

Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121644
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327539
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	200
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 P Botting
Headteacher	Ms Helen Rodbourn
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	North Lane Wheldrake York North Yorkshire YO19 6BB
Telephone number	01904 448564

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wheldrake with Thorganby is a smaller than average voluntary aided school which serves two villages just to the south of York. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British heritage and no pupils are new to learning English. A lower than average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities although the number requiring additional support is rising. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has recently received the Dyslexia Friendly School award. The EYFS provision is made for children in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wheldrake with Thorganby is a good school with outstanding features that gives good value for money. Central to the school's good progress since the previous inspection has been the clear vision of the headteacher and her quiet determination to provide high quality education. This can be seen in the vibrant quality of the new building and colourful facilities. She is ably supported by a talented team of motivated staff and an astute governing body. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to improve further. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciate the high quality of care and support their children receive. 'I feel privileged my children are in a caring and nurturing school,' is a typical parental comment.

Pupils achieve well and they reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. More able pupils achieve remarkably well in science. Over the past three years, the school has made concerted efforts to boost achievement in writing and mathematical skills. Current school information from the thorough checking of progress shows that this effort is realising a great deal of success, especially in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because staff take great care to adapt activities to their individual needs and interests, for example using dyslexia friendly approaches.

Pupils arrive at school with a smile, a clear reflection of their enjoyment of life at school. Their exemplary behaviour and excellent attendance illustrate their eagerness to get to school and learn. The Maher Community Centre provides pupils with first-hand experiences of other beliefs and cultures, giving them a valuable insight of life in a diverse world, and the school takes the opportunities to develop these links. Pupils are very well aware of the many benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Teaching and learning are good overall and often outstanding. Basic skills are consistently well taught, for example pupils display imaginative writing skills and are able to confidently adapt their style when required. In the outstanding teaching, probing, open ended questions demand complex thinking to solve problems and apply their understanding. Throughout these lessons there is a relentless focus on achievement. Occasionally, not all opportunities are taken to draw out thinking and reasoning skills which slows the pace of problem solving. Excellent pastoral care and very good guidance help pupils develop the skills they need to achieve well. The school's monitoring systems accurately check pupils' progress and are used to set challenging targets in lessons.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has ensured a strong, continuing focus on raising the quality of education. She benefits from a committed group of staff and an effective governing body. In the last three years, achievement and standards have risen. The quality of teaching and management has been strengthened. A major programme of new building and refurbishment has been successfully completed. The headteacher has established a happy, caring culture in which all pupils are included and where there is an expectation of high achievement regardless of their starting points.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On arrival into the Reception class, children's overall skills are at age-related expectations but their communication skills are sometimes lower than expected. Excellent relationships with pre-school provision and parents ensure that all staff are aware of individual needs. This helps ensure that children settle quickly, gain confidence and early independence. Parents especially

appreciate the high quality of individual care their children receive. They really enjoy their work and make good progress in their speaking and listening and tackle early writing with confidence. They make particularly good progress in their personal development because of the warm and supportive relationships they have with adults and each other. Classroom routines are swiftly established in vibrant, stimulating areas. Organised activities strike a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning. Opportunities are provided for children to explore, think for themselves and begin to make their own decisions. Their learning is thoughtfully enriched through role play, for example answering the telephone in their school office or preparing a menu to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Yet outdoor learning does not provide sufficient challenge and stimulation across all areas of learning. Regular observation and assessment ensure that staff are aware of each child's progress and make sure that talents are successfully nurtured. This well led and managed provision promotes children's welfare really well to make certain they feel safe and secure. They adopt safe practices, for example responsibly pedalling a vehicle outdoors. They are successfully encouraged to adopt healthy daily routines.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' thinking skills to increase the tempo of problem solving and boost achievement.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning in the EYFS.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter school with age-related expectations although some have weaknesses in their communication skills. Successful action to raise achievement in writing has produced a trend of improvement in national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 2 pupils make good progress and attain standards that are above average. This rate of progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 pupils attain above average standards. Achievement is good. The school's careful checking of progress reveals that standards are currently above average and rising with a far more even pattern of good achievement in English, mathematics and science. More pupils are on course to achieve higher levels. The impact of successful initiatives is being sustained. Nearly all pupils are on course to achieve their challenging targets in all years. Effective teaching and support makes certain that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils want to come to school because staff make learning fun. This is reflected in their outstanding attendance. There is a strong sense of community, and relationships amongst pupils and with staff are excellent. Behaviour is exemplary. Older pupils in particular set a terrific example to younger children by their well mannered, safe and considerate attitudes. They are keen to join in a wide range of activities including regular exercise. They are very aware of the benefits a healthy lifestyle can bring. Pupils enthusiastically join in parish and village events, for example writing articles for the parish newsletter. The school council revel in their responsibilities to make decisions and improve the school. They have helped to establish the 'University of Wheldrake which helps foster their business skills and prepares them extremely well for the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is nurtured extremely well through many positive emotional

