

Swainby and Potto CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121617
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339980
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Decosemo
Headteacher	Mrs Penny Vernon
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons and observed three teachers. He observed some of the school's other activities and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. He analysed the school's documentation, progress data, welfare arrangements and the 25 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers, as well as those from staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which the recent improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 is being sustained
- the use of assessment data by teachers to plan suitably challenging work for all pupils, including children in the Reception class
- the extent to which pupils are aware of the world beyond school, including its multicultural dimension
- the suitability of the curriculum for the different year groups, including the Reception class, and for gifted and talented pupils
- the impact of self-evaluation on development planning.

Information about the school

This is a small rural primary school. All pupils are White British, with a preponderance of boys. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. Few have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is federated with nearby Osmotherley Primary School; the headteacher shares her time equally between both schools. The pupils are taught in two classes – one for children in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, and the other for pupils in Key Stage 2.

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 is a good school. It has a happy and positive atmosphere in which the quality of care for pupils is outstanding. Staff are very aware of the individual needs of pupils and support all groups of pupils well, including the most vulnerable. Teaching is generally good and, with an improved curriculum, pupils understandably enjoy school and work hard. They behave well and are considerate of one another; older pupils automatically look after younger ones, for example. Pupils rightly feel extremely safe. Parents and carers are also happy with the school. One said, reflecting the views of others, 'I feel that staff have every child's best interest at heart.'

Standards have improved and are above average; pupils achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 rose dramatically in 2009 and were high. Currently, Year 6 pupils are working at a better than the average level. With such small year groups, it is likely that standards will fluctuate, but the underlying trend through the school is one of rising attainment. There are no significant differences between groups of pupils or subjects. Teaching has improved and, consequently, lessons now have appropriate challenge, good pace and involvement of all pupils, helped by the good numbers of support staff. The curriculum has become richer and more stimulating, although this is not the case in every lesson. There are some good links with the local and global communities, but pupils are not sufficiently aware of the diversity of communities in the United Kingdom. The school has done well to improve aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage, but there is still work to do. Provision here is satisfactory and children's progress is also satisfactory. Children benefit from working alongside older pupils, but do not always have enough time specifically with their teacher. In addition, the outside area is not yet well resourced enough to promote learning fully.

The good leadership of the headteacher, well supported by an effective governing body, has been the driving force behind recent improvements. Importantly, the staff work cohesively and increasingly benefit from the federation with Osmotherley Primary School. Accurate self-evaluation has prompted efficient development plans which, in turn, have ensured steady improvement since the last inspection. Not only have teaching, standards and aspects of the curriculum improved, but so has the quality of care. As a result, the school demonstrates a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- expediting the existing plans to develop resources fully as soon as possible, especially to provide better scope for outdoor learning
- ensuring that children have a suitable balance of opportunities for independent learning and sufficient time with their teacher.
- Develop pupils' awareness of the broader community in the United Kingdom by providing a range of first-hand experiences and by making full use of current events.

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

Pupils enjoy school and their learning. They are attentive and interested in lessons and capable of sustaining concentration for long periods. They respond readily to given tasks and are particularly effective when working with a partner or in groups. Their good behaviour results in little time being lost in lessons and a good pace of work.

Consistently above average attendance is testament to their keenness for school.

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. At the last inspection standards were average, but they rose sharply last year. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that standards continue to be above average in Key Stage 2 in all subjects except that writing standards are not quite as high as standards in reading. In Key Stage 1 standards are broadly average. There are variations between groups from time to time in both key stages, but there are no consistent disparities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve equally as well as other pupils.

Pupils feel very secure at school. They know that staff value them highly and can always be relied upon to sort out problems. The Christian, family ethos is ever present and helps pupils reflect on their life and that of others. Pupils relish exercise and understand the need for a sensible, balanced diet. Through the school council and their eco-committee, they know about civic responsibility and this is reinforced through such activities as litter picking in the village and protesting about the closure of the nearby post office. They are well aware of other cultures and faiths, but are less knowledgeable about the diversity in the United Kingdom. All in all, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	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?

Teachers work hard to overcome the complexities of teaching classes with mixed-age year groups and very different abilities. In the main, they succeed in challenging and motivating pupils through careful planning, varied questions and very different tasks. Sometimes, though, teachers are not flexible enough in their approach to whole-class activities and so groups of pupils are not kept fully focused. However, the clarity of teachers' expectations, the open-ended nature of tasks, the interesting range of resources and the sensitive support from teachers and teaching assistants ensure that learning is essentially good. Staff give good guidance to pupils in lessons, but do not always reinforce their messages through marking.

The curriculum is well structured and allows for the good development of pupils' skills. Teachers expand learning, not only through visits, visitors and special weeks, but also through interesting topics that naturally combine subjects. Key Stage 2 pupils displayed a whole range of skills, including planning, costing, catering, hospitality, computer and presentational skills, when they staged a film première of Romulus and Remus recently. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are gifted or talented. Regular music tuition is available, for example. Provision for personal and health education is effective in weekly lessons and informally at all times around the school.

