

Hawsker Cum Stainsacre Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121498
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327499
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Mrs Lesley Clark

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Cummins
Headteacher	Mr J Barber
Date of previous school inspection	February 2006
School address	Hawsker Whitby YO22 4LA
Telephone number	01947 602772
Fax number	01947 601152
Email address	admin@hawsker-cum-stainsacre.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

The inspector visited 5 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan; the tracking and records of pupils' progress; the local authority and school improvement partner reports on the school's work; safeguarding information, including risk assessments; pupils' writing in all year groups; a sample of pupils' work in mathematics and science; children in the Early Years Foundation Stage working outdoors as well as inside and a sample of their profiles; and 16 parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how well writing is taught so as to challenge more-able pupils and especially whether marking helps them to improve their work and involves pupils sufficiently in assessing their learning
- whether leaders and managers have sufficient ambition for pupils' academic success, including preparing pupils for their future lives
- to what extent children in the Early Years Foundation Stage direct their own learning and have access to an equally wide range of activities outside as well as indoors.

Information about the school

This very small primary school is housed in a 125 year old building in a quiet rural farming area near Whitby Abbey. Just over half the pupils come from the two villages that give the school its name. A growing number of pupils come from outside the catchment area. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school at times other than the usual. Almost all pupils are White British. The very small numbers on roll means that the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fluctuates significantly from year-to-year. Currently, it is below average and none has a statement of educational need.

A modern extension provides a purpose-built classroom and outdoor area for the mixed age Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class. The school does not have a hall but makes use of the neighbouring church which is fully equipped to provide physical education and drama facilities, as well as regular worship. The school holds the Artsmark, a science award from Northumbria University and takes part in major music festivals in the North East of England.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils make good progress in each class because they are well taught. They quickly become confident, independent, articulate young people who enjoy their education and contribute much to the local community. They are happy, caring and friendly saying, 'there is nothing we want to change' and 'lots of people come to this school from other schools and they like it here.' Their parents and carers have very positive views, commenting favourably on, 'the location and facilities', 'staff commitment' and 'the family feel.'

These typify some of the strengths of this school where individual care and attention given to pupils is the norm. This is why pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are vulnerable and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in well and make good progress. However, with the youngest children, adults tend to direct their learning just a bit too much. The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good in terms of resources and giving children time to learn on their own, but children do not always have a wide enough range of interesting and thought-provoking activities to choose from both inside and outdoors.

From below average starting points, pupils make good progress and reach broadly average standards overall, by the end of Year 6. However, standards vary between subjects. In mathematics and reading, they are above average by the end of Year 6. This is because these subjects are taught extremely well by knowledgeable staff who challenge more-able pupils to perform at a very high level. Standards are close to average in science, with an increasing number of pupils reaching the higher levels each year because they are inspired by challenges that bring learning alive. It is different in writing. Although nearly all pupils reach the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6, few reach the higher levels because they are not given sufficient guidance to help them to write more accurately, neatly and with increasingly sophisticated punctuation and vocabulary.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they show a strong sense of identity with children from different cultures and backgrounds. They are generous fund-raisers and have a strong sense of fair play and children's rights. This is because they are encouraged to empathise through drama and to speak and listen to adults and to each other throughout the school day. Pupils are proud of their school and are ambitious, inspired by thoughtful leadership and management, which set and expect good standards.

