

Skelton Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 121335 |
| Local Authority | York |
| Inspection number | 339919 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Rajinder Harrison |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 80 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Eileen Wilks |
| Headteacher | Mr Mark Halliday |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 February 2007 |
| School address | Brecksfield Skelton York YO30 1YB |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, saw five teachers and spent approximately six hours evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. They held meetings with governors, staff, parents, groups of pupils and representatives from the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including school policies, the development plan, monitoring records, analyses of pupils' attainment and progress and reports from visits by the local authority. Inspectors analysed 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the progress of pupils particularly in writing at Key Stage 1 and for the more able pupils throughout the school
- the quality of provision, particularly the quality of teaching and the curriculum, to challenge higher attaining pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring pupils' achievement and driving school improvement
- the school's action to promote community cohesion particularly at the national and global level
- the quality of outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. All pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a below average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also below average. Provision for the seven children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 Class. The school has a Healthy Schools Award and the Arts Mark Gold Award. The school provides a range of before- and after-school clubs managed by the governing body.

The deputy headteacher took up the role as acting headteacher at the end of January 2010.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Parents' and pupils' views that this is a good school are accurate. Pupils enjoy being in a small school where they feel safe, happy and valued, with one commenting, 'The school makes me feel special because it cares about people.' Despite its size, the school achieves success because it wants to be the best. Winning a cycling trophy in competition with many larger schools is just one example of the school's high ambition. Pupils' exemplary behaviour and good achievement show that they enjoy learning. These positive attributes, alongside the above average standards they attain, ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at the expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and attain average standards at the end of the Reception Year. The activities they undertake do not always challenge them sufficiently to achieve more. This lack of challenge, particularly of the more able, continues into Year 1, resulting in satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Current Year 2 pupils are working at broadly average standards, with writing below average because pupils have insufficient opportunities to write at length and independently. High expectations and good planning accelerates pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are above average, with writing being a strength. Well-considered interventions to support pupils who fall behind their targets or have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils achieve well.

Teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' different ability levels and many lessons are lively and engaging. Key Stage 2 pupils have individual targets to work towards, but this does not always happen in Key Stage 1, to help them understand what they are working towards. Similarly, marking is very good in showing pupils how to improve their work at Key Stage 2, but is less effective elsewhere. Good care arrangements enable pupils to learn confidently regardless of their individual circumstances or difficulties. Procedures to ensure pupils are safe at school are satisfactory.

The curriculum is well organised and many enrichment activities make learning interesting and fun. The curriculum supports awareness of other cultures, faiths and traditions satisfactorily. The school is a very harmonious community and pupils are respectful of people whose lives are different to their own. Links within the local community are strong but pupils' understanding of the diverse communities that live in Britain and abroad are less well developed.

The acting headteacher, supported effectively by staff and governors, is working hard to raise standards. He has accurately identified immediate priorities to improve writing at

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Key Stage 1 and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good and self-evaluation is accurate. Governors are very supportive. They have managed the school's staffing issues well and ensure the school retains its high standing in the local community. In light of the school's significant strengths, leaders and managers demonstrate a good capacity to improve the school further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards for pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, by:
 - challenging pupils sufficiently, particularly the more able
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write independently and at length
 - ensuring pupils have individual targets to work towards and that marking helps them understand how to improve their work.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing children with more challenging activities to extend their learning
 - giving children more time to explore and learn independently, particularly in the outdoor area
 - making sure assessment is used to support planning more effectively
 - having higher expectations of all children but particularly the more able.
- Ensure that the school does more to extend pupils' understanding of diverse communities in Britain and other countries globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn effectively and achieve well because they want to succeed. They settle quickly, listen attentively and work enthusiastically, eager to share their ideas to extend their learning. They find learning especially exciting when they engage in lively question and answer sessions. When set challenges, for example, in science, they confidently reason and debate to solve problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently explained why their cars crashed when falling from a steep ramp and that they would travel further on a smooth surface. Such lessons buzz with excitement because teachers keep pupils interested and involved by asking probing questions. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy many good opportunities to write and hence attain above average standards in writing. With fewer such opportunities, particularly in Year 1, standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are not as high. Insufficient challenge, particularly for the more able in Year 1, results in pupils' overall achievement being satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 where teachers organise challenging activities. Senior managers intervene quickly when pupils fall behind their predicted targets and this ensures they catch up quickly.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they form good relationships. If problems arise pupils are confident they can go to staff for support. They show respect for others by

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listening sensibly and helping each other. They understand well what they should do to stay healthy. Many enjoy healthy school meals and take regular exercise. They are enthusiastic about physical activities and join many school clubs, for example, for hockey and football. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils adopt a mature attitude as they help around the school and look after younger ones at lunchtimes, commenting wisely that, 'We make sure they have friends to play with.' They talk enthusiastically about their fund-raising activities. They express a sense of wonder as they learn about sustaining the earth's resources and recycling. School council members say, 'We shut doors and turn lights off to save energy costs and are buying equipment to improve the environment with the money we made washing cars last year.' Young children delight in watching plants grow and worms wriggling. While they are confident with each other and recognise that differences should be respected, they are less sure about what life is like for children in communities different to their own, with one commenting, 'I'm not sure what it would be like in a school where everyone speaks different languages.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teaching is good in most classes because teachers plan interesting lessons, with activities that encourage pupils to think about their learning. Teachers use discussion between pupils well to give them time to share ideas and be more confident in their answers. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils animatedly discussed what made irrational and weakly-reasoned arguments pointless and enjoyed exploring the language people used in such situations. Effective use of interactive whiteboards helps pupils understand their learning well. Teaching assistants work well to support pupils who need additional help to participate fully. In the occasional less effective lessons, mainly in Key Stage 1, the use of inappropriate worksheets that do not reflect pupils' prior attainment and lengthy presentations where pupils struggle to maintain concentration, confuses pupils. Consequently, they are unsure of what to do when working on their independent tasks. Occasionally, lack of pace and challenge result in pupils making slow progress, especially those capable of harder work. While some marking is very good, the quality is inconsistent across the school. Pupils do not always know if they have met their targets or how to improve their work.

