

Saltergate Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121464
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339946
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Walker
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Mortimer
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom examined the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and the school improvement partner. They observed the school's work and looked at the data on pupils' performance, including their current progress, plans for the future and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 76 parents' questionnaires were considered, alongside responses from staff questionnaires.

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

- the impact of actions taken to improve standards in mathematics and English
- the effectiveness of teachers' planning
- teachers' use of data and how effectively they check to ensure that good progress is made by different groups of pupils
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels in helping to raise standards.

Information about the school

Saltergate is an average sized infants' school that serves a large local authority and private housing estate on the north-west side of Harrogate. It also serves a nearby British Army Foundation College and a few families from a local American airbase. The school caters for Early Years Foundation Stage children in its Nursery and Reception classes. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from areas of social and economic disadvantage, and also vulnerable children, has increased since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is larger than average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The governing body is responsible for a privately run nursery on the site. The school receives support from a family link worker. Extensive building work has disrupted the normal life of the school for the past 18 months, and continues to do so as the building programme has entered its final phase in the construction of a community children's centre.

The school has a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, The Active Mark, National Healthy Schools status and the local authority Inclusion Quality Mark.

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

Saltergate ensures a good education for its pupils. The highly effective leadership of the headteacher has been central to maintaining high morale among staff and to improving further the quality of teaching and the curriculum on offer. This has been achieved in the face of severe turbulence and disruption over a long period of time as building work has taken place that has significantly improved the school buildings and outdoor spaces. The school works effectively with parents and carers and enjoys their overwhelming support and confidence. This is a highly inclusive school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning: they behave well, establish very effective relationships with each other and their teachers, and respond positively when challenged to do their best. The school has significant strengths in pastoral areas, where outstanding care, guidance and support have a clear positive impact on the personal development of pupils. This high quality of personal care results in pupils who feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to live safely and healthily. The central focus on pupils as individuals reflects an approach where every child does matter and they in turn are committed to making a positive contribution to the school community. They are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Standards reflect a rising trend, particularly in reading and mathematics. The overall attainment of children starting in the Nursery is below levels typically expected, and many have low skill levels. By the time pupils leave Year 2, standards are broadly average and reflect good achievement. The school is not complacent. It is well placed to raise standards further and has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to sustain improvements. It provides good value for money. Senior leaders, staff and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and take effective action where necessary. For example, changes to the way the curriculum is taught has engaged boys in particular, and helped to close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment that existed previously. Leaders have rightly identified, and the inspection confirms, that initiatives to raise standards in English and mathematics are having a positive impact, but need to be developed further to improve writing among lower and middle attaining pupils. The quality of teaching is good overall and some outstanding teaching takes place. However, teachers do not always plan lessons in the detail needed to make clear what they expect different groups of pupils to attain.

The curriculum is excellent and ensures a broad and balanced experience for pupils and one that they enjoy. The use of the excellent outdoor facilities has transformed the way pupils are taught by fully engaging them in their studies through innovative approaches that capture their interest and reinforce the work undertaken in the classroom. The contributions of pupils to the school in particular and to the wider community are

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excellent. They are reflected in the vibrant displays in corridors and classrooms that show the width of activities in which the pupils engage, for example, in fund-raising, distributing harvest festival produce and in running the school council.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support that helps them make good progress and participate fully in school life. Those considered to be vulnerable are particularly well catered for. Pupils' attendance is broadly average, despite the many initiatives and hard work put in by the school to improve it further. While parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, there are still too many who take their children on holidays during term time.

The headteacher's clarity of vision ensures that there is confidence in the direction in which the school is heading, and new ideas and ways of working are encouraged. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are good at all levels and subject leaders take an effective role in this. Governors play a significant part in planning and monitoring standards and quality; for example, they make a good contribution to setting priorities for improvement. They challenge appropriately as well as supporting whole-heartedly the life and work of the school. These factors mean that the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing among lower and middle attaining pupils by:
 - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills to increase their vocabulary
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to develop and use their handwriting skills.
- Raise the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan clearly to show what they expect different groups of pupils to attain in their lessons
 - identifying and extending the best practices in teaching and learning that are present in the school.

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

Improvements in provision mean that from low starting points, children are now making good progress, so that by the time they leave the school their attainment is broadly average. When their progress, attainment and enjoyment are taken together, pupils' overall achievement is good throughout the school. The innovative use of the excellent outdoor learning areas has had the benefit of making learning more meaningful and so improving pupils' enjoyment and engagement. Where previously boys had lagged behind girls, that gap has been closed and standards improved. Although attainment in reading and mathematics has risen since the last inspection, the school is fully aware of the need to raise standards in writing, particularly in terms of providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking, listening and handwriting skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils make good

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progress because of the high-quality support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants.

In most lessons pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to good learning. However, a few pupils do lose concentration and become inattentive, particularly as they tire during the afternoon session. Pupils eat very healthily and are highly aware of the need to play sports and keep fit. Many take part in sport during break times, such as 'huff and puff' and the running club after school. The school council plays a good role in putting forward ideas and all pupils are given the opportunity to take part. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is nearly always good or better. Classroom routines are well established and ensure that pupils behave well. Excellent class management is a consistent feature and is based on very caring relationships with pupils on the part of teachers and other adults who assist. Good use is made of information and

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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communication technology to engage pupils and to help convey difficult concepts, for example, where pupils are introduced to number patterns. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' planning makes it very clear about what they expect different ability groups of pupils to learn. This enables them to match the content of the lesson accordingly and to monitor the progress of all groups with great precision. This is not the case throughout the school and school leaders have acknowledged the need to bring all practice up to the standard of the best. More generally, assessment is used well to inform both teachers and pupils of the level at which they are working, and to inform pupils about their targets for improvement and the next steps in their learning.

