

Harrogate, New Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121396
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327478
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Jones

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	234
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	Wing Commander M Bottomley
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Plummer
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Skipton Road Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 3HF
Telephone number	01423 503011

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
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Fax number

01423 529094

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Reception-age children are provided for in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection the roll has fallen considerably in line with trends in the local population, which has resulted in a number of staffing redundancies. At the time of inspection, the new headteacher had been in post for three days. The school has gained the Activemark. There is on-site Nursery provision which was inspected at the same time as the school inspection and receives a separately 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

This is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of the school are good, particularly in the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the personal development and well-being of pupils. Parents are supportive of the school. 'We are very pleased with the level of care and support,' summarises the views of many.

Children begin in Reception with standards that are generally below those expected of this age group. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and begin Year 1 with skills that are in line with national expectations. They then make satisfactory progress, leaving in Year 6 with broadly average standards. Standards in writing are below those in reading, mathematics and science and school data indicate that pupils make less progress in writing than in other subjects. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They speak knowledgeably about the need to lead healthy lifestyles and say how very safe they feel on the secure but welcoming school site. Pupils grasp the plentiful opportunities to make positive contributions, for example through the very active school council or by becoming playground buddies. They enjoy school a great deal, saying that teachers and teaching assistants are 'kind, and really care about us'. They say that bullying is rare but that there is always a peer mentor or adult to turn to should the need arise. Average standards in mathematics and English result in pupils' economic well-being being satisfactory.

Improved monitoring has now eliminated any inadequate teaching and learning and is beginning to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, in some classes work is not challenging enough for pupils, which results in them making satisfactory rather than good progress. The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities. However, there is a need to develop pupils' writing skills across the whole curriculum. There are strengths in the pastoral care provided to pupils, which results in their good personal development and well-being. Academic guidance, however, lacks the sharpness necessary to enable pupils to know exactly what they need to do to achieve well, particularly in writing. Overall, therefore, care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher has quickly settled into her role and has already started to help teachers work together more closely to improve the quality of teaching. Systems to track progress and monitor the quality of teaching introduced by the acting headteacher helped the school to recover from a rapidly declining trend in standards. Middle leaders are developing their roles and self-evaluation is now beginning to be undertaken by all staff. Data on pupils' progress are well understood by leaders but they have not yet been able to ensure they are used consistently in classrooms to ensure pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress. Community cohesion is satisfactory. While the school has links with local businesses, churches and the on-site pre-school provider, plans to extend pupils' understanding of culture and communities beyond their own are at an early stage of development. Owing to improvements in standards and in teaching over the past year, the school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a flying start in this warm and inclusive environment. They begin in Reception with standards that are generally below those expected of their age. They make good progress, particularly in the areas of personal development, mathematical skill and communication, leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage with average skills. Teaching and learning are good. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully integrated with class activities. All children receive very prompt attention to their learning needs from adults and are helped to become independent learners. The classroom area provides a stimulating environment for learning, making a sound contribution to children's mathematical understanding and language development. While the outdoor area is well equipped and used to its best advantage, it is too small and this limits the effectiveness of outdoor learning. Children take responsibility for tidying up after themselves and adopt good hygiene practices in the bathroom. They make good use of the freely available fresh fruit and water and are well aware of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Children's welfare is given high priority. The good curriculum is interesting and stimulating, responding well to children's interests and needs. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to extend learning. For example, children enjoyed making an animation of the life cycle of a butterfly. Parents are fully involved in children's learning by contributing to assessments. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed leader has engendered a good team spirit, which ensures outcomes for children are good. The generally good system of assessment is not quite as sharp as it could be in the way staff record children's achievements. The leader has good plans in place to develop provision and the skills of staff further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement, particularly in writing across the school.
- Ensure information on pupils' progress is used effectively to plan lessons which challenge all pupils and inform them on how they can improve their work.
- Develop community cohesion so that pupils acquire a deeper understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 dipped sharply in 2007 due to turbulence of staff including leadership. Standards then rose in 2008 to a satisfactory level. From broadly average starting points in Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1. They make less progress in writing than in reading or mathematics, however. Between Year 3 and Year 6 pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, leaving in Year 6 with average standards. Standards in writing at Key Stage 2 lag behind those in reading, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates that while pupils are making satisfactory and occasionally good progress in reading and mathematics, they are not making enough progress in writing. Systems to track pupils' progress are understood by teachers, although they are not used sharply enough to enable pupils to reach better than satisfactory standards overall. The school strives

