

Settle Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121587
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314049
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Alston

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	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Samantha Adams
Headteacher	Mr Richard Wright
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Bond Lane Settle North Yorkshire BD24 9BW
Telephone number	01729 822019
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Age group	3–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized school lies in Settle, a rural town in the Yorkshire Dales. It also takes pupils from a wider area and at present the school population is rising. Most pupils live in an area with no significant social or economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than that found in most schools. There are no pupils from minority ethnic heritages. In 2007, the school gained a number of awards including Investors in People, Healthy School, Activemark for sport and Football Charter mark.

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 in which pupils achieve well in their academic work and also make enormous strides in their personal development. It is held in high esteem by its community; one parent said, 'The teaching staff and everyone involved at school are a huge strength with their dedication and commitment. They make school a caring, wonderful place for my children to go. We are lucky to have such a fantastic school for our children.'

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that by the time they enter Year 1 most reach the nationally expected levels for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress, to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and above the expected levels by the end of Year 5. The school correctly identifies raising pupils' achievement in writing, particularly for the most able, as an important and necessary next step to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.

Pupils are very proud of their school and of what it does to help them understand healthy living, care for the community and conservation issues, of which they have a very good knowledge. Attendance is good. Pupils behave exceptionally well and treat their classmates and others with great dignity and respect. The school council enthusiastically represent the views of all pupils: their suggestions about playground equipment and fund-raising schemes have already borne fruit.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well taking account of the different ways pupils learn. Excellent relationships are a strong feature throughout the school and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The curriculum is good, encourages pupils to be imaginative in their work and provides a rich and varied range of learning experiences. Irrespective of their levels of ability, pupils receive important guidance on how they can improve their personal and academic skills. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work varies in quality and, as a result, pupils do not always get enough advice on how to improve their work.

The well-being of each and every pupil is central to the work of the school. Teachers and all other adults care deeply for their pupils and support them to the utmost. Rigorous assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has been central to raising expectations and achievement and has contributed to the improving trends in standards.

Effective leadership and management are key factors in the success of the school. Recent increases to the school's intake of pupils, and staff changes, have been managed well. There is a strong team approach in the school with a clear focus on improving the quality of education and standards. Staff carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically and appreciate the strong leadership and direction provided by the headteacher and deputy. Highly productive partnerships with outside organisations enrich the work of the school and widen pupils' experiences. Effective school self-evaluation procedures accurately identify areas requiring development. Governors are very involved and fulfill their responsibilities well. They have a good awareness of the school's work and provide strong support and challenge. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Purposeful leadership by the Foundation Stage leader has lessened the impact of staff disruption ensuring that children's achievement is good, both personally and academically. On entry to

