

Yearsley Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132228
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	315978
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Kale
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Burn
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Yearsley Grove Huntington York North Yorkshire YO31 9BX
Telephone number	01904 656681
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The school opened in 2000 under the leadership of the current headteacher. In the past two years it has experienced significant changes to the teaching staff, mostly affecting pupils in Years 3 to 6. This has resulted from falling rolls and teachers leaving to take promoted posts elsewhere. A larger than average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times, most particularly in Years 3 to 6. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average with the proportion in the early stages of learning to speak English above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than typical; there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. The area has greater than average levels of disadvantage. The school has attained the Investors in People Award, the Basic Skills Award, Silver Artsmark and the local authority Silver Inclusion Award. It is currently working towards validation for the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and an award for its work in information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, giving satisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal and social development is a strength. It reflects the impact of the strong values taught and the emphasis the school places on developing pupils' good behaviour and sense of responsibility. Parents and pupils appreciate the happy environment of the school where pupils feel safe and are taught to help each other. Behaviour is good and pupils show a positive and friendly approach to visitors. Another strength is seen in the care that all pupils receive so that they enjoy school and their learning. They know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further because their progress is checked and charted meticulously. Pupils make informed choices about healthy lifestyles and by Year 6, are mature and ready to move on to secondary education.

Most children enter the Nursery with skills below expectations for their age, and for a significant proportion it is well below. Standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2006 national tests were below average and significant numbers of pupils did not make the progress they were capable of. Results improved in 2007. Current standards in Year 6 in mathematics, English and science are nearer to, but still below average. However, standards in writing are not high enough throughout Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 1 pupils, who have benefited from more stable staffing, make good progress and attain broadly average standards.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils' underachievement in recent years has been tackled successfully so that pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. There are some strengths, for example, the headteacher and senior staff are providing good leadership in establishing a clear vision for the school's development. Self-evaluation is accurate. Systems to check and track pupils' progress are good and starting to make a significant impact on pupils' achievement. The successful action taken to raise standards and the positive response to the last report reflect good capacity to improve further. Governors support the school well and make a satisfactory contribution overall. However, they are not in a position to offer challenge because they lack first-hand experience of the work of the school. The recent and significant changes to staffing mean that some teachers with leadership and management responsibilities are new to their role and do not have all the skills necessary to drive up standards further.

The curriculum is good and is extended and enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including good use of visitors to school and visits out of school. As a result, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are interested in their lessons. Good links with local schools and the community further enrich the curriculum. Parents and pupils relate how teachers work very hard and are friendly and approachable. The higher than average proportion of pupils who join the school during the course of the year are integrated well and settle in quickly.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, resulting in pupils making satisfactory progress. There is some teaching that is good or outstanding. Across the range, there are common features to the teaching. These include good planning and use of assessment to chart and check progress. Teachers plan thoroughly and manage their classes efficiently. This leads to pupils enjoying their learning, having good attitudes to their work and behaving well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children enter the Nursery at the age of three, many lack the skills, knowledge and understanding normally found at this age. Teaching is satisfactory. All staff share a common understanding of the needs of young children and they use detailed assessments to help them plan a satisfactory range of interesting activities. These stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to talk freely about the things they are encountering. Children develop personal, social and emotional skills that allow them to learn and play alongside others and gain a basic understanding of how different forms of language are used for communication. Practical activities and first-hand experiences are used to help children to acquire a basic understanding of numbers and more knowledge of the world around them. By the end of Reception, their standards are still below expectations in all areas of learning. However, children make sound progress in response to satisfactory teaching and build a solid platform for their future learning. Management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The Nursery and Reception classes do not yet work seamlessly as a unit, but this has been recognised and plans have been formulated to bring about necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills in Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the skills of teachers who have leadership and management responsibilities so they can play a more effective part in raising standards in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Involve the governing body more closely in the life of the school to enable them to carry out their monitoring role more effectively.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children start Year 1, their knowledge and skills are below expectations. Current standards are broadly average in Year 2, and below average in Year 6. This reflects satisfactory achievement across the school overall. All groups of pupils, including the significant minority who join the school at a later time than normal, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups, are now achieving satisfactorily. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have made good progress recently because they have benefited from a more stable staffing situation. The teachers now in post in Key Stage 2 are working successfully to ensure greater continuity to the learning of the older pupils. The school has successfully improved standards in English, but standards in writing remain relatively weak throughout Years 3 to 6, particularly in sentence construction and the accurate use of punctuation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. For example, good moral and social development is seen in the way pupils behave well from day-to-day. Pupils' good cultural development is seen in the level of their knowledge of their own culture and an understanding of the culture and traditions of others. Parents are