The outstanding curriculum is rich, imaginative and very effective in capturing and engaging pupils' full involvement. The extension of the classroom to include the outdoors, allows teachers a greater flexibility in the way they plan their teaching. They take the opportunity well and learning is characterised by pupils becoming more independent and responsible. The use of educational visits and the many visitors to the school add further breadth and interest. These are popular with pupils and enrich the life of the school and make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. The importance attached to pupils' well-being is reflected in the detailed attention given to providing a safe environment for all children and staff. When pupils, for whatever reason need additional help, support systems are very effective, and parents are particularly appreciative of this. There are highly effective links with specialist agencies to support individual pupils and they are used to good effect to complement the excellent levels of pastoral care, support and guidance provided by the school. There is a very strong and effective partnership established with parents and carers from the early stages in the pupils' school life so that any concerns are dealt with quickly.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clarity of vision coupled with her relentless drive for improvement are used very effectively to set the pace and direction for the school's development. Middle managers, staff and governors subscribe wholly to this vision and the school is characterised by its productive and happy atmosphere, where pupils are open and welcoming to visitors. Staff share in the ambition to succeed. Middle leaders respond well to the responsibilities they are given to monitor pupils' attainment and the progress they make. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching by all leaders is a growing

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strength, but there are still some inconsistencies to be tackled in the way some teachers plan their lessons. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and provide strong support and an appropriate level of challenge to help keep improvements on track. They are fully involved in the good quality school development planning and self-evaluation. Financial control, planning and accountability are good and have resulted in significant improvements to the school environment. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and very effective.

Discrimination is not tolerated at any level and the school is very effective in ensuring that all pupils benefit from good opportunities to succeed. The effectiveness with which community cohesion is promoted is good and, within this, pupils' understanding of the multicultural world in which they live is a developing strength. Through well-founded local networks and support programmes, the school reaches out to those parents who may themselves be disadvantaged. Partnerships with other schools are very effective.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There have been recent and significant changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. These include much improved facilities both indoors and outside and new leadership and management. The governors are also responsible for the privately-run nursery, 'Gateways', on the school site, which ensures outstanding quality of provision for young children. The 'Gateways' Nursery and the school interact closely to mutual benefit.

Excellent induction procedures that fully involve parents and carers give a good

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introduction to children's experience in the school Nursery. Parents and carers are encouraged from the very start to continue to be full partners in the education of their children. The excellent quality of care in the Nursery and Reception classes leads to children being settled, happy and secure. Children make good progress in the new settings in response to the good teaching they receive. The classroom environment provides exciting stimuli for children and they benefit greatly from the well planned use of the outstanding outdoor facilities to develop well across all areas of learning. As a result, the large majority reach expected levels for their age by the end of Reception Year. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is well led and managed overall, but the coordinator's role in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning across the whole of the provision is not sufficiently developed. The well structured curriculum builds learning systematically. Teaching and learning are good and based on a secure knowledge of how young children learn. Planning ensures absorbing learning experiences, through which children learn many new skills and add to their knowledge. For example, children in the Reception class enjoyed collecting autumn leaves. These were used to make leaf prints, which promoted their aesthetic and creative development as well as developing the practical skills involved in mixing paint colours. Adults are efficiently deployed and make a good contribution to evaluating children's development. This is achieved through a simple but secure system of assessment so that a full picture is built up of each child's achievement and progress and the next steps in their learning. The provision complies with requirements for registration.

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 and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They describe the headteacher's leadership as outstanding and very effective in supporting the staff through an extended period of turbulence and disruption while major re-building took place. Parents and carers describe staff as dedicated and relate how they go, 'beyond the extra mile', for example, in taking great care to ensure that classrooms are exciting and stimulating areas for learning. Parents and carers appreciate the safe and secure environment of the school where their children are happy and bullying is not an issue. They praise the way the school encourages children to think of others and to be kind and follow the school's 'Golden Rules'. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the ease of access they have to teachers and are happy with the progress their children

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make. The very few negative comments arose from misunderstandings; parents and carers were concerned that their comments should be seen in the context of their overall high level of satisfaction with the school. The inspection confirmed that the school works hard to engage parents and carers and has good systems in place, both formally and informally, for them to meet with staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saltergate Infant 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 175 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	79	16	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	67	25	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	53	33	43	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	59	28	37	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	70	22	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	59	30	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	68	22	29	1	1	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)	45	59	21	28	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	61	27	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	47	34	45	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	46	37	49	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	74	17	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	76	17	22	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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saltergate Infant School, Harrogate HG3 2TT

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for talking to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. We particularly enjoyed your singing.

I like the way you take responsibility, and how well you are taught to take a pride in your surroundings. I saw this in the wonderful displays in your classrooms that make them interesting places to be in. I was also impressed by how kind you are towards each other, whether in the classrooms or out in the playgrounds. I appreciate how your school helps you in learning to live healthily. Your participation in 'huff and puff' almost left me breathless! Your teachers are very good in ensuring that you are safe and that you know how to live safely. You obviously enjoy your time in the infant school and you are made ready to progress to the next stage of your education.

I found that your school gives you a good standard of education, because teaching is good and the curriculum provided for you is excellent. The way you use the outdoor areas as classrooms is exceptional. This means you achieve well and the standards you reach by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Your enjoyment of school and your regard for your teachers shows in your good behaviour in classrooms and around the school. To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help all of you to raise your standards and make even better progress, especially in writing. They will help you by being even clearer about what they expect from you. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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