school, children's skills and knowledge are mostly at the level expected for three-year-olds. They make good progress, reaching expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of Reception, especially in personal and social education. This is because their learning is thoughtfully organised and carefully tailored to develop their basic skills. The needs of every child are uppermost in everyone's mind and are represented in the colourful, well resourced learning environment. Good teaching, in a warm, caring, supportive climate for learning provides a hive of activities for children. However, limited space and large equipment limits the contribution that can be made by the outside area, but plans are in place to improve this. The children are happy; 'They just love to come,' was a comment echoed by a number of parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of those pupils who are capable of reaching above average standards in writing.
- Share good practice in marking to ensure that all pupils receive enough advice on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their earlier attainment. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, but few pupils reach the higher level expected of them in writing. For a number of years, progress during Key Stage 2 has been good, resulting in Year 5 pupils consistently achieving above expected levels in English and in mathematics. However, quite a number of pupils who achieve the higher level in reading do not do so in writing. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress, due to very effective support from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupil's confidence and self-esteem improve rapidly because all staff value them as individuals and listen to their ideas. They quickly develop very positive attitudes to learning because it is made so enjoyable. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are very friendly towards each other and mix well together, regardless of age or gender. Their ability to organise activities and find things out for themselves is a strength. Pupils used a variety of sources of evidence, including old inspection reports, to find out about what their school was like in Victorian times for example. Moreover, pupils have a very good knowledge of healthy eating and very successfully grow their own vegetables in the gardening club. Pupils quickly become confident enough to work independently and rapidly learn to take turns and share resources. They remain busy throughout lessons, persevering with tasks and responding positively to encouragement and praise, which spurs them on to try even harder. Excellent relationships, friendships and behaviour ensure that the school is a great place in which to learn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers' very caring relationships with pupils generate very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, conscientious planning and sensitive questioning ensure that pupils clearly understand tasks. Very good class management and stimulating environments contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to support pupils in their learning. In the best lessons, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils and pupils are challenged to reach their targets. But this good practice is not consistent across the school. For example, targets are not always written in ways which pupils can understand or regularly review. Teachers assess pupils' progress often and accurately, and generally use the information well to plan suitable work. However, the usefulness of written comments in marking varies, and, consequently, pupils do not always get enough guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich range of experiences for pupils, from the youngest age groups onwards. An increasing focus on literacy and numeracy ensures that there are good links between subjects that promote basic skills, despite the relative lack of provision for higher attainers in writing. The curriculum is enriched by a focus on environmental issues and making an impact in the drive to live in an ecologically sustainable way. There are special projects, for example in science, music and art that give all pupils much to enjoy and especially appeal to the most talented pupils. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the fitness of pupils not only through the curriculum for physical education, but also through a very wide range of extra clubs and coaching opportunities. In addition, there is a wide range of activities other than sports, for example a choir and recorder groups, thinking skills and touch-typing clubs as well as residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are justified in highlighting this as one of the strongest aspects of the school's work. There are many tributes to the excellence of the sensitive and extremely effective support provided for vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are full of enthusiasm and offer much support to the pupils. 'My children have loved their time in school and have developed into individuals we are proud of,' is a typical comment made by parents. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are fully in place. There are frequent risk assessments and pupils' health and safety is paramount. Systems to check pupils' achievement are rigorous and used effectively to highlight any potential underachievement and to initiate extra support where needed. The school has successful strategies to try to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. Excellent partnerships with outside agencies enhance the provision for pupils most in need of support or improve the provision for pupils with special gifts or talents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and have set a very clear direction for the school. They maintain high expectations for standards and the quality of provision ensuring that there is strength in its capacity to improve. All staff, governors and parents share that vision and are now beginning to contribute more fully to the school's continuing success. The school lies at the heart of its community. It is good at creating the context in which pupils at all levels are able to progress well, despite higher attainers, in writing, needing more opportunity to fulfill their potential. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The headteacher, well supported by staff, has successfully steered the school since its last inspection and has firmly embedded good teaching, achievement and outstanding quality of care. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurately assesses the school's performance. The school is justifiably recognised by parents as 'a fantastic place for children to be'. Governors understand the school's strengths very well and are equally clear about where the school can do better. They are developing their role in school self-evaluation, but this does not prevent their work from being good.

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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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	1

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

After spending two days in your school, I would like to thank you on behalf of my colleague and myself for making the experience a very enjoyable one. Your excellent behaviour and very good relationships are a credit to you all.

Well, what did we think after our visit? I know your teachers were worried about inspectors coming, but I hope our report will help them feel all their hard work is worthwhile, because our judgement is that Settle Church of England Primary is a good school. I always ask pupils for their views of the school and one pupil said, 'It's a fantastic school - the teachers really make lessons fun and care about you.' We agree; your school is a very caring place. You have a committed headteacher who leads your school successfully and places your well-being at the centre of all that happens. All the staff make teaching interesting and also make you work hard. As a result, you are learning lots in lessons. They try to make school enjoyable and exciting with the many visits you go on and lots of visitors to school. We were pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well you all get on. We saw lots of pupils who have responsibilities and carry them out very well. We were also very pleased to see all the clubs you have. You take regular exercise, and sport is important to you.

I'm sure your teachers always say, 'This is good but you could make it even better if you.' Well, this is what we are telling your school. To be even better, it needs to help more pupils who are capable of reaching above average standards in writing to achieve their potential. Another improvement would be if all teachers make sure that you understand the targets you are set and that they are used together with useful comments when your work is marked to help you to improve your work. We know you like to have targets to try and achieve them. You may have some ideas of your own on how best targets can be shared and used with you and your parents.

Finally, we would like to thank you again and wish you and your teachers every success for the future.