

Ralph Butterfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121299
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	292071
Inspection date	3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Thompson
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	Station Road Haxby York North Yorkshire YO32 3LS
Telephone number	01904 768325
Fax number	01904 768325

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large school is situated in a sizeable town to the north of York. Virtually all pupils are from a White British background. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average in number. The school admits children into Reception in September and January. The majority is usually admitted in January, which gives these children two terms in Reception. The school has had a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher since it was last inspected. It gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2005 and was awarded Healthy School status in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'A fantastic school that is very friendly and welcoming. The children meet the high standards expected of them, both socially and academically,' is a typical view held by very many parents. The inspection finds that this is a good school with some outstanding features. The superb care provided for pupils has a powerful influence on their personal development, which is excellent.

The school's atmosphere is one of consideration and mutual respect. These result from the fine example set by leaders' caring approach. In such an inclusive context, pupils feel safe, are encouraged to lead a healthy life and enjoy school immensely: no wonder that attendance is first-rate. They praise their teachers for providing interesting lessons and teachers show a detailed knowledge of the pupils and their needs. The pupil council is exceedingly well run by the pupils themselves who have a profound interest in everything that goes on. They are extremely proud, for example, of their efforts in raising funds to employ a basketball coach for after-school tuition. Pupils value the care they receive.

The provision for children in Reception (the Foundation Stage) is satisfactory and improving rapidly. A year ago, children had little opportunity to play outside purposefully and so standards reached were below the nationally expected level. This year, there are many exciting things to do, inside and outside, which have helped to quicken progress in all areas of learning. The new deputy headteacher has led the way admirably in instituting these developments. As a result, links with the pre-school providers are stronger. Standards are now in line with national expectations. The improved nature of the Foundation Stage is an accomplishment which contributes to this being a good school.

Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Currently, standards in Year 6 are above the national average, as they were in 2006. The school has a reputation among parents for good standards. For example in 2004 and 2005, attainment was exceptionally high at the end of Year 6, putting the school within the top 10% of schools nationally. Moreover, the well above average standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2006 represent a success story. It was declining in the three years up to 2006. Since then, dynamic teaching in Year 2 has enabled pupils to make some rapid improvements, particularly in their reading and writing. Well above average performance has been sustained in Year 2 this year, which is a tribute to the resolve shown by leaders to halt the downward trend. By contrast, pupils' progress is satisfactory in Year 1. The school has identified, and begun tackling, this relative weakness.

Teaching has a positive influence on pupils' learning and progress. Despite a few patches of pedestrian teaching, the majority of lessons involve pupils fully in demanding and interesting tasks. This is partly because the headteacher, who has considerable skills of analysis, has made sure that teaching is nourished by helpful information from assessments. Thoughtful evaluation leading to sustained improvements is the hallmark of the school's capable leadership and management. It is the thread that binds pupils' excellent personal development and good academic progress together.

The curriculum is a contributing factor in pupils' good progress, particularly in the way that programmes in English, mathematics and science have been well-honed to allow improved achievement. Higher attaining pupils, in Year 6, are increasingly reaching their potential in national tests. Throughout the school, pupils with a wider range of gifts and talents across the curriculum develop them reasonably well, but could do better still. The school's current computer

hardware facilities, which are about to be upgraded, limit the way pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. Moreover, there are too few links between subjects beyond English, mathematics and science. So, pupils do not use and develop their skills of investigation and problem solving to the full.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress made by pupils in Year 1 to match the good progress elsewhere in the school.
- Improve the curriculum to ensure that skills of investigation and problem solving are fully developed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and leave in Year 6 with above average standards. The continuance of this good achievement is made more possible now that progress is satisfactory, and improving, in the Foundation Stage. It was the case in recent years that pupils' writing, in Years 1 to 6, lagged behind other aspects. This has been remedied, to a large extent, and pupils are writing with more panache throughout the school. In Year 1, advancements in writing have been made, while reading and mathematics have slipped a bit. This lack of consistent progress demonstrates that greater progress can be made before pupils enter Year 2. While standards overall at the end of Year 2 rose in 2006 to well above average, attainment in reading and writing at the higher level was only average. Currently, more pupils in Year 2 are reaching those higher levels: another facet of the school's good achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Behaviour is exemplary and pupils possess marvellously positive attitudes. The school underestimates its success in this aspect: personal development is first-rate rather than good. Pupils revel in the lively assemblies and also the small scale opportunities to help the few individuals who feel sad from time to time. The pupil council ensures that everyone feels involved in its endeavours. Those elected to its membership relish their responsibilities in striving for the common good. In this way, all pupils are prepared excellently for the next stage in their education and subsequently the world of work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's Healthy School Award, including the improved lunchtime meals, ensures that pupils greatly appreciate important topics related to staying fit and healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils assert that, 'