

Skipton Parish Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121591
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327522
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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)	296
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Oldham
Headteacher	Mrs Ellen Woodthorpe
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brougham Street Skipton North Yorkshire BD23 2ES
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. It serves a diverse and changing community that has a mixture of rented and owner-occupied houses. An increasing number of pupils come from beyond the catchment area of the school. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background, though the number of pupils from an Indian, Pakistani and Eastern European heritage is increasing. A small number of pupils are from a Gypsy/Roma heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average although currently increasing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the proportion that has a statement of special educational need. The numbers of pupils on roll is declining due to a dip in the birth rate. This has resulted in all but one class having pupils from two year groups. Forty seven children are educated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Up to 30 pupils attend the after-school club. A Children's Centre is currently under construction on the same site as the school. The headteacher has been in post for two years and the deputy headteacher is newly appointed. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark for a third time, and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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. Every pupil is successfully included in all activities. The school accepts pupils who have been permanently excluded, or are at the risk of exclusion, from other primary schools. Its success rate with the behaviour and achievement of these pupils is remarkable. A further strength of the school is the excellent partnership working with other schools and businesses which enrich and accelerate learning. For example, the school is conscious that it has no green areas surrounding it. However it is determined to ensure pupils undertake some physical activity. So links with cluster schools and sports centres have been established these help pupils to keep fit and gain skills in such diverse activities as kick-boxing, juggling and line dancing, as well as more traditional sports. This contributes to their excellent awareness of how to remain safe and healthy. Equally, links with a local bank have effectively furthered pupils' understanding of finance and budgeting.

The good provision in the EYFS gives children a good start to school life. The children achieve well. Children join the school with skills below those typical for their age and make good progress, with the majority of children working securely within all areas of learning by the end of their year in the Reception class. The good gains continue in Key Stage 1, so by the end of Year 2, standards are average in writing, and above average in reading and mathematics. For the past three years, there has been a year-on-year rise in standards at Key Stage 2 with the 2007 national test results being well above average in English, mathematics and science. The provisional national test results for 2008 indicate that from a low baseline pupils made good progress in reading and science and very good progress in writing. As a result, standards in English and science are above average. Standards in mathematics are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress.

Good teaching and an exciting curriculum encourage the pupils to learn at a good rate. Teachers and skilled support staff work closely together to ensure that all pupils' learning is effective. Good pastoral support ensures that pupils make good gains in their personal development. The school makes effective provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this together with the good overall care, support and guidance they receive means that the pupils feel safe and secure.

Attendance is above average, behaviour is good and racial harmony pervades. The extended school provision in the after-school club is good. It meets the requirements for young children in the EYFS as well as pupils of school age. Though restricted for outdoor play, the club offers a wide range of activities for all ages. Pupils say they have fun at the club and enjoy playing with their friends. They are eager to tuck into the snacks and look forward to tasks such as baking. Good progress has been made since the last inspection to ensure pupils are safe and healthy. Adults now hold paediatric first aid certificates and food hygiene certificates. A good range of new resources has been purchased, including those to reflect the diverse population of the school.

Good leadership and management at all levels underpin the success of this school and provide good capacity to improve. The headteacher has very successfully created a feeling of common purpose among staff. A wealth of information has been collected on pupils' attainment and progress. This is used well in many instances, but some elements, for example, the colour-coding, can be misinterpreted. Moreover, as yet the data have not been used fully to compare the performance of pupils in mixed-age classes. Overall, parents and carers think well of the school;

