

Dringhouses Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121276
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327443
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	301
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	24
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Hanby
Headteacher	Ms Julia Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Helen's Road York North Yorkshire YO24 1HW
Telephone number	01904 706 493
Fax number	01904 706 493

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. It serves an area of mixed socio-economic circumstances, but which is overall more favourable than average. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. The school has gained the Activemark, Artsmark, Basic Skills and Healthy Schools awards.

Extended provision is available for pupils after school. That provision was inspected separately and receives a separate written report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dringhouses is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has moved forward since its previous inspection, particularly in the provision for the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the leadership and management at all levels and through the development of the curriculum. Over time pupils' achievement is satisfactory, because they had in the past a slower start to their learning in Reception. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although good improvements to the curriculum have resulted in pupils recently making better progress. The school is now well placed to continue to improve.

Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are rising, but remain broadly average. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected nationally (Level 4) has increased. However, too few pupils are reaching the higher level. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, from their broadly average starting points. Inspection evidence confirms that many pupils are starting to make better progress throughout the school. In particular, recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage help children to get off to a good start to their learning. They now reach standards higher than normally expected at the start of Year 1.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Throughout the school relationships between pupils and with their teachers are harmonious. Teachers use questions well with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' language skills. Pupils are confident and articulately express their views. Learning is generally matched closely to pupils' needs, although the challenge, particularly for more able pupils, is sometimes undemanding. This slows down their pace of learning. The good quality curriculum is adding enrichment and purpose to learning by the linking of subjects. A strong emphasis of practical investigations is benefiting pupils' enjoyment of learning and improving levels of achievement. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is good. Pupils have a growing understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They are well cared for and there is a good emphasis on equality of opportunity for all. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school and this is shown in their good attendance and positive behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils have limited awareness of different national and international communities and major world faiths. The school council is active and has been involved in suggesting improvements to playtimes. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Enhancements in marking are helping pupils to appreciate their achievements and to understand their next step in learning.

Together with the governors, the headteacher has strengthened the effectiveness of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. This has resulted in a faster pace of improvement in all aspects of the school's work and is beginning to help to lift pupils' progress and standards. The leadership and management track pupils' progress rigorously using a wealth of information about individuals' attainments. Discussions between teachers and senior leaders result in challenging targets being set for pupils and progress towards them are checked carefully. The information about pupils' progress during their time at the school is not succinctly recorded to enable the leadership to check easily the success of their well thought out initiatives to raise standards. Most parents praise all aspects of the school's work, in particular that the school has a committed and approachable staff.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the provision, teaching, and leadership are good. Children's welfare needs are met well. Children enter Reception with skills broadly as expected for their age with few lower or higher attaining children. They settle well into school routines because of good links with parents and pre-school providers. Children behave well, quickly make friends and are keen to learn. They achieve well, including in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, standards by the end of the Reception year are higher than normally expected. There is an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Lessons are planned well. Learning indoors is linked closely with that outdoors. The wide variety of activities is matched well to individuals' needs. The children are well prepared for transfer to Year 1.

The leadership has successfully improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff work together as an effective team and have made major positive changes to the curriculum. The assessment of children's progress is detailed and developing records are shared with parents. The leader has a very clear understanding of how to improve the provision. For example, a priority is to develop the monitoring of children's progress from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage to entry to Year 1. Parents are highly satisfied with the start their children have at Dringhouses. A typical parental comment is 'the new Reception unit is fantastic'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistency of challenge within lessons, particularly for more able pupils.
- Help pupils to gain a better understanding of major world faiths and a greater awareness of national and international communities.
- Succinctly record individuals' and groups of pupils' progress over the time they are at the school to enable leaders to measure easily the success of initiatives.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and improving quickly. Attainment on entry to Year 1 until 2008 has typically been as expected. However, pupils in the current Year 1 entered with attainment above expectations because of improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2008 were broadly average, a trend that has continued since the previous inspection. Current standards in Year 2 remain overall broadly average, with most noticeable improvement in mathematics.

