

St Oswalds Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121535
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327508
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	287
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	Mr Steve Britten
Headteacher	Mr Rupert Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Heslington Lane Fulford York North Yorkshire YO10 4LX
Telephone number	01904 555421

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2009
Inspection number	327508

Fax number

01904 555448

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Oswald's Church of England Primary School is of average size, mainly serving the suburb of Fulford to the south of York. A small proportion of pupils attend from families attached to Her Majesty's Forces. The incidence of pupils entering or leaving the school part way through their education is higher than usual. The school has a small special unit for pupils with dyslexia who usually join the school in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than that found nationally. The great majority of pupils are White British and the proportion for whom English is an additional language is low. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in its Reception class. It holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and the local authority's Inclusion Mark. The school community has benefited from a new building. The pre-school provision on site is run by a private provider and did not form part of the inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

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 that is improving. It is a caring school in which pupils feel valued and secure. The headteacher and his staff know the pupils well and a positive atmosphere ensures that all pupils are fully included in what the school offers. The understanding of pupils' differing needs is central to the success of St Oswald's and parents are very appreciative of the school and its work. One comment typical of the feelings of many was, 'A great all-round school that gives each child many opportunities to grow and develop both academically and in a wider social and emotional way.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. Standards, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and pupils' achievement is good. The provisional results for 2008 for the end of Key Stage 2 and school data for 2009 shows a good, improving trend. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress owing to appropriate interventions and good support.

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons move at a good pace and generally work is well matched to pupils' needs. Improvements made to the tracking and monitoring of pupils' achievement have had a positive impact upon how well teachers plan for the differing needs of pupils. The range of teaching strategies employed is good and enables pupils to enjoy their learning. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in discussions about their progress because of the use of individual targets in writing and mathematics. Where this works well pupils can improve their work independently but it is not used effectively in all classes.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and speak well of the good relationships they have with their teachers. They have a good understanding of how to be healthy and to keep themselves safe. They engage in a curriculum which is satisfactory overall but it lacks sufficient excitement for pupils and does not provide good enough opportunities for them to use their developing skills in, for example, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. The wide variety of activities outside lessons is much appreciated and activities are well attended by pupils. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident about their responsibilities and use opportunities through groups, such as the water committee and the school council, to consider problems and situations, deciding together how best to resolve them. This, together with their good skills in mathematics and English, prepares them well for their future education.

The enthusiasm and vision of the new headteacher is having a positive impact upon all aspects of leadership and management. Senior leaders have good strengths, and the newly established teams have greater responsibilities so that there is a strong sense of ownership of school improvement. As a result teachers are enthused with the potential for the future. The strongly inclusive nature of the school and its focus upon improvement since the last inspection means that it is now able to set increasingly challenging targets to raise standards further. Governors are knowledgeable and well informed. They speak confidently of their abilities to challenge the leadership team in their commitment to further improvement and development. The school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly typical for their age but with weaker aspects within personal development, literacy and mathematics. Current data and observations confirm that children are making good progress, and their achievement is good. Most children are very cooperative and participate fully, especially when adults direct their activities. Children listen carefully. They try hard to master new sounds and letter combinations, showing pleasure when they succeed. An engaging range of well planned activities is well matched to children's learning needs. Children are encouraged to work independently as adults focus on supporting and challenging particular groups and individuals. Children understand the links between different learning and play activities: for example, they are able to explain how knights would use the shield they were designing for protection. Adults track aspects of children's progress carefully. They identify weaker areas and use such findings to inform planning and address these needs. For example, a small group of less motivated boys enthusiastically engaged in investigating the engine of the teacher's car. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children's welfare is a priority, and partnerships with parents and other agencies are good. Adults work well together and have introduced a range of improvements to successfully address identified weaknesses. Self-evaluation is realistic and the team continues to develop their practice to ensure even greater improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop links between different subjects to enable pupils to make broader use of their skills.
- Ensure consistency in the use of pupils' individual targets to allow pupils to improve their learning independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From broadly average starting points in Year 1 pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 and this represents good achievement. The slight decline in standards in 2006, when major building work caused severe disruption, has been addressed and the school now demonstrates an upward trend in attainment. The most recent provisional data for 2008 indicate a return to the levels of former years. There is some variation in standards year on year because of the differing nature of the cohorts and the high levels of mobility of pupils. The school now sets increasingly challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2. Present data indicate further improvement in standards for 2009 with higher proportions of pupils set to reach the average Level 4 and the above average Level 5. Standards by the end of Year 2 demonstrated a similar decline to that of Key Stage 2 in 2006. Since then there has been an improving trend and now standards in all subjects exceed the national average particularly in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to interventions and their progress is good with many pupils meeting the standards expected of them for their age by the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance and punctuality. Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is not an issue. They demonstrate good relationships with their peers and with adults and this contributes significantly towards their attitudes to work.

