

# Spofforth Church of England Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	121592
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327523
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Linden Phillips HMI

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.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Bruce
Headteacher	Mrs J Turner
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	School Lane Spofforth Harrogate HG3 1BA
Telephone number	01937 590655
Fax number	01937 591078
Email address	admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited ten part-lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including: school assessment files; summative monitoring of attainment; the school improvement plan; headteacher reports; minutes of the governing body meetings and 54 parental questionnaires from the 61 families at the school.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress made by pupils across the school
- the quality of assessment in supporting teaching and learning
- the promotion of community cohesion
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in making improvements since the last inspection.

## Information about the school

Spofforth Primary is a Voluntary Controlled church school. It accommodates small, generally stable numbers on roll and the school expects all places to be filled from September 2009. It is an extended school with activities for pupils before and after the school day. Most pupils live in Spofforth village or close to the school. Pupils are very largely from White British families; all are English speakers. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies within cohorts and across year groups. It is sometimes below, but generally at the level expected for their age. A few children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained a number of awards: the Special Needs Quality Mark, Basic Skill Quality Mark, Activemark and has gained Healthy Schools status and Eco Schools status.

## Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

1
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Capacity for sustained improvement

1
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## Main findings

Spofforth Primary school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. All staff share a clear vision of what excellent learning should be for children and they work energetically as a whole-school team to make it happen. The pupils respond with evident pleasure in coming to school citing 'hard work' as one of the best things about the school. This is reflected in well above average attendance and high take-up of the large number of enrichment activities offered by staff and parents.

Teaching staff and the higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) comprise the management team and their detailed and focused collaboration has led to sustained improvements in standards, and indicates outstanding capacity to improve even further. The headteacher leads a rounded dialogue about how best to make improvements. Children of all ages are involved appropriately for their age and feel that they have a real say in what happens next. Self-evaluation takes account of all views, is honest and reviewed regularly, so that it is effectively directed at aspects of provision where improvements are necessary.

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and, for some, their progress is outstanding. The school achieves high standards by the end of Key Stage 2. The school prepares children appropriately for taking tests, but does not allow that to be an intrusive focus. The school rightly feels that children who have learned through a broad and genuine learning experience will be able to take tests in their stride. Pupils were taking standards assessment tests (SATs) during the inspection week and were completely at ease, moving happily on to lessons. Pupils' progress is well supported by teaching, which is good overall, and at times is outstanding in its effectiveness in promoting confident and independent learners. Children who experience difficulties are given extremely good care and attention; the school works effectively with a range of external agencies, and with parents, to make sure that barriers to learning are minimised. Pupils' progress against targets in all subjects is tracked carefully and staff intervene if children are not achieving as expected. The school is embarking on clearer assessment systems, but these are not yet consistent or embedded in practice across the school.

Staff encourage pupils to take the lead in many community activities so that they become experienced in, for example, looking after stalls at school fairs and in making presentations to community groups. Although the school offers opportunities for pupils to meet with children from very different communities and with different backgrounds and beliefs, the school has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of its promotion of community cohesion.

The headteacher and staff, well supported by parents and the governing body, have made considerable improvements to the learning environment in the school. Outdoor areas, in particular, have been made accessible and safe for children who are now able to explore and play with a range of fixtures and games equipment.

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

- Improve the implementation of assessment so that:
  - systems are consistent across the school
  - feedback to pupils highlights very clearly what the next steps for improvement should be
  - the analysis of information about pupils' progress helps teachers to adapt lesson planning and secure even more outstanding lessons and outstanding progress for all.
- By the end of 2009, to complete an evaluation of the school's strategy for promoting community cohesion so that:
  - the school is aware of how effective work has been so far and where there are gaps in provision
  - pupils have a strong sense of the wider UK and global communities
  - pupils are knowledgeable about the cultures and beliefs of children from different backgrounds and are well-prepared to work together.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1
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Pupils make good, and often outstanding, progress as they move through the school. There has been an upward trend in attainment over the last three years and by the end of Key Stage 2, the school's national test results are high. They are particularly good in mathematics and science. Although English scores are above the national average, children's writing has been identified by the school as needing additional attention. Teachers' records and work seen in pupils' books indicate that writing has benefited from more attention within an adapted curriculum and continues to improve. The way in which pupils work with each other and with teachers in their lessons is outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive dedicated attention and make as good progress as their peers. All pupils spoken to expressed their whole-hearted enjoyment of school. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They approach learning with enthusiasm; they help each other; they listen carefully when asked to and also speak confidently with ideas and comments.