The school knows itself well and accurately assesses what it needs to do next. This, together with the good rate of improvement since the last inspection, reflected in the higher standards, indicate its good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially for those capable of reaching higher levels by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting, presentation and organisation of their work
 - improving marking so that it encourages pupils and gives more detailed points for improvement
 - involving pupils in assessment so they understand what they have to do to improve their work.
- Extend the opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to become independent and curious learners by:
 - sharpening planning, ensuring appropriate and relevant adult intervention, especially for the youngest children
 - setting up challenging, interesting and thought-provoking activities indoors and outside that encourage children to investigate and find out for themselves.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils work hard and concentrate well, especially in mathematics lessons, where they are challenged exceptionally well to think and to draw conclusions. Older pupils quickly spot patterns in numbers and shapes. For example, finding over twenty different ways of creating multi-sided shapes based on linking seven equilateral triangles. Pupils work methodically, at a fast rate, choosing their methods to suit their ways of working, explaining 'it gets harder as you go on.' It is a similar picture in science where lively, thought-provoking investigations such as devising a machine to generate electricity from rain water spark pupils' interest and bring learning alive. Pupils say they like lessons which are 'practical and fun'. These are clearly factors which promote their good achievement, especially in mathematics, where standards are above average. Results in national tests over the past five years confirm that pupils do best in this subject with a generally upward trend in both English and science, taking into account variations caused by the small numbers of pupils.

Reading standards are also above average because pupils are given a great deal of individual help. They are also encouraged to borrow and read two books a week from the school library. Standards are close to average in science. A growing proportion of pupils now reaches the higher levels as a result of much more challenging investigative work this year. Standards in writing are more variable, with fewer pupils reaching the higher levels compared with the other subjects. This is because although pupils have lots of opportunities to write, their presentation, organisation and handwriting often mar their good ideas. They do not check their work in the same way as they do in mathematics, for example, and so tend to repeat mistakes. More-able pupils are too easily satisfied with mediocre work because

teachers do not show them sufficiently well how to improve it. In contrast, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed because pupils have lots of opportunities to talk about their ideas, present information to each other and take part in plays that they have written. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are given good extra individual support to help them to learn at the right rate for their stage of development.

Pupils develop into confident and mature young people. They are well prepared for their future lives. Through the school council pupils have a real say in what goes on at their school. For instance, the school is currently acting on pupils' suggestions to provide a new building to house a breakfast and after-school club. Pupils are kind and friendly and newcomers quickly feel welcome. Pupils are very sure that there is no bullying and if there were any they are confident that adults would quickly sort it out. They have a good awareness of why it is important to lead healthy lives, but do not always choose to. On the one hand, they exercise energetically and relish the many opportunities to play competitive sports, but on the other they are reluctant to eat salads at lunchtime. Behaviour is often outstanding in lessons but a small number of pupils need lots of reminders to pay attention. Most pupils attend well and almost all arrive punctually because they really enjoy school. However, a small number of pupils have poor attendance. The school goes out of its way to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Its success is seen in the improving attendance and pupils' good achievement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	3
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is effective throughout the school although stronger in some subjects than in others. Pupils learn well because teachers take care that lessons are well matched to the different ages and abilities in each class. Teaching assistants are used effectively to help those who have learning difficulties and to ensure that newcomers to the school quickly slot in and work at the same rate as the others. The provision for both mathematics and science is very effective because it is based on pupils using and applying their skills to solve problems. The quality of teaching in mathematics is

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

outstanding. In these lessons learning is lively, practical and fun as well as extremely challenging. The approach to writing is different and not as effective. Teachers encourage pupils to write about lots of different subjects, but do not follow a clear plan or marking scheme to ensure that more-able pupils write with increasing flair and accuracy, using a wide vocabulary and interesting sentence structures. Assessment is good overall, but stronger in mathematics than in writing. Teachers use assessment well to chart pupils' progress in different subjects over the course of a year and to decide which pupils need extra help. This ensures that pupils make good progress. The marking of pupils' work is good in mathematics but less effective in English. This is because in writing, teachers do not strike the best balance between encouragement and pointing out what needs to be improved, especially in more-able pupils' work. In addition, pupils are not involved in assessing their own learning in writing. This means they do not spot errors because they are not used to checking their work against specific criteria, such as, including a wide range of punctuation or finding different words.

