

Bishopthorpe Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121440
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327489
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Les Schubeler

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	152
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	Mrs H Sharples
Headteacher	Mrs R White
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sim Balk Lane Bishopthorpe York North Yorkshire YO23 2QQ
Telephone number	01904 707506
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Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village infant school. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has received the Primary Activemark, Gold Artsmark and for the third time has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. After a long period of stability in its staffing, the school has undergone substantial changes in its teaching force since the previous inspection.

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. It has several outstanding features.

Pupils love coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. One parent's comment, typical of many, is 'My child would come to school in the holidays if they could'. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their activities, showing very good attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is exemplary.

They find learning exciting because the quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers and other adults work together to assess pupils' work and plan lessons that are enjoyable and varied and help them to develop academically and socially. As a result, pupils achieve well. They enter the school with skills that are highly developed in language and mostly above expectations in other areas. They make good progress through Reception and Key Stage 1 and reach standards that are well above average by the time they leave Year 2.

An outstanding curriculum adds to pupils' enjoyment and encourages high levels of application to learning. Through an emphasis on creativity, cross-curricular links and a clear focus on progression in skills, it promotes good academic progress and excellent personal development. Very careful consideration is given to the provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which prepares pupils successfully for their future lives.

Pupils thrive in this very secure and stimulating learning environment. All groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most vulnerable, receive exceptionally high levels of care and support. Relationships are excellent. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued and are confident that there is always someone to help them sort out any worries.

The school actively forges close links with parents. Almost all parents who responded to the parental questionnaire wholeheartedly support the work of the school. They feel welcome in the school and typically comment that the school is 'warm, open and caring' and that 'teachers are kind and approachable and provide stimulating activities'. Many parents agree that 'the child is put at the centre of everything the school does'.

Leadership and management overall are good and are enhanced by the very good teamwork among all staff. The vision and enthusiasm of the headteacher and deputy, supported by the commitment and hard work of staff, governors and parents, make vital contributions to the development of the school and its continuing high standards. Clear direction is provided by the energetic and often inspirational leadership of the headteacher and deputy. At all levels, there is a strong desire and commitment to promote high quality education and care. The school provides good value for money because resources are used wisely. Issues identified in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed. The school's good self-evaluation has led to significant improvements in a revamped curriculum and in the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, as yet its leaders have tended to focus on the high standards without analysing assessment data carefully enough to measure with accuracy the progress that individuals and groups of pupils make from their starting points. Consequently, the school's evaluation of pupils' overall progress, although effective is not as precise as it could be as it does not measure finely enough whether all pupils achieve as well as they could.

It is a great credit to the school that, during a period of turbulence in staffing, it has maintained its high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 while making

improvements to its provision. This confirms the school's good capacity to go from strength to strength while continuing to ensure the happiness and well-being of its pupils which is central to its vision and highly valued by its parents.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are generally above those typical for their age. The school is working hard to improve the self-discipline skills of the small group of children who tend to misbehave and improvements are now evident. Good teaching and well planned practical activities that encourage the children to investigate and explore for themselves enable children to make good progress in all areas of their learning. By the time they enter Year 1 all children are working securely within the expected goals and many exceed these.

The enjoyable summer 'welcome picnic' helps children and their parents settle quickly and happily into school routines. Children are extremely well cared for in this secure, attractive environment and children's personal and social skills are particularly well supported. All welfare requirements are met. Most children work and play well together, sensibly sharing resources and taking turns. They quickly grow in confidence and independence and enjoy talking about their work. The much improved outdoor area is used effectively to extend the learning experience of most children. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and parents are very supportive, contributing effectively to the assessment of their child's development through the 'Something to Wag About' display.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more effectively to evaluate how well pupils make progress and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress relative to their starting points in Year 1, which are above expected levels. By the time they leave school, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing tend to be slightly higher than those in mathematics and reading. The last two years have seen a steady improvement overall, although results in reading registered a slight fall from those in 2007. In 2008, in all three subjects almost a half of the pupils reached the higher level. Standards reached in other subjects are also above average. They are particularly high in art and music. Strategies to raise standards in all areas have been successful and inspection evidence shows pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in all areas of learning. This achievement is largely a result of a sharp focus on raising attainment; significant improvements in the curriculum that have led to pupils writing with confidence in all subjects; good teaching and learning; and the high quality support that pupils receive. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of effective support and the strong partnership with a wide range of outside agencies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the school has exciting plans to develop further pupils understanding of the diversity within today's society.

Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming and this is reflected in the family atmosphere evident within the school. They really care for each other; the older pupils act as buddies to the younger ones and as servers during the family lunchtime arrangements. Pupils clearly know the importance of a healthy diet and participate enthusiastically in the many physical activities provided for them. They also have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They show care for the environment through recycling and gardening activities. Musical performances at national conferences and workshops, together with many fundraising activities for charities very effectively develop their awareness of the wider community. A very successful whole school breakfast event is an important step in beginning to develop Year 2 pupils' enterprise skills well as they formed small companies to plan, advertise, cost, prepare and serve breakfast to pupils and visitors. Pupils leave the school as confident and successful learners who are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching, underpinned by very secure relationships, ensures pupils are fully involved in their learning and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Excellent displays of their work motivate pupils and the attractive environment supports their learning effectively. Classrooms are a hive of activity, because pupils have many opportunities to explore ideas together and discuss their work. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. Activities are planned carefully to ensure the focus is always on learning. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they need to do. In the best lessons teachers generate a lively pace and they engage pupils in a range of stimulating activities, which capture their interest and fully involve them in their learning. This has resulted in pupils' good progress. In the small minority of lessons where progress is slower, teachers spend too much time on some activities, which causes the interest of pupils to wane. The marking of pupils' work is good. A judicious use of praise and constructive comments help pupils to gain an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

Very occasionally, pupils receive insufficient written advice on how to make their work better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A stimulating curriculum promotes pupils' respect for, and understanding of one another and their specific community and it ensures equality of opportunity. Work seen during inspection in art and music is very impressive. Regular visits and visitors bring the arts to life and inspire pupils to produce some stunning art work, which is displayed with great pride in all areas of the school. Teachers work together closely to plan and monitor the curriculum and they modify it regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of learners.

Curriculum enrichment is excellent and pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities to learn new skills in areas such as French, cookery, weaving and Indian dancing, all of which contribute valuably to their learning, personal development and enjoyment. Visits to the local churches and shops are broadening pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local area and enriching their cultural experiences. Personal, social and health education is planned imaginatively, successfully developing pupils' confidence in talking about themselves and ensuring they have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All systems to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being, including child protection, health and safety and risk assessments are securely in place and good attention is given to those pupils with medical needs. Productive links with outside specialists ensure further support as necessary. The staff are effective in identifying when and where they need to provide some pupils with extra support or challenge so that the curriculum meets their needs.

Skilled teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to be fully included in all that the school offers. As part of the school's commitment to meeting all pupils' diverse learning needs, each of these pupils benefits from a carefully considered individual plan to support their education. Coupled with the good teaching they experience, this helps these pupils to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy act as coordinators for English and mathematics and they regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that pupils' needs are met. All subject leaders use assessment information well to identify curriculum areas that need to be revised. However, some are relatively new in the post and have yet to take a bigger role in analysis of the school's data on pupils' progress. Partnerships with neighbouring schools, outside agencies, outside sports and creative partners are highly effective in promoting pupils' health, well-being and learning. The promotion of community cohesion is good. It is developing well, particularly through the curriculum. The school is taking positive steps to make further links with schools in contrasting areas to enable pupils to gain a clearer understanding of the diversity of UK communities. Governors are supportive of the school and offer good challenge. They have a good understanding of the school's work as a result of their own direct observations in the classrooms.

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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

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	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	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 being so friendly and polite to the two inspectors who visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school. We also enjoyed looking at your beautiful art work, hearing you sing so well and, of course, seeing the wonderful costumes you wore on Red Nose Day!

We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. We think your school is particularly good because:

- your teachers take very good care of you
- your teachers think about how they can help each one of you to learn well and to produce very good work
- you think about others and take very good care of yourselves and your friends
- all the adults at the school work together to make sure you are happy and to help you learn.

Your teachers have lots of good ideas on how to make things even better. We have asked them to work out more carefully how much progress you make during each year.

We can see why you enjoy coming into such a friendly school and why your parents are so proud of you and your school.