and social experiences. Pupils are confident that if they have any worries or anxieties staff are always on hand to listen and help.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good and often inspiring teaching. Teachers expect pupils to do well at all ages and tailor their teaching to motivate pupils to reach and exceed their targets. Pupils' progress is carefully checked, and slips in progress quickly identified and carefully scrutinised so effective help and support can be provided. Effective staff teamwork and excellent relationships in the classroom ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not left behind. A whole school focus on literacy and numeracy has led to considerable improvements, especially extending the skills and accuracy of writing and calculation. The most inspiring teaching demands more involved thinking to unravel problems. Pupils are then expected to explain their solutions or decisions. At times, opportunities are missed to push pupils to think through solutions for themselves. Positive marking is effectively linked to learning objectives and provides very good advice for improvement. Pupils can then plot their own progress on their classroom target board.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils, with good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Cross-curricular links provide pupils with many varied opportunities to practise and strengthen their literacy, numeracy and information communication and technology skills. A rich range of first hand experiences makes learning more exciting and meaningful for the pupils. The school uses its curriculum effectively to promote good community cohesion. Achievement is celebrated in the many stimulating displays of children's work. Innovative features, for example, 'The University of Wheldrake raises pupils' awareness of the world of work. Global awareness is being enhanced through developing cultural links with an Ethiopian school. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn new skills, for example learning how to play a musical instrument and using the excellent links with York University. The residential experience gives pupils the chance to show initiative and take responsibility. Altogether this provides an excellent range of opportunities for their personal development. Nevertheless, there are times when not enough opportunities are provided to develop problem solving skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support which demonstrate the warm and caring ethos. Procedures to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of pupils are in place and meet current guidelines. Trust is mutual between staff and pupils. They confidently describe that they always feel valued, safe and secure. This all helps pupils to develop mature, responsible attitudes in all aspects of school life. The progress of each child is systematically scrutinised and the information used to plan learning and set challenging targets. Pupils are given very good advice, which focuses clearly on priorities for improvement. Pupils regularly check their

own progress against their targets although now and then Year 6 pupils could be given greater responsibility deciding how successful they have been.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. At the heart of the school's progress, is the vision and drive of the headteacher. Patient and sensitive approaches have successfully developed and improved the quality of teaching. A shared commitment to pupils, strong teamwork and raised expectations are central to school improvement. The transformed school buildings provide a range of high quality classrooms in which pupils' interests and talents are fostered. This prepares them well for life in a diverse world. There is much good practice to share in teaching, for example the skilled use of probing questioning. This helps to ensure there is a continuous focus on achievement in lessons to clear up inconsistencies and boost progress. Governance is good and makes certain the school is held to account for all that it does. Governors, senior managers and staff have an accurate view of strengths and how well the school is doing, although occasionally judgements are overly modest. The impact of improvement can be seen in the more consistent pattern of good achievement across the school.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1

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	1
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

Inspection of Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
York, YO19 6BB

We thoroughly enjoyed our inspection of your school and appreciated your really warm, friendly and courteous welcome. We were extremely impressed by the happy atmosphere and your keenness to learn. We enjoyed talking to the members of the school council and seeing you enjoy your playtime and lunchtime with your friends. You go to a good school. These are some of the things the school does really well.

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers make learning fun and staff help and support you very successfully when you need it.
- Helping you to achieve well and reach above average standards.
- Your behaviour is exemplary. You get on exceptionally well with each other and we were very impressed with the way older pupils look after younger children.
- Your school's leaders are determined to continue to improve your school and make sure that you all achieve as well as you possibly can.
- Your headteacher and staff work very hard to make certain you receive high quality care and support.

We have asked your school to improve your education by making sure you improve your thinking skills so that you can solve problems successfully. We have also asked staff to improve the outdoor learning area for Reception children (EYFS).

You all have an important part to play improving your school. You can help by continuing to listen very carefully to the advice and guidance of your staff and by working as hard as you possibly can. This will help you achieve more and reach even higher standards.

Thank you for helping us with this inspection. We hope the school will keep building on its strengths.