

# Saxton Church of England VC Primary School

## Inspection report

---

Unique Reference Number	121585
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327521
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

This 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.

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)	64
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Thwaites
Headteacher	Mr Rick Weights
Date of previous school inspection	May 2006
School address	Dam Lane Saxton Tadcaster North Yorkshire LS24 9QF
Telephone number	01937 557396
Fax number	NA
Email address	admin@saxton.n-yorks.sch.uk

---

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	26–27 February 2009
Inspection number	327521

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited 6 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and a group of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the tracking system used to monitor children's progress, the work children were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by 23 parents.

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

- pupils' progress and their standards of attainment
- how effectively teaching is challenging all pupils and helping them to learn
- the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This very small school serves the village of Saxton and the surrounding rural area. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is well below average. All pupils come from White British families and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Class 1 provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), class 2 provides for lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and class 3 provides for upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). Children start in the Reception Year in Class 1 in the academic year in which they are five.

The school holds several awards, including Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools status, information and communication technology (ICT) Mark and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

## 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

Saxton is a good school. It has several outstanding features. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. This results in a warm, calm and productive atmosphere that establishes a very good climate for learning. Pupils are a delight. They are confident, inquisitive and polite and show consideration and care towards others. Behaviour and attendance are exemplary, demonstrating their very positive attitudes to learning and eagerness to do their very best. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Each pupil, no matter how young, has their own individual responsibility and each is fully included in the life of the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the small proportion of pupils who have transferred to the school having found learning difficult elsewhere, are fully included in all aspects of school life and flourish as a result.

Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards because of good teaching and learning. Particular strengths observed in lessons include skilful questioning, carefully timed and swiftly paced activities, and pupils' active participation in lessons and their own assessment. Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is timely, effective and well-received. However, the quality of written feedback in pupils' book is variable and does not always let pupils know what they need to do to improve their work further. The good progress pupils make, the above average standards they reach in English, mathematics and information communication technology (ICT), and their high levels of self-confidence and excellent interpersonal skills put them in a strong position to attain well when they move on to the next stage of their education.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a flying start, developing their confidence and abilities through a good range of carefully planned independent and adult-led activities. Staff know each child very well individually and have a clear understanding of their abilities and achievement. Nonetheless, strategies to assess and record what children can do and the effective use of this information to plan suitably challenging next steps in learning is currently under-developed.

Governors provide good support and challenge. The school has good capacity for further improvement because self-evaluation is accurate, development planning is rigorous, the school's actions are well targeted and any weaknesses identified are

tackled enthusiastically by all of the staff.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of written feedback and ensure it informs pupils of what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Improve strategies to assess, observe and record what children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can do and use this information effectively to plan suitably challenging future learning.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2
---

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress in the vast majority of lessons. Their inquisitiveness and eagerness to learn are palpable. Pupils relish regular opportunities to participate in their own learning, such as working with talk partners or in small groups to discuss their thinking, and they respond very well to carefully directed questioning. A good example of this was observed in an English lesson where Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated very good communication skills and high levels of confidence when they presented to the whole class outlines of the books they had been reading. These pupils answered the thoughtful and often insightful questions their classmates were keen to ask them. As was the case in all of the lessons observed, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were fully included in this activity and, as a result, made the same good progress as their classmates. This was because of the very good and unobtrusive support the pupils received from the highly skilled teaching assistants and the seamless teamwork between the teachers and the support staff witnessed throughout the school.

Children arrive in the Reception class with skills that generally match those expected for their age. The school provides them with a well-rounded education through interesting and absorbing tasks. As a result they make good progress and achieve well. More able pupils benefit from working with older pupils in small groups within the mixed-age classes and this accelerates their progress. Standards of attainment, as measured by pupils' performance in Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. The majority of pupils achieve at the higher levels, particularly in mathematics and reading.

Pupils are mature, thoughtful and show respect and kindness towards others. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding as is their attendance and punctuality. Pupils feel secure in their relationships with others and very safe in the school. They report that there is always an adult they can talk to and bullying is rare. Any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Pupils are also able to raise any concerns they have through the school council's 'listening box'. They have a good appreciation of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle. They participate energetically in physical education lessons, the after-school sports clubs and residential visits to an outdoor education centre. Pupils make a positive contribution

to the life of the school and from an early age they are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility such as talk partners and door monitors. They work hard to raise money for charitable causes. Members of the local community are frequently invited into the school, for example to coffee mornings and 'grandma's lunches'. School council members regularly lead assembly and recently made an effective presentation advising the local parish council about children's play areas. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of their own faith and culture and those of others. This is supported and encouraged by the strong emphasis the school places on these aspects of pupils' development as part of the curriculum.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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?	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
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?	1

## The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching is typically good. Teachers create a very effective climate for learning; they are enthusiastic and encouraging and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are thoughtfully planned to provide a good range of tasks and activities which meet the needs of pupils with differing abilities. Skilful questioning, clear instruction, outstanding timing of activities and swift pace keep pupils alert, motivated and eager to participate. The use of ICT is a strength: it is put to good use by teachers and pupils alike. Teaching assistants and parent helpers are very effectively deployed throughout the school especially to support the development of pupils' reading skills. Older pupils are generally clear about their challenging targets and work hard to achieve them. Pupils' understanding is routinely checked during lessons and their progress is regularly assessed and tracked so that any difficulties can be quickly identified and addressed. Staff have a very precise record of each pupil's progress and attainment as they move through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and know their individual capabilities well. Teachers provide excellent on-going verbal feedback to pupils about their progress and how they can improve. The

