

Baldersby St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121478
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339952
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Anna Hare
Headteacher	Mr M Lawn
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
School address	Baldersby St James Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 4PT
Telephone number	01765 640277
Fax number	0
Email address	admin@baldersby-st-james.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed pupils being taught in small groups and individually. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plan, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed 16 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- how well teaching in both classes supports pupils' learning and progress
- how well the school meets the needs of pupils of different abilities and backgrounds
- pupils' understanding and appreciation of communities that are different to their own and how well the school is promoting wider community cohesion
- how the changes made to the curriculum since the last inspection are benefiting pupils
- how well teaching and learning is led and managed.

Information about the school

Baldersby St James is a small rural school which serves three village communities and the surrounding area. The school has two classes; one which accommodates children in the Early Years Foundation Stage alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 and a second containing pupils in Years 3 to 6. Early Years Foundation Stage children join the school in the September preceding their fifth birthday. With very few exceptions, pupils are White British and none is at an early stage in learning English. No pupils are eligible to take a free school meal. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and no pupils have a statement for their special educational need. The school has achieved the Primary Quality Mark and Activemark awards and has National Healthy School status. The school provides curriculum evenings for parents and accommodates local authority adult learning courses.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The strong family atmosphere which prevails ensures pupils are happy at school and value the education they receive. Being with their friends and having lots of fun are the things pupils appreciate the most but they also recognise they are at school to learn. As one pupil wrote about the school, 'It is very good because it helps me and people like me and they care.' Pupils' personal development is promoted well and they grow into sensible, caring young people with a strong sense of social responsibility. Considering its size, the range of experiences the school provides both as part of, and in addition to lessons, is very good and much appreciated by pupils.

Good teaching and colourful, well-organised activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class ensure pupils achieve well and make good progress. While the content of lessons in the Key Stage 2 class is planned carefully, they do not provide the same level of challenge and teachers' expectations of how much the pupils themselves will contribute to lessons are lower. Consequently, while pupils work conscientiously and make steady progress in Key Stage 2, many do not recognise when they need to think for themselves and average attaining pupils, in particular, often rely too much on the staff to get them started and keep them going.

The school is a close-knit community which is very actively involved in the life of the villages it serves. It has very few links with contrasting schools and communities outside of the immediate area. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and appreciation of communities and cultures that are different to their own is often very limited.

Senior staff and governors have a clear picture of where the school is most successful and the areas in which improvement is needed. Involvement in the Creative Partnerships project is an exciting initiative and staff have planned well to ensure that when it commences next term, pupils will derive maximum benefit. While the leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory, there are times when areas in need of improvement are not identified precisely or quickly enough. The school has moved forward steadily since its last inspection and made well-considered changes to the curriculum. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise achievement in Key Stage 2, particularly for average attaining pupils, improve teaching and learning by:
 - raising the level of challenge in lessons by increasing pupils' involvement in discussion and decision making

- promoting pupils' confidence as independent thinkers and learners
- ensuring that procedures for managing teaching and learning enable areas for improvement to be identified precisely and acted upon quickly.
- Broaden the contribution the school makes to community cohesion and increase opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of communities that are different to their own.
- 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

Key Stage 1 pupils are eager to learn and take on every new task with enthusiasm. They readily join in discussions at the beginning of lessons, often putting forward their ideas spontaneously, proud of what they know and keen to share it with others. They quickly get down to work and readily help each other when tasks prove hard. The atmosphere at the start of lessons in Key Stage 2 is less lively. Although pupils sit quietly, introductory discussions are often quite one-sided, with teachers giving a lot of information before eliciting a response from pupils. Once given a task, most pupils apply themselves well and remain focused until it has been completed. They follow instructions carefully and use what they have been taught productively, but many are reluctant to take the initiative and make decisions for themselves. This applies particularly to those of average ability who lack a little confidence as independent learners.

The number of pupils in each year group is often very small and attainment varies year-to-year because of their different starting points. For most individuals, the gains pupils make in knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school represents satisfactory progress. Pupils' progress has quickened in Key Stage 1 in recent times but the improvements have still to work through Key Stage 2. On occasions, lessons in Key Stage 2 do not meet the needs of average attaining pupils well enough and they make less progress than other ability groups. Higher attaining pupils often attain standards that are above average for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress towards their individual targets because they receive well-targeted support. The very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good gains in learning English.

Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff and feel completely safe and secure in school. With a small number of exceptions, pupils of all ages behave well both in and out of lessons and need few reminders of what the school expects from them. Attendance is above average and, when the school bus is on time, they are very punctual. Many pupils exercise regularly and appreciate that this, along with a sensible diet, is key to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and regularly raise funds to help those less fortunate than themselves. Many aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good but their appreciation

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

of cultures and communities that are different to their own is limited. Earning money through projects they have run themselves gives pupils a good understanding of enterprise and financial management. The skills many pupils show, such as the competent use of information and communication technology (ICT) and their ability to work effectively with others provide a strong platform for future learning and life.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The difference in quality often relates to the challenge the work provides and the expectations placed on pupils by the teachers. Although they often have a common starting point, lesson activities in Key Stage 1 are matched carefully to pupils' abilities so that they build progressively on what they already know and can do. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have started to provide different outcomes for class activities so that pupils of different ages and abilities have targets that are appropriate. This is improving the relevance and pitch of the work but adults often do too much of the thinking for pupils, particularly when ways of working and possible

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

outcomes are being discussed. Pupils are set useful individual targets and teachers' marking is generally clear and constructive. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. A lack of insistence on good presentation and neat, fluent handwriting often reduces the quality of older pupils' written work.

