

Austwick Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121620
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314058
Inspection date	19 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Allison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Plimmer
Headteacher	Mrs L Crutchley
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Austwick Lancaster North Yorkshire LA2 8BN
Telephone number	01524 251366
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small rural school serves an area where pupils are drawn from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The pupils transfer at the age of 10, mostly to one middle school. Most are of a White British heritage. The number of pupils from ethnic groups is well below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The school has gained the Investors in People award and the Special Educational Needs Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils thrive intellectually and personally in the caring yet demanding atmosphere. The headteacher's exceptional vision and drive give a clear direction to the school. Pupils therefore respond very well; they enjoy school and display enthusiasm and commitment in everything they do. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the school. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

Pupils come to school with skills that are as normally expected of children of this age. Their performance in national tests at Key Stage 1 is well above average. By the end of Year 5, pupils' standards are also well above average, which represents excellent progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make very good progress because of the effective learning materials that are provided and the very good support they receive from all staff. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average as the school has invested heavily in equipment that pupils use very effectively to enhance their learning.

Pupils make strong progress in lessons because of the outstanding teaching, which has a profound knowledge of each pupil at its heart. Therefore, teachers skilfully plan and adapt their input to challenge every individual. Higher-level teaching assistants are also very effective in supporting pupils and in leading group work. Pupils are interested in their work because the innovative curriculum based upon themes is suitably challenging. It provides extremely good opportunities for pupils to use their English, mathematics and ICT skills in relevant situations.

Pupils develop very well personally as they move through the school. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils care about and support each other very well. They know how to keep safe and live a healthy lifestyle. The school is an integral and important part of the community through its close links with the church, the local area and charities. Pupils receive very good guidance on how to improve their work.

All staff cooperate well as a team to share and develop ideas. They are actively encouraged by the governors and headteacher to further develop their skills and experience. As a result, all take the lead in developing ways to further enhance pupils' learning. The school's performance is rigorously monitored so that any dip in performance is immediately identified and effective measures are put in place to rectify the problem. Development planning accurately identifies the most important areas for attention. Governors are very supportive of the school and effective in evaluating its performance. The issues raised in the last inspection have been resolved and the school has very good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Pupils receive an outstanding start to their education because of the very good provision in the Foundation Stage. When children start in the Nursery they show the level of skills and personal development expected for their age. The outstanding teaching, and excellent support, focus on providing activities that are clearly matched to the learning goals for each child's stage of development. Activities are stimulating both inside and in the outdoor play area. Children take full advantage of these and are subtly guided by the teaching staff to reinforce and develop understanding. Therefore, by the end of the Reception year children reach well above the nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. This represents very good progress. Children cooperate well with each other, they enjoy the experiences offered to them and behaviour is

excellent. ICT is used very well and children become quite independent in its use. Leadership and management are very effective. A particular strength is the very detailed assessment and tracking system that is used to target effectively the learning needs of each child. Links with parents are strong and they speak highly of the start their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant issues for the school to address that are not already identified in its planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From the very good start in the Foundation Stage, pupils continue to achieve very well in the rest of the school. Standards in national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have been well above average in recent years. A significant feature has been the well above average proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 5, pupils' standards are also well above average in the optional national tests and inspection evidence supports this. Standards remain high because of the very good monitoring of pupils' performance. This information is used very effectively to adapt teaching methods. For example, teachers now concentrate on mathematical vocabulary which was previously identified as a relatively weak area by the school; as a result standards have improved. Teachers advise pupils very well on those areas that need improvement. Pupils' ability to read very fluently and to write imaginatively and accurately reflects the well structured literacy programme developed throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' attitude to learning is very good. They take a pride in their work and want to succeed. They willingly take on responsibility and most are given roles that allow them to extend their skills, such as 'computer technician'. The school council has been very effective in improving facilities for the pupils and in fundraising activities for charity. Assemblies develop pupils' spiritual development very well. Pupils have a keen awareness of what is right and wrong. They work together well and respect each other. Therefore, pupils say there is no bullying. Attendance overall is good. However, in spite of the school's robust procedures the proportion of absences caused by holidays being taken in term-time was above average in 2006. Pupils know the importance of keeping fit as shown by the high numbers who run at lunchtime. Pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures is good. A particular strength is their understanding of the characteristics of the main world faiths. The pupils' well-developed interpersonal skills and academic development prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is very well structured to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes. Therefore pupils make very good progress. They know exactly what to do because teachers explain the tasks clearly. Pupils develop well as independent learners because teachers encourage them to experiment and to find things out for themselves. Pupils are encouraged to discuss

and cooperate so that they learn from each other. They are encouraged to assess each other's work and to offer alternatives. This often leads to very mature discussions, which the teachers manage unobtrusively. Pupils know what they need to do to improve because of the excellent comments that their teachers provide in their books. Pupils use the interactive display boards very well, for example to demonstrate and display solutions to mathematical problems. Teachers provide challenging tasks that extend the most gifted appropriately.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very successful in promoting pupils' personal and intellectual development. The overall planning, based upon themes each term, provides an effective structure around which appropriate activities are planned. As a result, pupils find their work interesting and challenging. There is a very good emphasis on enjoyment and extending pupils' experiences. The development of the teaching of French from Reception is a good example. Residential visits are successful and enjoyed immensely by the pupils. Extra-curricular activities are wide ranging and pupils participate enthusiastically. Many pupils take advantage of the extensive opportunities for music tuition. There are good links with other providers that enhances the curriculum, for example pupils speak highly of the healthy living sessions provided by the health visitor.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding and ensures that all pupils are very well cared for. Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe and child protection arrangements are in place. Academic guidance is very good, as pupils clearly know their targets and what they have to do to achieve them. Links with the local middle school are good and pupils feel secure about moving on there. The recent introduction of French teaching by a higher-level teaching assistant supported by a member of staff from the middle school has further helped to consolidate this confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent progress made by the pupils is directly linked to the outstanding leadership and management at all levels in the school. Teachers are not content with how things are; they continuously want to improve the provision for pupils. Therefore, the school is very much one that evaluates itself effectively then acts upon these messages. The school improvement plan is the result of the input of all stakeholders and provides appropriate structure to the school's development. Central to this is the very effective headteacher whose outstanding leadership skills set the tone for the school. The management of the school is also excellent as it runs smoothly and as a result pupils are happy and content. The extensive and detailed tracking system enables teachers to analyse how well pupils are progressing and to intervene as appropriate. Governors have developed their knowledge and understanding of their role through regular training and provide a good level of challenge to the school.

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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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 was most grateful for the kindness, cooperation and welcome I received when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work; listening to what you thought of the school, looking at the excellent displays on the walls, and seeing you work hard and enjoy your lessons. I have made a list below of the main things I found out about your school.

What I found good about your school

- You make excellent progress as you move through the school.
- The atmosphere is warm and friendly and staff make sure you feel safe and happy.
- You are polite, help others and you behave very well.
- You learn to play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy.
- You help other people through what you do for charity.
- You take responsibility and make a very good contribution to the running of the school.

You attend an outstanding school so I could not find any important things that need to be improved that the school is not already tackling.