

Wheatcroft Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121349
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339922
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Swift
Headteacher	Miss Jennifer Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, observed all teachers and spent approximately 40% of inspection time looking at learning, including time spent looking at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, the improvement plan and an analysis of school records on pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team received and analysed 70 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as a number of questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- the progress pupils make throughout the school, especially across Years 1 and 2
- the effectiveness of provision made in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- pupils' attendance rates
- the impact of recent developments on the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers, at all levels, in embedding ambition and driving improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. It admits children to Reception at the start of the year that they reach five years old. Most pupils are from a White British background, with small but growing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above average, but the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality and Inclusion Quality Marks, Activemark and National Healthy Schools status. Since the last inspection there has been a change in headteacher. The current headteacher has been in post for one year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Wheatcroft is a satisfactory, happy and improving school. The headteacher provides determined leadership which is resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. In a little over a year, she has correctly identified strengths and areas for improvement. She has taken clear actions which have arrested the fall in standards at the end of Year 2 and improved attainment, particularly in mathematics, by the end of Year 6. Staff are fully committed to enhancing further the quality of education provided, as seen in recent steps forward made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors are highly supportive of the school and are aspirational on the part of all pupils. They are providing more challenge as they receive increasingly helpful information about the quality of the school's work. As a result, inspectors judge the capacity for future improvement to be good.

Some aspects of the school's work and some of the outcomes for pupils are good. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage encourages children to become increasingly independent learners from an early age and to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as well as their literacy and numeracy skills. The behaviour of pupils, the extent to which they make a contribution to the community and the way they look after each other around school are also good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for music and sport is outstanding and there are many opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts and drama productions and to visit local theatres and museums. Staff are caring and support pupils well. Links with parents and carers are positive and, as a consequence, pupils enjoy coming to school and say that it is a safe environment in which to learn. They take active roles on the school council and enjoy the many extra-curricular clubs on offer. They are knowledgeable about leading a healthy lifestyle, as seen in the active playtimes and healthy lunch choices. However, despite the school's wide ranging efforts, pupils' attendance is low.

Attainment is broadly average and the progress of all groups of pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Boys' attainment in writing is improving, as are general standards in mathematics, although there is still more work to be done to achieve consistency across all years. Pupils identified as having additional needs are now making satisfactory progress, because they are provided with suitably challenging and interesting activities. However, not all teachers are using the assessment data they are collecting to meet the needs of all pupils so that pupils understand how to improve their work and make consistent progress across the school. This is particularly the case in Years 1 and 2, where standards are not as high as they might be.

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The school has been successful in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Year 6 standards in mathematics have risen and in 2009 were above national expectations. Levels reached by the highest attaining pupils have also increased and were above average in English, mathematics and science in 2009. Procedures for checking pupils' progress and identifying underachievement have been refined. A new curriculum is providing exciting opportunities through which pupils can develop key literacy and numeracy skills, while still enjoying a range of creative and imaginative experiences. The checking of teaching and learning is more systematic and the overall quality is satisfactory, with some good practice, particularly across Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning are not as effective as they might be across Years 1 and 2, largely due to changes in staffing in recent years and a lack of stimulating experiences that enthuse all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more consistent rates of progress are made by all pupils in writing and mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to at least good in all lessons by ensuring that all teaching provides:
 - practical and meaningful activities that inspire and challenge all pupils to learn more effectively
 - specific advice to individual pupils about how to improve their work.
- Raise levels of attendance to at least average levels by tackling more rigorously the small proportion of parents and carers who persist in taking their children on holiday during term time.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons the vast majority of pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and this contributes to their learning. Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, although improving in writing and in mathematics, as of late. Given that pupils start Year 1 with outcomes in line with national expectations, this represents overall satisfactory rates of progress. However, progress is not yet even throughout the school. Historical staffing issues have hindered the progress made by pupils across Years 1 and 2. End of Year 2 standards have fallen in reading, writing and mathematics in the past two years, and were significantly below national expectations for reading and writing in 2009. However, staffing is now more stable and the school's most recent information shows that standards are beginning to rise. The downward spiral of the past two years has been arrested and, overall, standards in Year 2 lessons and in pupils' work are approaching national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make

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satisfactory progress. They generally receive appropriate support from teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to understand and learn the skills being taught. Pupils understand safe practices, for example in relation to hygiene and the way they care for each other. They are welcoming and positive, and are confident that they can turn to adults in school to help them with any problems. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and enjoy participating in the good range of physical activities the school provides. There is a good take-up of school lunches and pupils are learning to appreciate the healthy options offered. They enjoy the opportunities to take on responsibility, for example in raising money for Haiti, participating in local council competitions and as members of their own school council. Many participate enthusiastically in the wide range of after school activities. Pupils are using and developing their basic skills satisfactorily. They are developing their teamwork skills particularly well and are rewarded for success in this area. They make good progress in developing their spiritual, social and moral understanding which enables them to cooperate effectively in the school community. In particular, their understanding and appreciation of other cultures is increasing through regular opportunities to learn about people from other ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, attendance is stubbornly low in most years, largely because a number of families choose to take holidays during term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. For the most part, teachers use an appropriate range of questions to promote thinking and create supportive learning environments. Where learning is most effective, teachers plan stimulating opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and share their understanding, working on practical and purposeful tasks that are relevant to everyday experiences. Learning is challenging and well-trained teaching assistants work effectively alongside pupils with specific and additional needs. In some lessons, however, teachers tend to talk for too long, pupils' attention wanders and quality in learning falls. On these occasions, there is an over-reliance on work sheets and activities are not related to real life experiences. The school has improved the regularity of assessment information collected about individual pupils. This is being used well by some, but not yet all, teachers to share with pupils what they need to do next and to plan for future steps in their learning.

