

South Kilvington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121516
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327503
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mrs Joy Frost

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Tyson
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	South Kilvington Thirsk YO7 2LR
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited seven lessons and held meetings with a governor, staff, groups of pupils and the headteacher. She observed the school's work, looked at pupils' work in books and formal assessments of their work, the school's tracking data and documentation, and scrutinised the 25 parental questionnaires that were returned.

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

- the achievement of the more able pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the progress and attainment of pupils in mathematics and science compared with English
- how well teachers use assessment to plan for different groups of pupils in lessons, especially boys in Key Stage 1
- the impact of the revised curriculum
- how well the leadership and management has improved since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This is a small rural primary school serving a wide area on the outskirts of Thirsk. The number on roll has fallen recently due to some families moving out of the area. Most pupils live outside the village and travel to the school by car. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. The proportion with a learning difficulty and/or disability is average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, but none are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A new headteacher took up post in June 2007 and there have been recent extensions and improvements to the school buildings to provide extra classrooms and an outdoor area for younger children. There is currently no nursery provision in the village but most children have had some form of pre-school education by the time they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes, one of which caters for pupils aged from four to seven years. The school works in partnership with other schools in the cluster and a local provider to offer extended services and after school clubs.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and attendance is consistently above the national average. This is in no small part down to the school's excellent care, guidance and support for its pupils. All staff know individual children and their families very well and, as a consequence, pupils are happy to come to school and say that it is a very safe and happy environment. This view is echoed by the vast majority of parents. Pupils have a strong moral code and treat each other with respect and kindness. They are very willing participants in all that the school has to offer and readily come to school early to take part in 'early bird' activities to improve their learning in mathematics, reading and writing. Some aspects of the school's work are good. These include the way pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, as seen in lessons, being healthy, safeguarding procedures and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' knowledge of staying safe and their behaviour are outstanding. The school meets its duty to promote community cohesion in the school and the local community well but agrees that this work lacks an international and global dimension.

The new developments to the building have enabled children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to work in a safe and well resourced outdoor area, although opportunities for them to use this area consistently throughout the day for child-initiated play opportunities are still developing.

The school has secured success in improving most areas of weakness identified in the last inspection report. However, the school's work to improve attainment and pupils' learning and progress in English, mathematics and science have not impacted on the end of Year 6 and Year 2 assessments. Attainment has been broadly average for the last three years representing satisfactory progress from pupils' initial starting points. Pupils attain less well in mathematics, especially higher ability pupils. Improvements in reading are evident across the school but attainment in mathematics is typically weaker than in the other subjects. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good due to the improvements noted during the inspection and the improved capacity in both middle and senior management. The systems introduced by the headteacher are beginning to have an impact: for instance, closer tracking of pupil progress, higher expectations and an improvement in teaching and learning. The school self-evaluation is accurate but actions to bring about improvement need a clearer focus on pupil outcomes so they can be better evaluated.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve attainment and progress in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take part in mathematical investigations
 - reduce the reliance on published worksheets to provide more challenge and independence
 - improve marking overall to the quality of that evident in English.
- Further develop the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the opportunities for child-initiated play activities in the outdoor area throughout the day.
- Expand pupils knowledge of society beyond the school locality by:
 - ensuring governors fully promote community cohesion beyond the school and the local area and measure the impact of this work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall performance is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of under performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school has correctly identified that pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are articulate and courteous at all times and have the confidence to express their views in a range of situations. Relationships between pupils and adults in school are very good and this aids their ability to try their best at all times. Pupils were eloquent in discussions with the inspector about how to keep themselves safe from a range of dangers and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils choose to cycle to school and they are aware of how to maintain their bicycles and are working towards cycling proficiency awards. A range of extra-curricular clubs are offered by the school, and through partnerships with other local providers, which include a range of sporting activities and a modern foreign language. These are well attended and many pupils choose to continue these sports in their own time outside school.

Pupils know that they are listened to. They play an active part in the life of the school through the school council and readily take on jobs within the school, for instance, acting as servers and buddies to younger pupils at lunchtimes.

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. However, this varies year-on-year because of the very small numbers in each cohort. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is also variable but has been broadly average in English, mathematics and science for the last three years. The school is aware of this and has introduced tighter and more rigorous procedures to check regularly how well pupils are doing. They can now identify any pupils who are underachieving and provide extra support and targeted intervention programmes. These are beginning to have an impact on pupil progress across the school. There are no significant differences in the attainment of different groups of pupils: those with a learning

difficulty and/or disability make at least the same as, and often better, progress than their peers. Previous lower attainment by higher ability pupils has been halted due to a better match of activities in lessons. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls in Year 3 is beginning to close due to identified support and intervention. Pupils' work in their books indicates that most pupils are now making better progress than test results indicate and more pupils are working at an above average level. The schools own data shows that the current Year 6 cohort of pupils is on course to achieve much higher standards than in previous years. The presentation of pupils' work is good: writing is neat and there is evidence of a developing maturity in punctuation and spelling, However, pupils often complete too much of their work on published worksheets which limits their independence, especially in mathematics. Pupils have developed good learning strategies and this, together with good attendance and punctuality, prepares them well for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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 and learning is good overall because pupils are making good progress in lessons. Teachers plan units of work around whole-school topics making links between English and other subjects. Well planned lessons engage pupils in their learning and a strong feature of all lessons seen are the many opportunities for pupils to talk together about their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and participation, enabling lessons to move along at a brisk pace. Learning walls in each classroom are used well to support learning and remind pupils of what they have already learnt. Teachers are good role models, they give very clear instructions about what pupils are going to learn and provide activities well matched to pupils' abilities. This is particularly difficult when mixed-age classes contain a large spread of ability. Pupils said that they enjoy their lessons and that the work is, 'not too easy or too hard'. Pupils who need further help are well provided for by extra adults in the classrooms. Marking in English is good and tells pupils exactly what they need to do next to improve their work. In mathematics, books are marked regularly but the comments mostly tell pupils what they have done well and there are fewer comments about how to move forward in their learning. Pupils do

