

Scarcroft Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121282 |
| Local Authority | York |
| Inspection number | 327445 |
| Inspection date | 12 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Linda Murphy |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 322 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr MacPherson |
| Headteacher | Mrs Anna Cornhill |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Moss Street York North Yorkshire YO23 1BS |
| Telephone number | 01904 653569 |
| Fax number | 01904 610199 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards in mathematics, the achievement of those pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils' understanding of how they can improve. Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work, assessment data and school documents, and holding discussions with the headteacher, other staff and a representative of the governing body and the local authority. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 large primary school serves a socio-economically mixed community in the city centre. The majority of pupils are White British: a few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and, of these, a below average proportion are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are fewer pupils eligible for free school meals or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usually found. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in two Reception classes. Since the last inspection there has been a very high turnover of staff. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark Gold, Bronze Eco Schools Award, Healthy Schools Award, Advanced Inclusion Award and Financial Management Standard in Schools. It is an Investor in Pupils.

Within the school grounds is an externally managed Nursery: Scarcroft Green Nursery. The Scarcroft After School Club is managed by a private provider and meets in the school. The Scarcroft After School Club was subject to a separate inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding and inspirational education for its pupils. It lives up to its motto to help pupils 'prepare for tomorrow's world today'. Excellent leadership at all levels - the cornerstone of the school's success - ensures pupils receive a very high quality, creative and enjoyable curriculum which engages their interest and curiosity. Together with outstanding teaching this helps pupils build on their success and attain high standards which set very firm foundations for the future.

Many pupils view the outside of their listed Victorian school building as a 'magical castle'. It opens to a bright, welcoming and vibrant school. Parents are full of praise for the school and typical comments that express the views of many include, 'children do very well at secondary school because of their first-rate start at this school', 'there is a lovely feeling of community', and that 'there is an amazing range of arts and cultural activities'. The pupils' view is equally exceedingly positive.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. From mostly below age related expectations on entry to the school in the Reception class pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and attain exceptionally high standards by Year 6. The school quickly spots any possible weaknesses in standards achieved and takes very timely and positive action. Much more accurate use of assessment has led, for example, to the proportion of pupils at Key Stage 2 who attain highly in writing increasing from 3% in 2006 to 43% in 2008. Similarly high levels are attained in mathematics and science. Even so, this year, the school has adapted the way that mathematics is taught to further increase standards at Key Stage 1. 'Writing and reading missions' over holidays help to ensure that pupils' attainment does not deteriorate when away from school. In information and communication technology (ICT) and the arts, standards are also very high because the pupils receive a very well-rounded education. All groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language achieve very well at this school.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are first-rate. Throughout the school, pupils are very happy, confident, and keen to be independent. They are extremely polite and very well mannered. Opportunities to accept responsibilities are seized enthusiastically. The pupils' voice in school decisions is very important, for example, pupils took a leading role in the school acquiring the Healthy School's Award and in raising environmental awareness. They enjoy school life immensely: attendance is above average. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of the importance of keeping fit, healthy and safe. They thoroughly enjoy the fitness programmes, playtimes, sports and dance. Mutual respect for other pupils and adults and excellent behaviour means that pupils are more than ready to learn and play their full part in the school community.

Children learn very effectively in response to the excellent teaching. The staff, highly skilled and experienced, benefit from well considered induction and training. This prepares them very well indeed to promote the strong work ethic seen in lessons. Teachers make high level intellectual demands of their pupils. This is because staff have an excellent knowledge of the subjects they teach. It results in much energy and persistence on the pupils' part. For example, role play and a free-flow of ideas in Year 5 and Year 6 were shaped into exciting mystery writing. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to pose questions as well as answer questions within a very broad range of learning styles. ICT is used very well to promote learning. Many pupils

agree that 'teachers are friendly and make lessons fun'. The teachers' enthusiasm for learning is contagious and pupils are proud of their own and their classmates' achievements.

Learning is founded on a tremendously broad curriculum which serves the pupils very well and provides them with much enjoyment. This richness is inclusive and extends to a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. The variety and depth of learning are key reasons why the curriculum is outstanding. It takes full account of developing not only pupils' skills and knowledge but also their attributes such as determination, resilience, originality and teamwork. Interactive and stimulating display creates an excellent backdrop for pupils' ideas and creativity.

The care and support that pupils receive are remarkable. Health and safety requirements including the safeguarding of pupils are met. Pastoral care is to a high level and pupils who require extra help are catered for very well. Academic guidance is excellent and pupils take much responsibility in checking their work. For example, editing writing is part of their responsibility as well as the teachers. Pupils appreciate that individuals learn at a different rate and realise the importance of their challenging targets which are nearly always met.

The school took a conscious decision to develop aspects of community cohesion starting locally. As a result, strengths are in the excellent school community and its links locally. Pupils' understanding of global awareness is developing. For example, Year 6 pupils speak quite knowledgeably about the 'credit crunch' and its impact. Even so, pupils' understanding of others' lives in Europe and beyond and their appreciation of diversity is good but not outstanding.

The dynamic and aspiring staff are led outstandingly well by the headteacher. Superb skills in team building mean that the senior leadership team work very closely with the governing body and this drives school improvement apace. High levels of staff training and induction impact very well and enable pupils' smooth transition between classes. Common threads for improvement emerge from very careful monitoring and evaluation. Team effort contributes substantially to the many external awards achieved to aid pupils' progress, to pupils' improving standards and outstanding academic and personal achievement. Subject leadership is strong. The headteacher sets an excellent example in the way in which music is led. The school responds very well to parents' views. The successful breakfast club and helpful homework policy sprung from positive liaison. The strong track record of improvement since the last inspection and the excellent systems in place demonstrate that Scarcroft Primary School has an excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Most children begin school with skills slightly below that typical for their age. All groups of children achieve outstandingly well. As a result, by the time the children enter Year 1 the majority attain a level higher than expected for their age in all areas of learning. This is because staff set exceedingly high standards, provide tremendous role models and are exceptionally skilled in helping children settle quickly into the school and into their daily tasks. The outstanding curriculum is very responsive to the interests of the children. At the same time, teachers ensure that pupils get a very good grounding in basic skills. Outdoor play is used very well to broaden the opportunities pupils have to learn and practice new skills. Great care is given to the children. Excellent leadership ensures that the teaching and learning are outstanding and that children are very well prepared for Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of European and global communities.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 1 |

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

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| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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**

What a privilege it was for me and Mrs Mothersdale to inspect your outstanding school. You excel at many things from the heart stopping Japanese drumming to the excellent stories that you write and the kindness you show others.

Yours is an excellent school because the headteacher and governors form a first-rate team with other staff. They know just what to do to ensure you are happy, confident and mature learners who make the most of the great number of opportunities given to you. Your teachers' enthusiasm for learning is catching and results in lessons that are great fun and just at the right level to help you learn very quickly. As a result, you attain high standards by Year 6.

You contribute a lot to the school and work exceedingly well with people in the nearby community. Although you know quite a lot about Europe and the rest of the world, there is more to find out. The inspectors have asked the school to help you to find out more about these things because they will be so important to you as you get older.