The curriculum is well organised, with increasingly clear links across topics for pupils to practise literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. Opportunities to enhance the way pupils relate to one another socially and emotionally are good. The widespread teaching of French gives pupils access to different experiences and cultures which they find stimulating. The good range of out-of-school activities are popular, helping to enrich pupils' overall experiences. Provision for music and sport is of a very high quality. Pupils sing regularly, take part in concerts and orchestral performances, and participate in a wide range of team games and activities. Regular visitors to school and visits to places of interest, including the forthcoming trip to France, enhance pupils' experiences.

Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of all pupils make a good contribution to their development. Procedures for promoting positive behaviour are effective. The school intervenes sensitively to provide additional support for children and families when needed. Clearly targeted support has positive outcomes for more vulnerable pupils. The vast majority of parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's efforts. However, a small number of families persist in taking their children on holiday during term time and, consequently, although attendance is rising it is still below the national average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. Since her appointment a year ago, she has successfully refocused the work of senior leaders on improving teaching and learning in order to raise achievement and standards. Effective procedures are now in place to monitor and evaluate the school's work. These include scheduled lesson monitoring, scrutiny of pupils' work and a refined system to analyse the attainment and progress for all groups of pupils. Improvement planning concentrates on the right priorities to continue to move the school forwards, for example closer checking of the rates of progress made by all pupils over time, as well as year on year. Staff are extremely conscientious, hardworking and entirely supportive of the school's child-centred approach.

The school ensures that procedures to safeguard pupils meet requirements, are up to date and effective, although written risk assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not as comprehensive as they might be. Training of all staff, in particular in child protection, is of an appropriate quality. Issues about safety and safeguarding are included in the curriculum so that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. There are good links with community, local authority and other outside agencies, such as educational psychologists and the special needs support service. Links with parents and carers are also good. They are kept well informed about their children's progress through letters, meetings and the school's very accessible website. The school works hard to improve pupils' life chances, promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. This is beginning to raise the attainment of underachieving boys and narrow the overall gap in attainment of boys and girls.

The governing body is well organised and carries out its statutory duties satisfactorily. Governors play a direct part in the life of the school and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They are increasingly confident to hold the school to account for outcomes, as they receive more regular and helpful information about the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and rates of progress made by pupils across the school. The strong sense of community in school is extended by wide-ranging charity work and productive partnerships with other schools locally. However, much of this is not planned in a systematic manner, nor evaluated methodically to determine the impact in the surrounding community.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress, overall, in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter school with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding below those expected for their age and leave at the end of Reception working securely within the national goals, with particularly well-developed personal, social and emotional competencies. Children settle quickly because staff ensure excellent transition from the home and pre-school providers, creating an immediate nurturing and calm environment. Well known routines underpin the positive relationships and help to establish close links with parents and carers. Staff place strong emphasis on children cooperating with each other, taking turns and sharing. Children are well behaved and respond positively to clear expectations and appropriate levels of praise and encouragement. Activities for children to investigate, explore and develop independently their reading, writing and mathematical skills are well planned. However, indoor and outdoor resources are not as modern and stimulating as they might be. Planning incorporates regular opportunities for adults to talk to and work alongside children, with a good balance of activities chosen by children and others directed by adults. Staff ensure that children's welfare is paramount at all times, although written risk assessments for individual apparatus are not all sufficiently detailed. Recent and new leadership ensures increasingly effective teamwork, resulting in good links between the various experiences that children have, thereby ensuring that important skills are reinforced at every opportunity.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

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The vast majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were happy because their children enjoy school and are cared for well. There were no significant trends in the small number of criticisms received. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed about care and the effect this has on children's personal qualities. The inspection findings about children's progress in learning support the view of the few parents and carers who believe this aspect could be better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wheatcroft Community 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 inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	48	36	48	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	57	32	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	39	38	51	5	7	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	41	31	41	10	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	55	29	39	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	45	33	44	7	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	51	32	43	2	3	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	28	41	55	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	43	33	44	6	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	36	40	53	5	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	29	38	51	10	13	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	32	43	37	49	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	51	32	43	3	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



5 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wheatcroft Community Primary School, Scarborough, YO11 3BW

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors. We appreciated all the help you gave us. This letter tells you what we found out.

Wheatcroft is a satisfactory and improving school, with some good features. In particular, the inspectors agree with many of you and your parents and carers who told us how kind the adults are to you and that you like school. You behave well and show really positive attitudes to each other. Many of you set a good example by keeping active at break and lunchtimes and by eating fruit and vegetables as snacks – well done! All the adults take good care of you, including those of you who need extra help. Many of you do well in lessons. These things happen because your headteacher and governors work hard to improve what is happening in school.

One reason for our visit was to see what your school could do better. We have asked your headteacher, governors and teachers to work on the following things.

Make sure that all pupils make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics in every year and especially in Years 1 and 2.

Make sure that all teaching is at least good by providing you all with practical and interesting activities and by ensuring that all of you understand what you are doing well and what you need to do to improve.

Ensure that more of you attend regularly and less of you take holidays during school time.

You can all help your teachers by coming to school every day, working hard to reach your targets and supporting each other. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Swallow

Lead inspector

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