

Hellifield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121402
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339931
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Wilcock
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Binns
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, with staff, including subject coordinators, the chair of the governing body and a group of pupils. Further informal discussions were held with pupils during lessons and at playtime. The inspectors observed the school's work, including a review of the school improvement plans, the systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, the school's records demonstrating arrangements for safeguarding the pupils and a sample of pupils' work in their books. The inspectors analysed 19 parental questionnaires.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their progress in their first year of school
- the standards pupils reach by the end of Years 2 and 5 and the rate of progress they make from their previous starting points, focusing particularly on standards in writing and the progress of boys
- the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning, particularly how well teachers use information about what pupils know and can do to plan work that matches their varying ages and capabilities
- the quality of care, guidance and support provided, particularly for vulnerable pupils
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels, and the governors, use school performance information to influence their monitoring activities, improvement planning and self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Almost all the pupils at this very small school are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception Year). These children are taught in the same class as pupils in Year 1. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes and transfer to middle school at the end of Year 5. The school has been accredited with the Activemark and Healthy School Award, Inclusion Award and Investors in People. In recent years, there have been numerous changes of headteacher. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features, such as the quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the care, support and guidance provided and the effectiveness with which the school works in partnership with others. In this happy, friendly, safe and welcoming setting, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They talk knowledgeably about how to keep healthy and safe. Behaviour is good and pupils agree that it has improved recently. Most parents have positive views. They agree that their children are happy and safe, and appreciate the warm and welcoming approach from staff.

Achievement is satisfactory. Although pupils' skills can vary widely from year to year, due to the very small numbers in each year group, by Year 5, attainment is average. This represents satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. In English, attainment is higher in reading than in writing. Pupils' progress in writing is sometimes held back by a lack of opportunities for practising writing skills as part of work in other subjects. The attainment and achievement of the boys lag behind those of the girls. Contributing to this picture is that the activities on offer are not always sufficiently stimulating to challenge their thinking or fire their imaginations. Learning gets off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In this area, staff track children's small steps in learning frequently and use the information effectively to ensure that activities offered take good account of children's varying needs. Between Years 1 and 5, although there are examples of good teaching, learning moves forward at a satisfactory, rather than more rapid, rate. In good lessons, higher expectations, lively and stimulating activities that match pupils' varying ages and capabilities, more opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on their next learning steps, along with effective individual questioning of pupils, are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. These good practices are not yet well embedded across the classes.

Since the previous inspection, the school has moved forward at a steady rate. Several staff changes have hampered efforts to bring about sustained improvements, such as ensuring teaching is consistently good. However, a more settled period of leadership of the headteacher, greater rigour in tracking pupils' progress, which is helping to spot precisely where learning is too slow, higher expectations of achievement, along with pupils' improved behaviour, are all providing a positive platform upon which to raise standards. Furthermore, the headteacher has evaluated accurately the school's performance, recognising both its strengths and areas needing attention. Nevertheless, the capacity to improve further remains satisfactory, rather than good. This is because the skills of subject leaders and governors, many of whom are very new to their roles, in reviewing school and pupil performance and in monitoring the quality of provision, are

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underdeveloped. As a result, much of this work, at present, rests on the shoulders of the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing and for the boys, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across subjects
 - making sure that activities in lessons are always sufficiently exciting and challenging to motivate and fully engage the boys.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that the good teaching practices evident in some lessons are consistently well applied across the classes.
- Extend the skills of subject leaders and governors, so that the responsibility for reviewing the school's performance, monitoring the quality of provision and driving improvements forward can be more equally shared.
- 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 visit.

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

Achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils behave well. Most pupils are attentive, keen to learn and contribute enthusiastically to lessons, particularly when given opportunities to work collaboratively. A minority of boys, however, although well behaved, are sometimes more passive, particularly when the activities do not offer sufficient challenge to keep them on their toes. Pupils often learn best in Years 3 to 5, where they respond well to teachers' higher expectations and relish ongoing opportunities to participate actively in exciting activities that motivate them all, including the boys. Between Years 1 and 5, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The outcomes of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 are average and by Year 5, attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and in science. In English, reading skills are now above average, although those in writing lag behind.

Pupils learn together harmoniously, show care and respect towards one another and feel happy and safe. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently above average attendance. Pupils behave well and demonstrate sensible and mature attitudes towards their learning. They say that in recent times, behaviour has improved significantly. Pupils are clear of school rules and of the high expectations of their behaviour, encouraging one another to meet them. They like the new 'peg system' of rewards, because it shows that their efforts are valued highly and celebrated often. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities that contribute to the day-to-day running of school. They develop a good understanding of how to contribute positively to their local community, such as helping the elderly, and participating in events with other schools nearby. Pupils' involvement in activities that enable them to influence school decision making or to develop a keen awareness of the diversity of cultures in the United

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Kingdom, however, are not yet fully developed. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles shows in their eagerness to participate in the good and growing range of sporting activities on offer, such as golf and orienteering. Pupils' good personal skills, along with satisfactory progress in basic literacy and numeracy skills, prepare them soundly for their future.

