

Poppleton Ousebank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133610
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	316167
Inspection date	17 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Callow
Headteacher	Mrs O'Hara
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Main Street Upper Poppleton York YO26 6JT
Telephone number	01904 795930
Fax number	01904 786614

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning, provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and the curriculum. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an above average-sized primary school serving a socio-economically advantaged area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage; those that are not speak English well. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also below average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007, following a term of interim management by the deputy headteacher.

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 which has continued to improve well since its last inspection. The school is extremely well placed to continue its improvement because leadership and management are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and so their attendance is above average and they behave well. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Results in the national tests in English have been significantly above average and consistently slightly higher than those in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in relation to their broadly average starting points.

Under new leadership and management the pace of improvement has accelerated. There is a real 'sense of excitement' about the school, commented on by parents and pupils alike. Using the curriculum as the main means of improvement, the new leadership team has started to sharpen pupils' educational experience. The impact is seen in pupils' rapidly improving achievement this year, especially in mathematics, an area the school has focused on. Projects such as the 'Invention Convention' give pupils' purposeful experiences and also prepare them well for their future lives. Here, for example, Year 5 pupils marketed their inventions and persuaded parents at a speaking and listening curriculum evening to invest in them, using virtual money. The school's aim: 'Capturing the imagination of young minds' is already being realised in some aspects of teaching, learning and the curriculum, though the school recognises there is more to do.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's self-evaluation of its performance as satisfactory is weighted towards what is seen as needing improvement. It does not take full account of the overall positive impact of teaching on pupils' achievement and standards. Consistently good teaching quality in Key Stage 1 ensures pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and enjoy what they learn. A strong focus on learning through discovery and practical experiences help all learners in this key stage to achieve well. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics as a result.

There is a less consistent picture in Key Stage 2 but, nonetheless, most teaching is good, with some outstanding practice, so that pupils continue to make good progress in the majority of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers' high expectations and well-thought-out strategies to challenge pupils of different abilities generate enormous enthusiasm and ensure effective learning. For example, Year 4 pupils were on the edge of their seats spotting multiples of eight, culminating in rapid silent calculations as they watched with breathless excitement as to where 'the fickle finger of fate' would stop on the counting stick so they could give their answer. With problems to solve involving spiders' legs and eight rowers in boats, they quickly learnt the eight times table because they could see how useful it was. In the small proportion of less effective lessons, learning slows because teachers underestimate what their pupils can do. Teachers do not always set sufficiently different work to match pupils' different abilities and miss opportunities to use visual and practical aids to help those who find it hard to learn through just listening.

In most classes, marking is very effective because it involves pupils in being 'critical friends' to each other as well as checking their work against agreed targets. This helps them to learn from their mistakes and pupils acknowledge that their work has 'got loads better over the year' as a result. However, in some classes, teachers miss opportunities to involve pupils in setting targets and checking their progress towards them. Consequently, pupils are reliant solely on

teachers telling them what to do to improve their work. They tend to repeat mistakes and are not always clear about their next steps in learning.

The good curriculum successfully enriches pupils' learning and supports pupils' good personal development. This is because teachers are now making purposeful connections between subjects so that pupils use and apply what they have learnt. This has given an imaginative lift to much of what is taught and pupils say, 'We learn things we've never learnt before and we get a lot done in a fun way.' As a result, they are brimming with ideas such as, 'expanding the wildlife area so we could look after it', and, 'reorganising the friendship corner so it helps more people'. They develop into mature, sensible individuals who know why it is important to lead healthy lives.

The school takes good care of all its pupils and safeguarding requirements are met. Governors give good support to the school and ask the right questions to further its development. The strong leadership team has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Its vision for the future inspires both adults and children. The school has outstanding capacity to improve further because it has already proved that its actions bring about immediate and effective changes that have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good with outstanding provision for children's learning outdoors. The new Foundation Stage team has brought about huge changes in a short time. As a result, children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development because they have more opportunities to make choices and act independently. From broadly average starting points, most children are working securely within expected levels in all their areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. This is good progress because two-thirds of children spend just two terms in Reception because of when their birthday falls. Teaching quality is good in the Nursery and in the Reception classes and adults assess children's progress accurately through close observations. Occasionally, adults' questioning is over-insistent and interrupts rather than progresses learning. However, the balance between taught and independent activities is good. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed which results in happy, active, busy learners bursting with curiosity. This is especially true outside where children take full advantage of the space, donning bug-like helmets and wings, for example, as they fly in and out of a makeshift hide they have created from cloths draped over a wooden frame.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide work for Key Stage 2 pupils that stretches them and takes account of the different ways that they learn.
- Involve Key Stage 2 pupils more extensively and consistently in setting targets and checking their learning so they know what to do to improve their work.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	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	2
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?	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

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Poppleton Ousebank Primary School, York, YO26 6JT

I very much enjoyed spending a day in your school. I especially enjoyed the lively discussions I had with some of you and hearing all about the many changes you feel have taken place in your school. I also enjoyed seeing you work and looking at your books as you were getting on quietly with your writing. Thank you for making me so welcome.

You go to a good school and for most of you learning is interesting and fun so that you make good progress and reach above average standards. You clearly enjoy coming to school for your attendance is above average and you behave well. Your school council does a good job and you all have lots of good ideas as to how to make your school even better. Your headteacher and teachers also have good ideas, too, which is why your school is undergoing so many changes at the moment.

It is part of my job to indicate what schools should do to get even better. This is what I have suggested:

- I have asked your teachers in Key Stage 2 to make sure that they expect a lot of you and set you work that challenges you and takes into account that each of you learns in a slightly different way.
- Second, I have asked your school to involve you more in setting your own targets and checking your work so that you know what to do to improve it. At the moment, this system happens in some classes and not in others.