

Harrogate, Bilton Grange Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121394
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339930
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Melanaphy
Headteacher	Ms Judith Ratcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including safeguarding policies, special educational needs and inclusion documentation, the school improvement plan and questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and parents. The inspectors looked at pupils' writing in each class.

- how well pupils write and whether the work they do in mathematics challenges them and gives them opportunities to use and apply their skills
- the impact of care, support and guidance on pupils' learning and well-being
- the effectiveness of the senior leadership team in terms of improving learning, teaching and the curriculum
- outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Harrogate, Bilton Grange Community Primary School is a larger than average, popular school. It is currently over-subscribed. It serves a mixed residential area to the north of Harrogate town centre. An average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British. About 25% of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is an above average proportion, as is the number who has a statement of special educational need or who have significant learning difficulties. The former deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher at the start of January 2009. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of one Reception class and a mixed Reception/Year1 class.

The school shares its site with a privately run Nursery and externally managed before and after-school clubs. These are not included in this inspection.

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

This good school makes outstanding provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have significant barriers to their learning. These pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and development. The overall quality of care, support and guidance is outstanding. As a result pupils develop into responsible, mature young people with a positive outlook. The school is a happy, friendly community. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and have total confidence in the adults who care for them. While pupils have good cultural understanding in terms of the creative arts, their awareness and appreciation of the multicultural diversity of Britain and the wider world is limited.

Pupils say, 'The best thing about school is our teachers. We enjoy learning because lessons are fun.' Pupils make good progress. Standards are going up because teaching is good with some outstanding practice, especially in mathematics. Pupils have ample opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills. Their writing is lively and imaginative but marred by elementary punctuation errors, immature sentence construction and handwriting. While children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage the development of early writing skills lags behind other areas of learning. This is because children learn a bit too formally, too soon, and, therefore, miss opportunities to practise pre-writing skills through imaginative and purposeful role play. The outdoor area is under-used and does not provide a sufficiently wide range of thought-provoking activities to challenge and engage young learners.

The senior leadership team is very effective in terms of improving learning, teaching and the curriculum. Since the school's last inspection there have been significant improvements in the achievements of the more-able learners, assessment and involving more people in leading learning. The senior leadership team's thorough self-evaluation shows it knows the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. All staff are involved in checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. As a result, the school is forging ahead. This illustrates well the good capacity the school has to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
- - ensuring pupils use punctuation accurately and use joined up handwriting as a matter of course
- - teaching younger pupils how to write extended sentences using a wider range of connectives

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- - finding ways to celebrate and share good writing so pupils learn it is important to write well.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - - ensuring children have constant access to outdoor learning, in all weathers
 - - providing a wide range of outdoor learning activities to excite children's curiosity and challenge them to think for themselves
 - - giving children more opportunities to develop early writing skills through providing imaginative role play.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural diversity of Britain and of the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to succeed. They behave well and respond positively to teachers' high expectations. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons, ask lots of questions and say that, 'teachers talk through the problems'. This helps them to understand new concepts. They have many opportunities to talk and to help each other to learn. Those who have understood quickly give 'top tips' to their neighbours. This means pupils all learn at a good rate because they share expertise and quickly move on to the next stage. This method of working is proving very effective in mathematics, in particular. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included and work in a similar way with extra support when they need it. As a result they become confident learners who feel they have much to contribute. This is why they make outstanding progress, outperforming similar groups of pupils in national tests.

Standards in the 2009 national tests and in the current Year 6 are above average, exceeding the school's challenging targets. However, attainment over a three year period balances out at broadly average, because until recently the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 has been below average. Standards are rising with over 50% of pupils currently on target to exceed the nationally expected levels across the school. Standards in reading though are much higher than those in writing. Many pupils make careless mistakes, when they write, forgetting to use capital letters and full stops, for example, or copying words incorrectly. Pupils are slow to use joined handwriting and this in turn limits the amount they write. The sentence construction of younger pupils, including some in Years 3 and 4, lacks variety. A small group of Year 5 pupils have started to run a magazine on their own initiative but opportunities for all pupils to enjoy, share and celebrate writing are more limited.

Pupils get on well together and say they feel safe at all times. They agree there is no bullying and if there were it would be sorted out quickly. They know who to go to if they are worried about anything. Playground leaders and 'buddies' ensure that everyone has someone to talk to and play with. Pupils have a good understanding of why it is important to live healthily. The school council has a good level of responsibility, organising fund-raising discos and in the development of appointing new staff, for example. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and take reflection times seriously. They make a good contribution to local community events and the school

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choir takes part in joint projects and performances with other schools. Pupils have few opportunities though to work and socialise with pupils from contrasting localities or who have different religious and ethnic backgrounds. There is no racism, but pupils have rather a narrow outlook as a result of their limited experience of ethnically and culturally diverse communities. Pupils understand right from wrong and know that, 'If you are in trouble, tell the truth, that's the right thing to do.' They develop into articulate, confident and thoughtful individuals, well prepared for the next stage in their education. The vast majority attend well and almost all arrive in good time for the start of school. Overall, attendance figures are marred by a few families who take holidays during term time.