The curriculum has undergone substantial development since the last inspection expanding opportunities for pupils and providing better links between subjects. These improvements, which have included a larger number of interesting visits and visitors, have added to pupils' enjoyment of learning and they describe lessons as being interesting and fun. Many of the improvements have been made in conjunction with other organisations and pupils have access to extra-curricular activities not often available in primary schools, such as canoeing and horse riding. ICT is integral to pupils' learning and they use computers confidently and competently in many subjects. While pupils are encouraged to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects, there are times when the overuse of worksheets adversely affects opportunities for further learning.

Staff know each individual pupil well and pay close attention to their care and welfare. Excellent relationships ensure that pupils feel confident to approach staff with their concerns or problems, safe in the knowledge that they will get the help they need and that matters will be dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils are monitored closely enabling any who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to be identified early and the support is provided to help them make the best of their time at school. The school has good links with different agencies which are utilised well to provide additional help for those who need it. Effective transition arrangements ensure that children settle into the school quickly and move to secondary education smoothly when the time comes.

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the leadership of the headteacher the school has a strong sense of purpose and ambition to improve. An effective team approach ensures the school runs smoothly and maintains a positive ethos. Planning for development focuses systematically on improving outcomes for pupils and the school makes good links with other schools and organisations to extend and enhance its own provision. While procedures for managing teaching and learning provide an accurate overview, they do not enable all the factors

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

influencing outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 2 to be pinpointed clearly enough. The school takes considerable care to eliminate any possibilities of discrimination and to ensure that all pupils benefit equally from all the school has to offer. Safeguarding procedures comply with requirements and are checked regularly. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school. The school promotes community cohesion well at a local level but makes too little contribution to understanding national community cohesion. Governors carry out their statutory duties diligently but several have only recently taken on new responsibilities and are developing their ability to make a full contribution to decision making and action planning.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

After attending play group or nursery most children start school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They are taught well by an experienced teacher and teaching assistant and make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage almost all children are working securely within the expectations for their age and some have moved beyond. Teachers assess children's progress frequently and use the information constructively to provide colourful and interesting activities, both in and out of doors, which children enjoy thoroughly. Although this provision is made within the infant classroom, good leadership and management ensure that it is tailored specifically to the needs of the Early Years Foundation Stage children and reflects fully the national guidelines for the age group. As a result, children learn well and move into Year 1 well equipped for the National

Curriculum. They talk readily to staff and each other using a good range of words to explain what they are doing and to show what they know. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language and number skills with activities that have purpose and meaning so that children appreciate why they are doing them. As a result, children are enthusiastic learners who enjoy playing and working in the company of others. Their behaviour is good and they readily help each other and staff when opportunities arise. Parents are happy that their children are well cared for. Staff construct colourful and well-illustrated records of children's achievements which are regularly sent home to provide parents with a clear picture of how well their children are progressing.

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

Most parents hold very positive views of the school and of the provision made for their children's education. They are pleased that their children enjoy school and find staff 'caring and enthusiastic'. A minority of parent have some concerns about behaviour but that seen during the inspection was generally good and the pupils themselves agreed that inappropriate behaviour occurs very infrequently. A small number of parents question whether their children are making sufficient progress. Inspectors recognise that there are times when older pupils could learn more and have reported how this could be achieved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Baldersby St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	36	16	64	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	20	14	56	3	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	20	16	64	3	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	56	8	32	3	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	52	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	32	15	60	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	24	18	72	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	40	9	36	2	8	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	24	13	52	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	72	5	20	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	56	10	40	1	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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Baldersby St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Thirsk, YO7 4PT

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Baldersby St James is a satisfactory school and some of the things it does are good. Most of you make satisfactory progress and the quality of your work is around where it should be for your age. The task now is to make it even better. When I came into lessons I could see that when you are set a task to do and helped by adults you work conscientiously and try hard to meet the success criteria the teacher has set. I have asked teachers in the Key Stage 2 to involve you more in thinking things through and working things out for yourselves. You need to play your part. For example, when the teacher is introducing the work, think carefully about what you already know or can do and how this might help. If you have any good ideas, be prepared to share them with the teacher and the rest of the class.

Thank you to all the pupils who filled in the questionnaires about the school, they have been very useful and informative. I am pleased that you feel safe and well cared for at school and I know this is important to the staff. Some of you indicated that you did not think behaviour in school was good enough. I can see why you think this but most of you behave well; it is just a small number who misbehave occasionally. Most of you said that you enjoyed school and the many interesting and fun things you are given to do in lessons and after school. Your personal development is good and I think you grow into sensible and responsible young people. Your teachers and I agree that you would enjoy meeting pupils from schools that are quite different to your own and this is something they will be looking into. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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