Pupils feel very safe and have excellent knowledge of how to keep safe. Staff help them by taking a proportionate approach to risk so that pupils can make independent decisions to try new things. Children are knowledgeable about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and put their knowledge into practice. The school's on-site kitchen prepares freshly cooked, healthy lunches and 80% of pupils choose to have a school meal. Girls and boys are equally represented in the high take-up rate for a variety of sporting and other activities including karate, cricket, jazz dance and the gardening club. Every child has represented the school at some point. Pupils play a large and active part in their community. While their contribution to their school and the wider community is outstanding, the school recognises that there is still more that could be done to extend those links and help pupils appreciate Britain's cultural diversity.

Pupils demonstrate high levels of literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Key Stage 2 and are well-prepared to make a success of the next stage of their education. The school judges that specific skills in enterprise and financial capability need to be developed further for this aspect to become outstanding.

The school and its governors help children to develop their spiritual awareness, social responsibility and moral compass. Children respond very well, supported by the school's reflective Christian ethos.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	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?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' good progress is ensured by good and outstanding teaching. In the best lessons, teachers provide stimulating activities where pupils are highly motivated to learn. A French lesson was conducted largely in French and pupils showed their increasing familiarity with speaking and listening in another language. Activities were well prepared, varied and fun. Older children approached a science experiment about the effects of yeast with gusto. They worked out which variables to keep stable and which to change, and then methodically measured the results to test their hypotheses. This exemplified very good learning by hands-on involvement. Pupils' work is marked and assessed against national standards. However, the school's newer systems for putting assessment information to good use, for example, in fine-tuning lesson plans to meet individual needs, is still in development.

The large number of enrichment opportunities within lessons and after school is a major part of the school's outstanding curriculum. Teachers and support staff have adapted the curriculum, informed by a coherent view of providing an entitlement for all, to an interesting and engaging curriculum where pupils learn with pleasure.

Each class includes two year groups. Children of different ages receive work specifically matched to their ability in class; the curriculum generally uses a two-year

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

rolling programme to make sure that pupils do not cover the same work unnecessarily and teachers support children to make faster progress when they can.

Learning in class and out of school is supported by excellent care and guidance systems. Children who experience difficulties are given very careful, thoughtful attention and the school uses its extended-school networks of support very effectively. As a result, pupils do not get 'stuck' if they encounter difficulties, but make good progress from their starting points.

*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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The teachers and the HLTA at the school comprise the leadership team. They take responsibility for subject development and other aspects of school development. The headteacher gives a clear lead and her vision is that the school provides the best possible environment for children to become confident and independent learners. The leadership team shares that view and articulates clearly what it means for their areas of responsibility. It is clear that the changes staff have made to the curriculum have emphasised writing so that children's developing skills are practised and reinforced across subjects. Even though standards are high, staff are working to improve their assessment skills and systems so that every child will achieve their best.

The headteacher keeps a close eye on all aspects of management. She ensures that staff are given opportunity to deputise for her and encourages staff to take national training courses. The school's environment has been transformed, with much thought given to encouraging pupils to explore and find delight in their surroundings. The headteacher looks outward to the wider community so that the school is an important part of the village. One parent's comment summed up points made by many, 'The school provides a secure and positive environment and plays a lead in many community events and activities'. The headteacher's role as a representative on the Extended Schools Cluster in the local authority has played a significant part in engaging external agencies and bringing valuable links into the school. Some of these links are still in development but are already enhancing the capacity of the school to improve still further.

Parents and carers maintain an excellent relationship with the school. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is active and involved in offering out-of-school clubs and activities. Parents roll up their sleeves to decorate the hall, to raise funds for new equipment and run after-school activities. The inspector received a high number of parental questionnaires: the great majority of parents and carers replied and of those almost all were completely positive '...a brilliant example of how a primary school should be', was a comment echoed by many.

