your learning.