The quality of care is outstanding. The formal procedures to ensure pupils' well-being are scrupulously maintained. Staff are vigilant but pragmatic about safety. For example, the supervision of pupils at break time allowed pupils to be creative in their descents of a slide yet neatly managed any over-exuberance. Staff make sure that the most reticent

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or vulnerable pupils play a full and equal part in school life. The very caring nature of the school means that children's movement from Reception to Year 6 is seamless.

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 leadership team has a clear view of how effective the school is at present and what still needs some improvement. The headteacher and governors rightly see that the school is on something of a journey, with a little way to go. Improvements to teaching, assessment and the curriculum are understandably taking some time to bed in fully, but clearly have already been effective. The clear vision, dedication and determination of the headteacher underpin the improvements. She ensures that all pupils are treated equally as individuals, whatever their background, needs or abilities. The shrewd and knowledgeable support of the governing body has been vital. Governors are fully involved in the school's development and rigorously monitor the progress of its action plans. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met; this includes highly efficient procedures for safeguarding pupils. The school is extremely thorough in checking the suitability of adults who work with children, for example. Termly audits of health and safety by an external agency are very positive. Risk assessments for all activities are stringent.

Partnerships with families and outside agencies are influential. Of particular importance is the federation which is enabling staff to share ideas and resources, and access activities more easily, such as residential visits. One day a week, pupils from both schools combine to form a Year 3/4 class and a Year 5/6 class, thus providing a valuable social and academic boost. Communication through the website is very good and parents and carers are increasingly involved in a range of the school's activities. The school is about to launch a project to strengthen home–school learning. Specialist agencies are used wisely to provide expertise for pupils with specific needs.

The school is an integral part of the local community. There are close links with the church; the vicar comes weekly to lead assemblies, for example. The school does well to promote pupils' awareness of the wider, world community through special projects and useful links with schools overseas. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of the diverse nature of the communities in the United Kingdom, even those relatively close to their own locality.

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Children have a positive start to school in their Reception Year. They settle and understand the expected routines quickly and develop social skills well; indeed, much of their personal development is as good as that of the other pupils in the school. At present, though, their academic progress is not as good. It is satisfactory but it is improving because the school has provided better resources and there is a good ratio of staff to children. Although attainment varies because of the very small number each year, they tend to start school with skills and abilities typical of four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception Year, they maintain the levels expected for their age. Their personal and social development is good.

The outdoor area, an issue at the last inspection, now provides greater scope for independent learning; the school has plans to develop it further to offer a more interesting and varied range of opportunities. Most activities are stimulating and prompt good speaking, listening and development of skills. However, children do not benefit from enough time being taught by the teacher and this means that they are not challenged enough. The curriculum is supported by the afternoon work with the pupils in Key Stage 1 and the quality of care is very high. All staff, for example, have had the requisite first-aid training for young children.

As elsewhere, the leadership has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. It has done well to provide greater challenge for children, improve their personal and social development, and begin to boost standards. The current emphasis to improve standards, resources and the accommodation, and to create a new dynamic

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policy, is appropriate but would benefit from swifter action.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

A very high percentage of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. Their responses were very positive; they especially praised the school's ethos, the quality of teaching and learning and the high level of care. The inspector agrees with these views. There were one or two concerns about the possible disadvantages of mixed-year classes and the part-time role of the headteacher. While acknowledging that these issues do pose challenges for the school, the inspector judges that the school handles them well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swainby and Potto C of E 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	50	1	50	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)	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	100	0	0	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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swainby and Potto C of E Primary School, Northallerton, DL6 3DH

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. I enjoyed my two days getting to know your school and I appreciated your thoughts and comments, and those of your parents and carers. I can now tell you what I think about your school.

In a nutshell, it is a good school – but I think you already knew that. You achieve well in your work and your standards have improved recently. This is because teaching and the curriculum are good. Lessons are interesting with exciting topics and links between subjects, and you are being challenged more to do your best. The staff support you well in lessons. In addition, of course, you work hard. You clearly enjoy your work, listen well and maintain good concentration. I have asked the school to make sure that those of you in the Reception Year learn as well as other pupils by having staff provide more interesting things to do and by giving you more time with your teacher.

The school takes excellent care of you and I know that you feel extremely safe. This is also evident in the way you look after one another. I know your behaviour is not perfect, but it is good. You are considerate and thoughtful, and you lead active and healthy lives. I am impressed with your good attendance. You benefit from the links with Osmotherley and the village, but I have asked the school to make sure that you learn more about the rest of the country, especially all the different communities.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors have made some good improvements to the school and have sensible ideas to develop your school further. I am sure they would be happy to hear of any ideas you may have that will help. I also hope that you will be able to do more things like the staging of the Romulus and Remus première. You clearly learned a lot about real life in a short time.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector

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