most are very pleased, commenting their child enjoys school, is making good progress and is 'flourishing in this caring, nurturing environment'. The school gives good value for money and has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry are generally below age related expectations. Their skills are well below the level expected in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal development. Children of all capabilities make good progress. They make very good progress in their language and mathematical development. Teaching is good so children learn at a good rate. The children are encouraged to be curious, grow in confidence and make sensible choices. Teachers work hard to provide effective planning for all children. Although the organisation of the joint age groups works well for much of the time opportunities for the Reception children are occasionally restricted. Additionally the pupils in Year 1 are sometimes distracted by the Reception age children playing. However, the school's organisation does lead to a successful transition from the EYFS into the National Curriculum. Adults work hard to compensate for the lack of outdoor facilities and have compiled a range of 'themed boxes' to ensure children experience all areas of learning in the open air. Children thoroughly enjoy being out-of-doors. This was evident as they gleefully trampled on leaves and gravel observing the leaves were 'spiky', 'crunchy' and 'scrunchy'. Leadership and management, and the partnership with parents and carers are good, and all the new requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 matches that in other subjects.
- Ensure the information tracking pupils' progress is clear, used effectively, and compares the progress of pupils in mixed age classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have continued to rise because of skilled teaching and a determination that all pupils will achieve as well as they can. As a result, the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers. Similarly, pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve equally well because of the good support they receive. Pupils from a Gypsy/Roma heritage, however, are not making as much progress, despite the support provided, because of their patchy attendance. School leaders identify any dips in achievement promptly and put additional strategies in place to ensure that pupils make good progress. Consequently, following a disappointing year in science, an intensive programme of investigative work resulted in almost one quarter of Year 2 pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Similarly, a new approach to writing has seen a considerable rise in standards in Key Stage 2. The school has recognised that standards in mathematics are average and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Their achievement in mathematics is not as good as in other subjects. This is because pupils' performance in calculation and in mental mathematics are areas identified for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The strong focus on developing pupils' social and emotional skills and the emphasis on moral values, supports pupils' personal development well. Their increased confidence is evident. Summed up by one pupil who remarked, 'I used to think I was hopeless at sums but now I know I'm quite good.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and healthy. They eat sensibly, relishing the nutritious school meals. They are particularly pleased with the work they did with a gas pipe laying company highlighting the dangers of playing around such sites. The attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils are impeccable, however occasionally, a few pupils find concentration difficult and this sometimes distracts others. Pupils are generous fund-raisers and contribute much to the school, church and local community. Their contribution to wider and international communities is less well developed. With the increase in numbers of pupils from different backgrounds, the pupils are developing a good awareness of other faiths. For example, they proudly drew attention to the colourful photograph of their Pakistani classmates taking an Eid assembly in their special clothes. Pupils especially enjoy receiving 'Gotcha awards' which lead to recognition for the whole class. This effectively develops their sense of belonging and pride in the achievement of their class.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective because teachers are confident in their subjects, plan imaginative activities, and understand that pupils learn in different ways. They plan their work conscientiously, providing a good match of tasks to pupils' capabilities and age. So that all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and skills. The inclusion of targets from individual education and behaviour plans ensures pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers. Flashes of inspirational teaching were seen in many lessons. Teachers are stretched delivering high quality lessons to two year groups in one class, but succeed well. This is especially so when the pupils are from different key stages, with a very wide ability spread. Nevertheless, they successfully promote independent learning and the pupils make good progress overall in their lessons. High quality, informative wall displays make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and staff encourage pupils to 'have a go, even if it's not quite right'. Marking is rigorous and informative and helps pupils improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is rich and meets the needs of learners well. While the focus on the key subjects of English, mathematics and science is raising standards, the creative use of time for 'schemes and themes' makes learning enjoyable and relevant. In addition, distinct weeks for sport, and the creative and performing arts give pupils the opportunity to succeed in other areas of learning. A considerable number of parents expressed concerns about the mixed-age classes. While this mostly works well because of painstaking planning by teachers, it poses a problem for the teaching of French and limits progress in this subject. The curriculum is enriched by visitors into and trips out of school. Pupils enthuse about these experiences, commenting, 'It helps you see history!' Annual residential experiences increase pupils' confidence and help them to function as part of a team. In their words, 'You get to work together'. Pupils' attendance

at 'engineering days' give good opportunities for real life experiences and prepare pupils well for life after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures are in place to ensure the health, safety and protection of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. The school is maintained and cleaned to a high standard. High quality care is seen in the level of commitment by all adults in ensuring pupils' well-being. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given very good support. Effective links with several health agencies provide helpful support. For example, for those pupils with movement problems or visual impairment. The parental support advisor has recently been very effective in enabling a number of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs to make a successful transition to secondary education. Similarly, the assistance given to pupils with English as an additional language is just as good. However, while greetings in community languages such as Hindi, Polish and Filipino are displayed, labels in classrooms and around the school are all in English. Evenings for parents and carers such as 'keeping up with your children' contribute well to pupils' learning. Pupils receive good educational guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is effective and has facilitated many changes smoothly and efficiently in her two years in post. Her collegiate style of management has given more responsibility to teachers and leaders and has resulted in a strong team. Subject leaders are fulfilling their role well. Professional training for all staff has resulted in raised standards and achievement, especially in writing. A considerable amount of evidence has been collected to track pupils' progress and identify gaps in their learning. This generally works well, but the introduction of colour-coding has resulted in some misleading information suggesting pupils have made greater progress than is true. The governing body continues to be very supportive of the school. Individual governors use their professional skills well to pupils' advantage, for example, in working with vulnerable families. The governing body has made some very good appointments which are improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. For example the very recently appointed deputy headteacher is a leading teacher of mathematics. Conscious of being a predominantly White British school, school leaders and governors are promoting opportunities for pupils to work with others from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds. School leaders are coping extremely well with the challenges presented by building work on the school site.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	2
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

As you are aware, a little while ago three inspectors spent a short time in your school. Thank you for looking after us so well, especially those of you who gave up your free time to show us around school and to eat lunch with us. It was clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we had from your parents that you enjoy school, and feel really safe and well cared for.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You work hard and usually achieve high standards because your teachers provide interesting work that makes you think. Your behaviour and attendance are good. You say you especially enjoy the sports weeks, arts week and your residential visits. All adults care about you and make sure you are happy. Your school is well managed and the headteacher and staff are working extra hard to make sure you keep out of harm's way and have enjoyable playtimes while the building work is taking place.

There are a couple of areas we have asked to be improved:

- you make good progress and achieve well in English and science in Key Stage 2, we would like to see the same rate of progress in mathematics
- teachers keep lots of records about your achievements but these are sometimes difficult to follow so we would like these to be clearer.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and we wish you every success in your future.