The governing body has been reconstituted since the last inspection and is now at full complement. Committees scrutinise aspects of the school's work very well and summative minutes clearly reflect the ongoing support given to the school. Governors have ensured that safety and safeguarding arrangements are secure, that policies are monitored and updated, and that resources are properly managed. They have given the headteacher essential support and security as she has implemented the large changes of the last four years. The positive and challenging dialogue between the headteacher and the governing body is now able to move on to include the detail of attainment and achievement across the school.

Planning for the promotion of community cohesion has begun, but the school has not yet evaluated whether it is effective in meeting its aims. Pupils are very well involved in their local community and the curriculum includes opportunities for meeting with pupils from other, very different, schools and learning about other religions. However, these are occasional rather than embedded and the school acknowledges that this is an important area of pupils' understanding which the school needs to enhance.

The headteacher, staff, governors and parents have worked together to deploy resources extremely efficiently to transform the learning environment. Pupils cannot stop talking about all the exciting things they can do at school and this, combined with their high standards and good progress, make for outstanding value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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	1
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	1

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The expansion of provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been a major project for the school. From January 2009 the school has taken over Nursery provision provided by a local Nursery, now closed. The school's provision is extremely well planned to give children a wide variety of experiences and to explore their own interests. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and the school's experienced and knowledgeable HLTA works in concert with the keen and energetic newly-qualified teacher to provide excellent management. Assessment is detailed, accurate and helpful to staff and parents. Teacher-directed activities help children to experiment, develop their language skills and form good relationships. Work with children on their early learning goals is meaningful and carefully managed.



Children are making good progress and the school is right to aim to ensure that the new provision improves the literacy levels of all children.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Spofforth Church of England 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 54 completed questionnaires some of which recorded views for two or more children. This is a high response rate from the 61 families registered at the school.

Overwhelmingly, parents and carers wished to say that their children were well looked after at school and given much support to make good progress and be happy and safe at school. A small number of parents would prefer not to have mixed-age classes, and although the inspector and the headteacher understand this concern, there is no alternative in such a small school. The school manages the organisation of classes well.

A small number of parents expressed concern about children who had gifts and talents. The inspector noted that the school had taken serious note of the comments of a subject visit to the school in 2008. Those HMI comments had led to swift action to better support children and there was emerging evidence that they were making better progress. Occasionally, parents felt that they would like better contact about their child's progress. In the main, though, this is done well.

The inspector discussed closing the entrance gate to the school. A parent had suggested it might be done automatically, but the headteacher had considered this and felt that it could trap children's fingers. One parent would like more outside play space. The inspector and the headteacher agree that more would be better, but the inspection judged that the school had made an incredible effort to make all the space accessible. There are some small areas where grass has been reluctant to grow, but this is being addressed.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	13	3	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.

18 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spofforth Church of England Controlled Primary School,  
Harrogate, HG3 1BA

Thank you all very much for being so welcoming to me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed meeting with you and I was very impressed by the way that you talked about your school, your teachers and the staff who look after you. You were extremely happy about your learning in class and all the exciting things you do. It was hard to stop you talking about it!

Mrs Turner, your teachers, the support staff, your mums, dads and carers (supported by the governors and other people in the village) give you an outstanding education. These are the reasons:

- you told me how much you liked being at school and how much you enjoyed 'hard work'
- you all learn very well so that you go to your next year group with better understanding and new skills. When pupils leave Year 6 they have achieved high standards and made good progress
- you are kind to each other. You help each other and try to be very good friends
- you know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. I was very impressed with your school chef who cooks such healthy and tasty meals and you show you like them because so many of you choose to eat them! I was amazed that all of you have represented your school at some point. You were all so keen on the sporting and other activities that the staff and your parents provide.
- Mrs Turner, other teachers and staff know how to improve things even more.

We agree that these things are important for your school.

- Teachers and teaching assistants will talk to you more about what you need to do to make your next steps in learning. They will also change your next lessons a little bit to help everyone to catch up. The way you talk about your teachers makes me feel confident that you will listen carefully and work with your teachers and teaching assistants.
- You play a very good part in the village and in your community. The school will check how much it helps you to know about the 'larger world' which you will need to be confident about - particularly when you move on to secondary school.

I wish you all the best for your futures.

Linden Phillips  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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