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Warm relationships, good organisation, ongoing encouragement from support staff and effective strategies to manage behaviour are features of many lessons. In lessons for the oldest pupils, there are higher expectations of what pupils might achieve, practical and engaging activities, regular opportunities for pupils to discuss how well they are getting on and effective questioning from staff. These best teaching practices, however, are yet to be consistently well embedded in other classes. An increase in curriculum time dedicated to developing reading skills, along with a good range of new resources, especially to help to engage the boys, is successfully helping to boost achievement in reading. Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills, such as regularly writing

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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creatively and at length in other subjects, remain too limited to impact significantly on accelerating progress. Similarly, opportunities for challenging pupils' thinking and motivating them are sometimes overlooked when pupils complete too many mundane worksheets. Pupils' good understanding of how to keep healthy reflects in the school's recent successes in achieving the Activemark and Healthy Schools Award.

Staff know their pupils well. This enables them to provide very caring and sensitive pastoral support at the right time. Effective arrangements are in place to meet the needs of those experiencing social and emotional difficulties, including the very few pupils who find it difficult to behave well. Effective partnerships with, for example, external agencies, along with the very skilled support from specialist staff contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development and ensure that they can learn together in peace.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school places a strong emphasis on the inclusion of all pupils and on their care, guidance and support. Safeguarding procedures are good, contributing to the confidence that parents have in the quality of the school's care. These factors, along with pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, demonstrate that the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, even though it is yet to successfully close the gap between the achievement of boys and that of girls, particularly in writing. Effective partnerships forged beyond school, such as with the local authority, other nearby schools and external support agencies, are helping to bring about improvement. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Successful links are forged within the local community, and the link established with a school in Morocco is, for example, helping to extend pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences of cultures around the world.

Despite the challenges the school has faced in recent years arising from the several changes of headteacher and high levels of staff turnover, it has improved steadily. Following a more settled period in leadership, the school now has an accurate evaluation of its performance. It is clear of its strengths and has pinpointed necessary improvements, which are focused clearly on raising standards and accelerating progress. Procedures for tracking pupils' academic achievement and spotting quickly where learning is too slow have improved. Even so, these are yet to manifest in accelerating

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pupils' progress to a consistently good rate. Although subject leaders and governors are starting to develop an awareness of how well the school is performing, they do not yet make a fully effective contribution to monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement or the quality of provision. Nevertheless, there is a realistic, sensible and accurate view of the steps necessary to take the school forward, along with a united eagerness to do so.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
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	2
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

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills vary but are broadly typical for their age. Learning gets off to a successful start and children make good progress. By the start of Year 1, the proportion reaching or even exceeding age-related expectations has increased. Children settle quickly into school routines, playing an active part in school life. The warm and caring relationships between adults and children ensure that they are happy and feel safe. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Adults encourage children to behave well and develop their confidence. Children also benefit from watching their older classmates showing good attitudes to learning. Since the previous inspection, changes to the ways in which staff find out how well children are getting on have helped to accelerate their progress. Staff work together closely and use this information smartly, so that daily activities take account of children's varying needs and their special interests, in order to fire their young imaginations. This is particularly effective as children work directly alongside adults. Opportunities for taking learning forward at a good rate, however, are occasionally overlooked when children play independently. This is because the activities do not always give children the chance to show what they are capable of. Nevertheless,

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good leadership and management ensure that provision is adapted where it is needed most, such as more opportunities for learning outdoors.

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

Parents who returned questionnaires are supportive of most aspects of the school's work. They particularly appreciate the school's caring, warm and welcoming approach and agree that their children are safe and happy in school. They are pleased that the school is enjoying a more settled period of leadership and acknowledge that improvements are evident. A few parents expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspector judges pupils' behaviour overall, to be good. Although there are a very small minority of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave well, these pupils receive very effective support from staff and external support agencies. As a result, pupils say that behaviour has improved greatly and now rarely gets in the way of their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hellifield 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 60 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	53	8	42	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	58	6	32	2	11	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	47	6	32	3	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	37	8	42	3	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	37	12	63	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	42	8	42	0	0	2	11
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	37	11	58	1	5	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)	7	37	8	42	3	16	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	42	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	32	6	32	6	32	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	42	7	37	3	16	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	7	37	8	42	3	16	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	53	5	26	3	16	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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hellifield Community Primary School, Skipton, BD23 4HA

Thank you so much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and finding out about your school and your views. I am writing to let you know what we thought.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. The standards you reach by the time you transfer to middle school are similar to those expected. The rate at which you are learning is satisfactory, although it is good in the Reception Year. I was particularly pleased to:

- see your good behaviour, hear how you think it has improved and see how pleased you are when you move your peg along the board in your classroom
- see just how much you care for one another and know how important it is to help others in your school, particularly those who find it difficult to behave well
- hear how much you know about how you can keep yourselves healthy, such as taking part in sporting activities
- hear that you are confident that all the adults care and support you well, particularly if you are having difficulties or are worried, and so you feel safe.

So that your school gets even better, I have asked that some improvements be made. These are to make sure that:

- you reach higher standards, especially the boys and in writing by:
- giving you more chances to practise your writing skills
- making sure that your teachers give you all activities that interest you so that you really want to learn
- in all classes, you learn well
- staff with special responsibilities and governors improve their skills in checking that you are doing as well as you can and in helping your school to improve.

You can help your school by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy or too hard and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should make sure that you always try your best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector

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