Progress of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, in Year 3 to 6 is satisfactory. The success of recent initiatives is resulting in an increasing proportion of pupils reaching, and in some instances, exceeding demanding targets. This is particularly the case in Year 6, where pupils' progress is speeding up and a higher proportion reaching the nationally expected levels. The progress of the more able pupils is also accelerating in some classes, where work is particularly challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A strong emphasis on sporting activities, walking to school and an effective programme of social and emotional aspects of learning help pupils to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. A good range of drugs education give pupils more awareness of the effect of the misuse of drugs on their own health and safety. Enjoyment is high in lessons and this is mirrored in most parental responses and pupils' views. Achievement is celebrated in 'special mention' assemblies. Pupils care for one another well and pupils feel the school is free from bullying. Some older pupils take on responsibilities for looking after younger children and help with the smooth running of the school. Pupils participate in the school council and help to raise money for national and international charities. Pupils' cultural understanding is satisfactory, although their awareness of different religions is more limited. The sound foundation of basic skills and good attitudes to learning prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and strengthening due to the improvements brought about by the school leadership team. Teaching is becoming more effective. In many lessons teaching is linked closely to pupils' level of attainment and they have a clear understanding of what they are to learn. Pupils are encouraged to work with others to solve taxing problems. A crisp pace and clear high expectations of all groups of pupils results in fast progress. However, in some lessons too little attention is given to linking learning to pupils' targets. The pace of learning is more leisurely and there is limited challenge for the more able pupils, in particular. This slows the rate of pupils' progress. Behaviour management is a positive feature throughout the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used productively to explain and consolidate new learning as well as to add to the enjoyment in lessons. Discussions with pupils seek out and exploit their ideas and views.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been successfully reviewed to add purpose and enjoyment in learning through a more creative approach. At the same time there remains a strong emphasis on developing basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT. Subjects are beginning to be linked together to add greater interest and purpose in learning. Opportunities to write in different styles in topics and subjects are expanding, though occasionally these are missed, such as developing writing skills in religious education. Visits and use of visitors are increasingly being planned to enhance learning. Arrangements are well advanced to extend pupils' experiences of national and global communities. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The art and music curriculum is well established. Art displays and a music CD celebrate pupils' achievements and interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All risk assessments and safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. The school successfully promotes pupils' health and safety. Attendance procedures are effective and are resulting in steadily improving attendance rates. Good links are maintained with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils understand their targets for improvement and this is helping them make faster progress. Their work is marked thoroughly, particularly in English and mathematics. Positive relationships and strong pastoral care make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. As a result, pupils feel happy and secure and grow in confidence in their own abilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection the leadership has tackled the previously identified inadequacies in the education of the youngest children. First rate improvement has been made to all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, the youngest children are now making good progress. Increasingly standards in English, mathematics and science have improved at the level expected nationally, although this success has not been as marked in the progress of the more able.

The enlarged senior management team, under the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, now represents all age groups of pupils. This has engendered a greater awareness throughout the school of its strengths and areas for development. Through planned observations of teaching and examination of pupils' work by senior leaders and subject managers greater consistency of practice has been achieved which is benefiting pupils' progress.

The management checks in detail the progress of individual pupils. Demanding targets are set by leaders and teachers for individual pupils. The progress towards these targets is assessed regularly throughout the year. Action is taken if pupils are not making sufficient progress. Analysis of the data to calculate overall attainment of different groups of pupils is in place. However, the systems are unwieldy. This makes the checking of individuals and groups of pupils' progress as well as monitoring the impact of initiatives too time consuming and not as effective as it could be.

Governors take a strong lead in the running of the school and use their expertise to benefit the pupils and to support the leadership. They are well informed of developments by the headteacher and subject leaders. They fulfil their statutory duties well in holding the school to account. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and the governing body has put in place an action plan to improve this aspect of its work. The plan gives a clear focus to the development of pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity within national or international communities.

The present strengths in the leadership and management of the school at all levels and the improvements since the previous inspection are resulting in a beneficial pace of change as well as optimism to sustain further improvement.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory education though it is an improving school because you are now making faster progress in your learning. The school cares for you well and your personal development is good. I was pleased to hear that you really enjoy school and attend well. You behave well and you have a good understanding of how to live healthy and safe lives.

Your achievement is satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Children in Reception are now making good progress. In Years 1 to 6 you make satisfactory progress overall though your standards at Level 5 need to be improved further. The teaching and your learning over the time most of you have been at the school are satisfactory. There have been recent improvements in your progress though there are some differences how quickly you learn. I have asked the school to ensure you are challenged in all lessons, particularly those of you who are more able. I also want the staff to help you to have a better understanding of major world faiths and a greater awareness of different national and international communities.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors run the school well. The school has a wealth of information about your attainment and it is used to plan your next steps of learning. However, I have asked the school to record clearly how much progress you make with your work over the time you are at the school, so that school leaders can check the work that they do is successful.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will keep doing your best and working with the headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.