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

quality, consistency and usefulness of written feedback in pupils’ books are more varied.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but this is not at the expense of other subjects, or the pupils own interests. There is an equally strong emphasis on pupils’ personal development and health as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils in Class 2 asked questions about recent events in Gaza that they had seen portrayed on the news. The teachers used this opportunity creatively to help the pupils develop a balanced view of the situation and to extend their understanding of history, geography and the media through this world event. Strong links with the local high school and use of the village hall ensures pupils have access to a full range of sporting opportunities. Extra-curricular activities such as cross-country, cooking and Brazilian football are well-attended. All of the staff are involved in rigorous planning to develop the curriculum around interesting whole-school themes. Parents are kept well informed about these themes and about the different subjects and skills their children will learn, through regular good quality newsletters and most notably through the very well-developed school web-site, where parents and pupils can also access a range of supporting learning activities.

Teachers and teaching assistants know each individual pupil and their families very well. Levels of support and care provided for pupils are exemplary. Staff are very quick to identify any difficulties that pupils may be experiencing. Well-targeted actions ensure that pupils receive whatever care or extra help is needed. This is particularly evident in the outstanding support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who transfer to the school having found learning difficult elsewhere.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has established a strong and purposeful vision for the school. All of the staff and governors are fully committed to making improvements and raising pupils’ achievement. The quality of the school’s provision has improved since the last inspection as a result. Whilst all of the adults are involved in planning and accurate self-evaluation, leadership responsibility currently rests solely on the shoulders of the headteacher. This is because of the small number of staff, many of whom are part time. Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition that there is a need to develop the leadership capacity amongst all staff so that the school creates a sustainable model of shared leadership and responsibility.

Governors provide good support and challenge and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school through a good range of scheduled meetings and other activities. For instance, during the course of this inspection four governors met with the school council to hear their views and opinions about the school and what they would like to see improved. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are robust.

The school works particularly well in partnership with others to provide support and care for individual pupils and their families when needed and to ensure a smooth transition for all pupils to the next phase of their education. Effective work to promote equalities is illustrated by the way pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the school and the good progress they make as a result. The school’s contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils contribute well to the local community but their engagement and experience of the wider community is more limited. The school has robust plans in place to develop further pupils’ understanding of the diverse nature of the global community. For example, by establishing links with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children arrive in the Reception class with skills that are broadly similar to most children of that age group and frequently with well developed communication and personal skills. This forms a strong platform for their future learning. They make good progress as they move through Reception and most children reach higher than expected levels by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Practitioners take very good care of the children and provide a well planned range of independent learning and adult-led activities indoors and outdoors and across all six of the learning areas. There are plenty of opportunities for creative and imaginative play. The somewhat cramped accommodation is well organised and managed effectively, although the small outdoor area does limit children’s opportunities to run about and ride bicycles for example. Children are very



confident and were keen to talk to the inspector about what they were doing and what they like best. Behaviour is excellent and all groups of children play and learn well together.

The staffing in class 1 which provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage has changed recently and consequently the management of the provision is yet to become firmly established. Staff have worked hard to implement the new requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage overall. However, whilst they know the children well individually and have a clear picture of their abilities and achievements, strategies to observe, assess and record what children can do in order to plan suitably challenging future learning are currently under-developed.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

## Views of parents and carers

This was a no-notice inspection so parents were invited to respond to questionnaires within a very tight time scale, effectively overnight. In spite of this, 23 parents returned questionnaires. A small proportion of these were accompanied by detailed letters providing strong examples of the outstanding care and support the school provides for its pupils especially when they have been going through a vulnerable phase and in need of extra help. A very large majority of the parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They perceive the school as one 'that children are eager to get to and enjoy their time in, and gives them a fantastic start to their education in a secure environment which encourages them to do their best'. The staff are perceived as supportive and approachable. Parents may wish to know that there were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received. However, whilst confidentiality was maintained, the inspector discussed these with the headteacher in order that he may address them and report back to parents in due course.

## 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: an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- 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.



2 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Saxton Church of England VC Primary School, Tadcaster, LS24 9QF

Thank you so much for all the help you gave me when I came to inspect your school last week. I really enjoyed meeting you and listening to all you had to tell me. I judged that your school is doing a good job overall and that there are several features of your school that are outstanding. This will not surprise you, as most of you, like your parents, think the same. I found you to be exceptionally polite and kind children who enjoy coming to school, work very hard and ask lots of important questions. Your behaviour and attendance is excellent and you are proud to take on the different jobs you are each given. You told me all about Brazilian football, 'phunky foods', the 'grandma's lunch' and that you think you are learning a lot and are doing well. I agree. Here are some of the things I found out.

- All of the staff take exceptionally good care of all of you. They work well with many people outside school to give you very good opportunities, to provide any extra help you might need and to prepare you for the future.
- Teachers provide you with interesting activities to do, make sure you get plenty of chances to learn on your own and discuss things with your talk partners, and provide you with good verbal feedback. They are particularly good at the timing of activities so that you learn at a fast pace. This keeps you motivated and ensures you make good progress and achieve above average standards.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and well.

Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership and knows what needs to be done to make your school even better. All of the staff and the governors constantly work hard as a team to improve the quality of your education. Even in good schools there is always something that can be done better. I have asked your headteacher to:

- keep better records about how well the younger children are doing and use this information carefully to plan lots of really challenging things for them to learn and do
- ensure teachers' written feedback in your books consistently provides you with information about what you can do to improve your work further.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).