to ensure all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as their peers owing to the close attention to their needs by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being is a result of the good pastoral care provided for them. Pupils' good attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but there is scope to develop their awareness of diverse cultures, ethnicities and religions. They display good attitudes to each other and to adults. During lessons they have the social skills to work very effectively in teams and solve problems collaboratively. Pupils' participation in school life is good. They eagerly grasp opportunities to take part in peer mentoring, becoming 'eco warriors' or playground buddies. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the need to stay safe, including the importance of Internet safety and 'stranger danger'. Satisfactory standards of mathematics and English, particularly writing, means that their economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the lessons which are good, there is a buzz of excitement as pupils discuss ideas, help each other and even teach each other skills. They mark each other's work, learning deeply from this experience. Classrooms are well organised and rules are well understood by all. Consequently, in all lessons, pupils are well behaved and show positive relationships to each other and to adults. Too many lessons are satisfactory though. In these lessons teachers talk too much, give laboured explanations and do not ask enough questions to challenge pupils thoroughly. Learning time is then wasted as pupils' attention wanes and they become passive. Assessments are carried out regularly and accurately. Teachers prepare work in great detail; however, planning does not ensure pupils are all challenged so they reach better than satisfactory standards, particularly in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum ensures there is equality of opportunity for all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Extra-curricular provision such as visits and residential trips enhance the curriculum. There is strong provision for physical education, which is enhanced by the local Schools Sports Partnership. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn French and there is a well attended after-school French club. Although pupils are taught ICT in a computer suite, there are limited opportunities to extend learning through ICT in the classroom. Writing is taught systematically across the school, but opportunities are often missed to develop it across the curriculum. Overall, writing does not have a high enough profile across the school, for example in display work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Strengths in the pastoral care given to pupils are reflected in their good personal development. Pupils talk in glowing terms of how staff look after them. A range of external agencies help to ensure those who need additional support are provided for well. There are relative weaknesses in the academic support, which means that care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, they are often not given precise enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. The result is that pupils' next steps in learning are not identified with sufficient sharpness, particularly in writing. The school meets all current requirements for safeguarding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has undergone a period of considerable turbulence due to the absence of a substantive headteacher. There was a period of time when monitoring and evaluation systems and effective tracking of pupils' progress lacked rigour. This led to declining standards, particularly in 2007. Rapidly falling rolls and a serious budget deficit compounded these problems, which have inevitably led to staffing redundancies. Support from the local authority and an acting headteacher introduced an increased level of accountability, more rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and improved monitoring of the quality of teaching. There were much improved results in Year 6 in 2008 and this process of recovery is now continuing under the leadership of the new headteacher. She has already begun to build on these recent improvements by helping teachers plan more collaboratively and improving communication across the school, particularly between the two key stages. Self-evaluation is now beginning to be undertaken by all staff at regular meetings, although this process is still being refined to be fully effective. Staff are now beginning to make use of pupil progress data to inform their planning and set challenging targets for pupils. However, this has yet to be implemented consistently across the school to ensure pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress, particularly in writing, across the school. Community cohesion is satisfactory. There are established links with the local community, local businesses and the on-site pre-school provider, although the school is aware that it now needs to strengthen its links with other cultures and ethnic groups so pupils develop a greater sense of the global community. Governance is satisfactory. Sound plans are in place to eliminate the budget deficit, which have now started to have a positive effect.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	2
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

Inspection of Harrogate, New Park Community Primary School, Harrogate, HG1 3HF

Thank you on behalf of the inspection team for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

New Park Community Primary School provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Children in Reception make good progress and are very well looked after. Between Year 1 and Year 6 you make satisfactory progress and standards are average. You told us how much you enjoy school, how very safe you all feel and that you appreciate the many opportunities given to you to take an active part in school life, for example through the school council. I loved listening to you sing in assembly and watching children in Reception making spiders when they were learning about minibeasts.

Here are some things I have asked the headteacher and staff to do to improve the school.

- Raise standards and make sure you all make better progress, particularly in writing.
- Make sure teachers' plans ensure you are really stretched and that they give you detailed advice on how you can improve your work.
- Develop plans for you to build up your understanding of other cultures and religions.

You can help by being the mature young people you are today, trying very hard with your writing and asking about how you can improve your work.