pleased that the school is highly inclusive, resulting in children from different backgrounds and with different needs getting along well together. Attendance is average, though unauthorised absence rates remain too high. Pupils enjoy their time in school. They know how to stay safe and say they feel secure in school because they are supervised well and are able to tell an adult whenever they have concerns. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They put this into practice in what they eat and in their enthusiasm when they have opportunities to take part in physical activities. They contribute well to the community through the school council and acting as buddies and peer mediators. Pupils' preparation for success in later life is being developed through the school's drive to develop basic skills, combined with opportunities for collaboration and independent work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and results in all groups of pupils making satisfactory progress in their learning. In the satisfactory teaching, there are common elements to lessons that all teachers do conscientiously and consistently. Planning is thorough and informed by accurate assessment of pupils' progress. Pupils are managed well, which results in good behaviour and means pupils come to class with positive attitudes, ready and willing to learn. Pupils are encouraged to cooperate and share ideas and experience the benefits that come with taking responsibility for their own learning. Teaching assistants make a sound contribution, particularly in helping the lower attainers to progress as they should. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently and use homework systematically, mainly to consolidate basic literacy and numeracy skills. There is some good and some outstanding teaching. Here, teachers use questioning techniques to challenge pupils to think hard and work out problems for themselves. Learning is made exciting and challenging by demanding pace and stimulating curiosity. This teaching leads to good progress being made. In the satisfactory lessons, the pace of learning is slower and teachers do not have such high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and places appropriate emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy. All required subjects are taught and teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills build progressively. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning in different subjects. There is a well planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education to promote pupils' personal development, although this is fairly new. The creative arts feature well. Pupils participate regularly in physical exercise, both within and outside lessons. The recent introduction of French is providing a phased introduction to modern foreign languages to broaden the curriculum. Good use is made of visitors to the school and visits to the local and wider environment to enrich pupils' learning. A good range of extra-curricular activities provides additional opportunities and pupils' levels of participation are good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils, including those who join school at a later time than usual, receive good pastoral care and academic guidance. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and safety meet requirements, and day-to-day supervision is thorough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. There is particularly good care for the most vulnerable pupils. The school works effectively with outside agencies to meet their immediate needs and to ensure that adults are trained to respond to any ongoing problems. The use of information about pupils' attainment and progress is well developed. Arrangements to track and check their progress and to set individual targets are very thorough. This ensures that pupils are now clearly aware of what they need to do to improve in each aspect of their work, although this has not yet resulted in consistently good progress being made across the school. A voluntary management committee has set up breakfast and after-school clubs. A home/school liaison worker provides extensive confidential support, and there are good opportunities for parents to learn how they can support their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are a number of good features. For example, the headteacher has worked hard to ensure as much continuity as possible during the recent period when the school experienced radical changes to staffing. She provides good leadership and ensures that raising standards and improving achievement are first priorities. The impact is starting to be seen as the significant underachievement of previous years has been tackled and pupils now make satisfactory progress. Other senior staff and teachers with leadership and management responsibilities work hard and conscientiously to raise standards. A number are new to post, however, and do not yet possess all the necessary skills to drive up achievement. Governors fulfill their responsibilities satisfactorily and make a positive contribution to establishing a clear vision for the school. The governing body is very supportive, but does not challenge sufficiently because they lack first-hand evidence of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Parents describe their general satisfaction with the work of the school, expressing appreciation for the loyalty and hard work of the staff. There are good partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to support its work. Self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. Targets for improvement at all levels are challenging and are being met.

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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?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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?	3
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?	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	3
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?	No

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

Thank you all for being so helpful and friendly to my colleagues and me when we visited your school. We judge your school to be satisfactory. We enjoyed sitting in with you during your lessons, seeing your work and talking to you. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters, and for talking to us.

You look after your school well and produce interesting displays of your work, particularly your sculptures and art work. You know your targets and what you have to do to improve your work. We were impressed by the way older pupils care for those who are younger in the playground and your good behaviour generally. You show that you enjoy coming to school. You like your teachers and the way they take good care of you and teach you to be safe and healthy. You can be trusted to get on with your work while your teacher helps other groups and you take responsibility well, for example, in your work on the school council. All in all, your school helps you to develop into mature young people, who consider others.

To make things even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to improve your writing skills. We feel that the new leadership team will require guidance and support in order to raise standards and improve your progress in the areas they are responsible for. Finally, we think the school governors need to see more of you and the work that you do in school, so that they can help teachers to raise standards further.

I wish you all well in the future.