The curriculum ensures that pupils build on previous work successfully and the teaching of French adds to their awareness of other cultures. Teachers incorporate themes and topics effectively to link work across subjects so it makes better sense to pupils. For example, pupils' understanding of hot and cold habitats has been enhanced by their extensive exploration of deserts, forests and jungles. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to work more independently, for example, in writing, are less evident. Modified plans, individual support and good resources allow pupils who need help with their learning to achieve well. Activities such as art, sports and musical instrument tuition extend pupils' interests and skills well. Visitors and visits such as the residential trips and good partnerships with others, such as sports providers, enrich learning further. A good programme for personal, social, health education ensures that pupils understand, for example, the dangers of drug abuse and how to stay safe.

Parents ensure their children attend school regularly. They are very happy with the way their children settle into school and say that staff respond promptly if individuals need help. Parents value the support and guidance the learning mentor offers to pupils and their families if any specific problems arise. Pupils who experience personal or academic difficulties are well cared for and links with other agencies to support them are good. Parents appreciate the many before- and after-school clubs the school offers to extend their children's learning and social experiences.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders and governors want pupils to receive the best education possible and to be inspired in their learning. They promote a strong sense of community in school. They are ambitious in their intent but, due to ongoing staffing issues, improvement since the last inspection has not been as effective as planned. Pupils of all backgrounds and ability have the help they need to achieve successfully but as progress is not as good in the younger classes, particularly for the more able pupils, the equality of opportunity is addressed satisfactorily. All aspects of health and safety and child protection meet current requirements and arrangements to secure safeguarding are satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation procedures to support development planning are good. For example, writing was identified as a relative weakness in Key Stage 1 in 2009 and, although the impact is not yet fully evident, corrective action is in place. The attainment of the more able pupils at Key Stage 2, an issue in the last report, has been resolved successfully. Provision for the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 is good.

The school has strong links with its local the community and involves parents and carers well in supporting their children's learning. School leaders promote community cohesion well locally and have started to make links with communities in other areas of this country and abroad.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Children enjoy learning, behave well, form positive relationships and settle quickly because induction procedures are good. They are happy at school because welfare arrangements are good. Good relations between home and school benefit children well. 'My child is really happy at school and can't wait to get here.' is typical of parents' and carers' comments. Most children are confident learners and work well with others. Any who need specific help are supported well. While the resources and facilities are good, staff do not always plan sufficient opportunities for children to explore and learn independently, particularly for children to play freely in the much improved outside area. For example, as children completed their numeracy activity, they were not able to go out to play, because the teacher was still working with those who had not finished. Once outside, children enjoyed serving in the 'garden centre' using real money and watching worms wriggling in the compost. Staff ensure that children try everything that is planned for them, including the more challenging tasks, such as writing, that lower attaining children find demanding.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Generally staff plan a good balance of activities between those that children choose for themselves and those led by adults, but adult-led activities occasionally lack pace, challenge and interest and children struggle to maintain attention because the work is not matched accurately to their needs. Assessments, while detailed, are not used well enough to inform planning to ensure all children work to their full capability, particularly those who could achieve more through increased challenge. This lack of challenge results in children's overall progress being satisfactory. The school's assessments show that they attain broadly the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning at the end of the Reception Year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views about the school are very positive. Many parents express very favourable comments about how much their children enjoy school; how they achieve well; the quality of teaching and leadership in the school being 'outstanding' and 'very good'; and that behaviour and other aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Inspectors agree with these views. The school works hard to involve and engage parents and carers and regularly sends out information to them about what they can do to help their children learn at home and welcomes parents into school if they wish to

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raise any concerns or issues.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Skelton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 31 | 82 | 7 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 32 | 84 | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 28 | 74 | 10 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 32 | 84 | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 31 | 82 | 7 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 28 | 74 | 10 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 23 | 61 | 14 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 21 | 55 | 14 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 27 | 71 | 9 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 25 | 66 | 12 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 71 | 10 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 31 | 82 | 7 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 32 | 84 | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| 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. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| 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. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skelton Primary School, York, YO30 1YB

Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being friendly and polite when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you. I am writing to tell you what we found out. You said that you enjoy school, particularly the visits you go on and the clubs you can join. You said that you like your school because it is small and friendly so you know everybody. You also said that you have many friends at school and that you like your teachers. I was impressed by the way older pupils look after younger ones and your lovely singing in assembly.

There are many good things about your school. These include your excellent behaviour and good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. You work hard at school and enjoy learning. You make good progress and many of you are working at above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Your lessons are interesting and the school takes good care of you. While these aspects of your school are good, the inspectors think that a few things could be better. We have asked the headteacher, other staff and governors to do the following to improve the school:

- make sure those of you in Years 1 and 2 are given work that really challenges you; that you have more time to practise your writing skills and that you know how to improve your work so that you can make better progress
- give children in the Reception class more time to do things they want to do for themselves, especially in the outside area, and have work that will help them make good progress
- help you learn more about what life is like for people who live in communities in Great Britain and in other countries that are different to Skelton.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, continue to try hard and make sure that you ask for harder work if it is too easy for you.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector

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