Pupils understand why it is important to live a healthy lifestyle and take advantage of the range of sporting activities on offer. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered. In a small number of instances, where tasks in lessons are not well matched to pupils' needs, interest levels fall and this can lead to low-level disruption. Pupils are responding well to emerging opportunities to express their views as they communicate their opinions through the school council. Pupils are increasing their levels of responsibility. Older pupils act as peer mediators, sports leaders and 'buddies' at playtimes. More recently, the work of the 'water committee' increased pupils' understanding of economic well-being as they used a range of skills to engage the support of pupils to raise money for water pumps in the Third World. As one pupil noted, 'We had to work our socks off for one day to raise some money and people have to work ten times harder every day to continue to earn money!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A common feature of all lessons is the very good relationships between teachers and learners. As a result, pupils work hard and are keen to succeed. Strengths in teaching are characterised by a good pace and challenge linked to well matched tasks to pupils' needs. This serves to engage pupils and as a result they learn well. Occasionally tasks are insufficiently challenging or differentiated for pupils and teachers can talk for too long which reduces opportunities for pupils to engage in learning activities. Consequently, pupils lose interest and learning slows, and this can lead to some misbehaviour. The developing use of individual targets in writing and mathematics, and of pupils' engagement in the assessment of their work, is leading to an improved understanding by pupils of the progress they are making. However, while better established in some classes, it is inconsistent across the school, which limits the extent to which some pupils can improve their learning independently. The development of the skills of teaching assistants is now a real strength within classes as their expertise enables them to support teachers effectively. They have good knowledge and work well in partnership with class leaders to support the needs of different groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory with some developing strengths; however, presently it sometimes lacks interest and excitement. Teams are working to introduce learning based on relevant topics where pupils will be able to use a range of skills from different subjects. There is a drive to develop a wider range of creative arts activities to make the best use of the high quality accommodation. Recent developments have strengthened English and mathematics across the school. Improvements in the science curriculum have yet to be fully addressed. Links with the local teacher training college are enhancing the range of opportunities in this subject. The school has recently introduced elements of social and emotional aspects of learning to enhance pupils' personal development and this is having a positive effect. The close links with the church provides additional support for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Other initiatives include the extended use of ICT to add to pupils' learning experiences. Pupils appreciate and take good advantage of the quality of specialist music tuition that is available to them. The good range of extra-curricular sports and clubs for children of all ages makes

good use of the sports and other facilities available. These are popular and the school is now planning to monitor participation more closely.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school in which pupils feel valued and secure. The necessary safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Procedures to support health and safety are good. There is high quality of support for vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is well targeted. Families from Her Majesty's Forces also benefit greatly from this support as the school works effectively to ensure that these pupils settle quickly. In addition, the enhanced provision for pupils with dyslexia provides high quality support by highly skilled teaching. The support and resources for such pupils are effectively directed and as a result these pupils achieve well. Overall, improvements in the tracking of individual progress since the last inspection now enable increasingly rigorous evaluation of the needs of differing groups of pupils. Teachers regularly monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and, as a result, targets in writing and mathematics are more closely linked to individual achievement. This helps to focus teachers' planning on the developing learning needs of their class. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their own work. Where this works best pupils are becoming more active participants and have much greater ownership of their learning. Where pupils are less involved there are fewer opportunities for them to consider how well they are achieving and as a result they are less sure of their next steps.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher's high aspirations inform the plans for the future. He leads a strong team of knowledgeable and able staff who work effectively together. He is well supported by a senior leadership team who are fully committed to moving this good school forward. All leaders have the opportunity to develop and use their skills to manage and develop their areas of responsibility. They are eager to contribute to shaping the strategic direction of the school and, although some are at different points on this learning curve, there is an enthusiasm that is infectious. The improvement of achievement and standards continues to have a high priority as the school seeks to meet increasingly challenging targets. The monitoring of achievement and standards across year groups is established and the school does well to identify the underachievement of individuals. There is good promotion of equal opportunities and all leaders and managers actively support the continued development of the care and well-being of all in the school. Self-evaluation is good and there are clearly identified priorities for development. The school has successfully addressed areas for improvement since the last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity to improve for the future. The school promotes community cohesion well and developments include opportunities to improve national and global understanding, for example through its 'water aid' project. Governors are well informed and use information effectively to support the school and to challenge leaders about the impact of potential developments. As a result, they fulfill their statutory duties well in holding the school to account. The school provides good value for money.

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

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	2
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 so much for the lovely welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. We really did enjoy listening to you about what you thought of your school, your work and the people who teach you. We know that you enjoy school and you like being taught new skills.

The staff take good care of you and as a result you feel safe in school. You are well behaved and take good care of each other. You have good relationships with your teachers. More of you are helping to develop your school and are trying to help others around the world who have less than you, for example by serving on the school council and on the water committee. Well done! We also know that you enjoy the after-school clubs, especially the wide range of sports and music.

Your school is providing you with a good education. Many of you reach standards that are above those expected for your age. You make good progress in your learning, but some of you could do even better if you were able to be more involved about what you need to learn. We also feel that it would help if you could understand the links between different subjects and use your skills more, for example through practising your writing in others subjects like science and history.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do.

- Develop links between subjects so you have better opportunities to use your writing and ICT skills, for example.
- Ensure all of you can discuss with your teachers your individual targets and allow you to have more ownership of your learning.