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

however, have up-to-date targets for improvement in their books, which are known by pupils and shared with parents.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. All staff are well trained and knowledgeable about individual pupils' needs. Some pupils have complex medical problems which require close attention to their needs; this work is carried out in an exemplary manner. The school goes to great lengths to cater for pupils of different faiths and beliefs so that they are not disadvantaged in assemblies and lessons. Outside agencies are consulted and work well with the school to cater for the needs of individuals through regular review meetings. The school has developed good partnerships with local agencies and schools in the cluster. Good links with 'Jack and Jill's Nursery' ensures good transition when pupils enter the school and attend after-school childcare provision. The school also works closely with the local secondary school so that when pupils move school they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory; it has recently been reorganised to ensure that all National Curriculum requirements are met. The school is still revising and improving the curriculum and the effects of the skills based approach gives pupils more opportunities and knowledge to enable them to write for different purposes in English. However, it has yet to make a substantial impact on pupils' attainment in national tests. It is well enriched with appropriate visits and visitors to the school, which enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of subjects such as history and geography. Pupils have opportunities to attend a residential visit and the headteacher regularly consults the pupils as to the quality of visits and visitors. The school has developed good assessment procedures for English and mathematics but has not yet fully developed assessment procedures to check the development of skills across the school in other subjects.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her staff are ambitious for the school and for its pupils. Since her appointment, the headteacher has clearly articulated to the staff, governors, the pupils and parents her vision for the long term future of the school. Recent building work to extend the number of classrooms and provide a school hall were well managed so that there was minimum disruption to learning. The school ensures that all pupils, regardless of their socio-economic, faith or cultural backgrounds are able to achieve satisfactorily. The analysis of the 2008 Year 2 assessments showed that boys were achieving less well than girls in this cohort. The school acted quickly to identify the weakness and deliver highly effective interventions for a small number of boys, which is beginning to close the gap. The governing body is very involved in the school. They have formed their own sub-committee to monitor attainment and progress and are not afraid to challenge the school about its work. The staff work

together well as a team willingly sharing good practice and learning from and supporting each other. They have taken on management roles which they are developing well. They are very enthusiastic about the recent changes and are knowledgeable about their subject areas, willingly attending training to improve their practice. Monitoring and evaluation take into account all the different groups within the school to ensure equality of opportunity and eradicate discrimination. Procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorous and well maintained. The school integrates issues about safety into the curriculum so that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The governing body fulfil their duty to promote community cohesion within the local area well but accept that more work needs to be done to evaluate the impact of these actions and introduce a more global perspective.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is relatively new. The outdoor area was opened in September 2008 and has greatly increased opportunities for young children. Children join the school from a range of private settings due to the lack of nursery provision in the area. Most have had some form of pre-school education and their skills and knowledge are variable but broadly typical for four-year-olds. Children settle into school very well and get off to a good start. By the time they leave most are working at or beyond the goals expected for their age in most areas of learning. Social development is a particular strength. Children develop independence, concentration and enquiring minds as they move through the year. They are able to work very well together in groups and with the teacher. Due to the restrictions in accommodation the youngest children are taught in a class with Years 1 and 2. This means that sometimes there is not enough emphasis on children initiating their own purposeful play opportunities throughout the day.

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 South Kilvington 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.

The inspector received 25 completed questionnaires, some of which relate to more than one child. In total, there are 50 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	19	8	1	0

The overwhelming majority of parents are very positive about the school's provision for their children. A number took the opportunity to write separate comments on the questionnaire about various aspects of the school's work: in particular, they praised the safe and secure learning environment and the caring and sensitive nature of staff towards the children. A few parents were also positive about pupils' behaviour, the quality of the curriculum and the standards achieved. Although very few in number, other parents' comments included a reference to lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils, the need for more regular homework to consolidate learning and better support for pupils with identified learning needs. The inspector found no evidence during the inspection to support these views.

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.



5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Kilvington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Thirsk, YO7 2LR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. I was very impressed with your attendance, behaviour, attitudes and how well you get along together. Your teachers take very good care of you and know you all so well. Your teachers are planning interesting lessons and you are all keen to take part and offer your views. I was also impressed with how well you talk to each other about your learning: listening to the views of others and valuing other people's contributions. In the past, some pupils have not achieved as well as they could in mathematics. The school has worked hard on this aspect and is now planning more challenging tasks so that you can make better progress. Nevertheless, I have asked the school to continue with this work and to make some further improvements to make your school even better. These are:

- to continue to improve attainment and progress in mathematics by making sure that you have more opportunities to carry out investigations, use less work sheets and have comments in your books which tell you the next steps in your learning
- to make sure that the very young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have more opportunities to choose tasks for themselves in the outdoor area throughout the day
- to make sure that your governors help you to gain a better understanding of what life is like for different groups of children around the world as well as just in your local area.

I very much enjoyed talking to you and observing you at work. You can help your teachers by continuing to attend school as often as you do and continuing with your excellent behaviour and attitudes. I wish you all the very best for your future education.

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector

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