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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, based on what pupils know and what they need to learn next. This is having a major impact on pupils' learning, especially in mathematics. Across the school, teachers give pupils lots of time to learn actively, talk to a partner and practise new skills through playing games. This especially helps learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers question well, often targeting different

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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questions at different ability groups. Pupils are closely involved in assessing their own learning and checking their intermediate targets as well as matching their progress against longer term ones. They mark each other's work and make constructive suggestions. In lessons where teaching is no better than satisfactory pupils spend too long listening and so the pace of learning slows. Teachers' marking of pupils' work in English does not always make clear the small steps pupils need to take to improve the quality of their writing. In outstanding lessons, pupils are fully involved in their learning at all times.

The effective curriculum provides well for pupils' interests and promotes well the application of their numeracy and information and communication technology skills in different contexts. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities as well as educational visits and visitors to school. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in the creative arts such as local art events and playing in the school band. They also have access to different sports, available through the school's extensive partnerships. These, together with residential trips, enable pupils to develop independence, team building skills and tolerance, preparing them well for life beyond the school. The staff have recently radically adapted the curriculum by linking subjects together so as to make it more creative. It is too soon to measure the impact of this on pupils' achievement.

Pupils are known as individuals and cared for exceptionally well. Pupils know who to turn to when they need help. Extra support, through the 'nurture group', provides expert counselling and advice for those who have barriers to their learning or have difficulties to overcome, such as shyness or being disorganised. The result of this support is that all pupils are better able to cope and so their progress accelerates. Excellent support for vulnerable pupils ensures they develop the confidence and life skills to succeed academically, because they learn to have high self-esteem. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally thorough and rigorous. These pupils make outstanding progress because their needs are identified early and they and their parents are fully involved in writing their individual education plans and reviewing them regularly. The school is extremely proactive in engaging outside agencies within school to offer extra help when it is needed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is improving rapidly because the senior leadership team leads teaching and

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learning by example. Leaders and managers make good use of a range of monitoring strategies to drive up standards and to hold staff fully to account. Curricular changes have added a new dynamism to learning, with pupils closely involved both in the planning and assessment stages. Although it is too soon for these changes to have had their full impact, the school exudes enthusiasm. Ambitious target-setting, based on accurate assessments, is being used successfully to motivate pupils and to accelerate their progress. Governors are fully involved in checking on the work of the school. Their practical approach ensures that safeguarding is good. The school adopts recommended safe practices across all areas of its work and child protection is of good quality. Adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. The school's excellent links and partnerships with other educational institutions and agencies substantially improve the school's provision and outcomes for learners. The school has identified where further improvements can be made and has good strategies to tackle them. A start has been made in developing national and international community links, but the school recognises that it has some way to go to significantly increase pupils' awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity within the global 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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

The provision is well organised. Adults take good care of the children and so they are happy and feel safe in this welcoming environment. They settle in quickly and know how to register for different activities. They behave well and show consideration for other people's needs. From broadly average starting points, most children make satisfactory

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progress to reach the level expected at the start of Year 1. Children make slower progress in early writing skills than in the other areas of learning. This is because they do not have extensive opportunities to write using a wide range of tools and equipment, or to take part in extensive and imaginative role play, where writing is a necessary part of the play activity. Children do not have sufficient learning time outdoors or suitable wet weather clothing. This means that the ample, adventurous learning space is underused. Opportunities for children to learn through solving problems or by using their initiative are limited. This is because activities tend to be planned in terms of learning resources rather than offering suitable challenges to children to learn independently and through discovery. Children freely access learning resources and play well together, building a complicated rail track, for instance, or inventing an elaborate game with special play-acting voices for different farm animals. The setting is satisfactorily led and managed, with strengths in the weekly discussions about children's progress to help plan the next steps in their learning.

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

Almost all parents are delighted with the school and many wrote or telephoned to say so. Typical comments were, 'It is a happy, supportive, inclusive school where children are nurtured' and 'treated as individuals'. Parents praise the school's pastoral care, especially the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who lack confidence or have other barriers to their learning. The inspectors agree with parents positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harrogate, Bilton Grange 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 304 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	68	32	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	64	36	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	54	46	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	53	44	44	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	63	34	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	59	35	35	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	55	41	41	2	2	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)	37	37	44	44	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	48	50	50	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	50	41	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	45	47	47	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	60	35	35	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	67	33	33	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

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.



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrogate, Bilton Grange Community Primary School, Harrogate HG1 3BA
Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. The other inspectors and I thoroughly enjoyed talking to so many of you and watching you learn and play. You go to a good school and adults take extremely good care of you all. You make good progress because you are well taught. You are quite right; your teachers do make learning fun! This is why you are achieving higher standards, especially in mathematics. You work hard and behave well. Those of you who find learning difficult make exceptionally good progress because adults help and support you extremely well. I like the way you ask when you find something hard to understand and the 'top tips' you give each other are an excellent way of making sure that you all know what you are doing.

I have asked your school to do three things to make it even better. First, you do not write as well as you read. This is because you copy words down incorrectly and often forget to join your letters when you write. Many of you forget to put in capital letters and full stops even though what you write is often very interesting. I have asked your teachers to improve your writing and also to help younger learners to use different joining words in their sentences. You could do a lot yourselves to improve your writing. Second, I have asked teachers to provide more interesting outdoor learning activities and more imaginative role play for Reception children. Last I have asked your school to increase your awareness of different cultures in Britain and in the wider world. This will give you lots more different things to write about or even paint, because I know many of you are very keen on art.

I hope you enjoy these new challenges and maybe one day some of you will publish your writing.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lesley Clark

Lead Inspector

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