The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to learn a broad range of skills and includes provision for pupils to learn a modern foreign language. It makes exceptional provision for music and teachers fully exploit the links between music and mathematics. All older pupils learn a musical instrument and the school orchestra and jazz band play in local festivals with notable success. There is a similarly rich provision for drama and sporting activities and a suitable range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning. This helps pupils to be self-assured, articulate and outgoing. The school takes good care of its pupils and takes full advantage of its small numbers to give pupils lots of individual attention and support. As a result, pupils thrive, growing in confidence and self-esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Through their teaching and leadership, all the staff including the headteacher show ambition and drive for all their pupils. Standards are rising and the school is growing in popularity. Parents agree, typically commenting, 'The school is led intelligently and warmly and staff are genuinely interested in bringing out the best in each child.' Each child is treated as an individual. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and the school makes every effort to nurture individual talents and to be fully inclusive. The result is a happy, harmonious working environment where pupils feel safe, learn well and respect and make allowances for each other's differences. The school improvement plan provides a coherent action plan for change. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements and ensure pupils' welfare needs are met. Governors take an interest in the school, especially when recruiting new staff or developing the school buildings, but realise that they should be doing more to question and influence school leaders. The school is at a satisfactory stage of

promoting community cohesion. Its excellent local links are counterbalanced by developing national and international links as the school explores early connections with schools in the North West of England and in Gambia. Links with local primary schools and the secondary school extend pupils' learning opportunities well and prepare them well for living and working in a larger community. Day-to-day management is very efficient which ensures that the school's resources are used to good effect.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception Year with skills that are below the level expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and by the start of Year 1 most are working within expected levels in all areas of learning. Children make especially good progress in their early literacy and numeracy skills because these are well taught and they like trying to do the same as the older pupils who are taught in the same class. Children bubbled with excitement when they helped to count in tens the potatoes they had unearthed, marvelling at the size and quantity. The provision for these young children is well managed so they have times when they work and play independently. However, the activities they have to choose from do not always provide interesting learning opportunities to arouse children's curiosity and inspire them to investigate and find things out for themselves, especially outdoors. Adults take good care of children and all welfare requirements are met. As a result, children are happy, safe and are very settled because they understand the class routines. For instance, children put on plastic aprons without being reminded before playing in the water tray and tidy up carefully after they have finished an activity. Sometimes, adults question children just a bit too much which can interrupt or restrict potentially creative play. Staff take great care to assess children's learning and use the information well to provide a profile of children's achievements and to help them make the next small steps in their learning.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hawsker Cum Stainsacre Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

Parents and carers provided a very positive response. They commented particularly on the teaching, the school's welcoming atmosphere, the small class sizes and their children's keenness to come to school. These are clearly the things that matter to families and indicate that parents and carers have a good level of involvement with the school and its activities. They would like to see extra-curricular activities for Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school, given its very small size, provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities and there are increasing opportunities as pupils get older to sample different clubs, especially in sport and music. The inspector judges extra-curricular provision to be satisfactory, taking into account the point made by parents.

The inspector received insert 16 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 32 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	6	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

6 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Hawsker Cum Stainsacre Church of England Voluntary
Controlled Primary School, Whitby, YO22 4LA

I very much enjoyed my two days in your school. Thank you especially to the three groups of pupils who spent time showing me their work and talking to me about your school. Your school gives you a good education and it is easy to see why you are happy and enjoy coming to school. These are some of the things it does really well:

- you make good progress because you are well taught, especially in mathematics, reading and science
- your school gives you good opportunities to learn musical instruments and do lots of different sports
- your teachers make learning enjoyable and lead and manage the school well
- you develop into confident, articulate young people because you are encouraged to speak and listen to each other and take part in lots of drama activities.

I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better.

- Those of you who are good at writing do not always write as well as you should. I have asked your teachers to give you better guidance and when they mark your work to make sure you know what to do to improve the quality of your writing. It would also help you to spot mistakes if you were involved in checking your work too.
- I noticed that the Reception children did not always have enough interesting and exciting activities to choose from both inside and outdoors and that adults tend to help them just a bit too much. So I have asked the teachers to make sure that there are more things for children to do that will help them learn and find things out for themselves. This will help them to think independently and help them when they grow older too.

You can help by asking questions about your writing and spending time checking your work and thinking of better ways of saying things.

With very best wishes and thanks to you all

Lesley Clark
Lead inspector

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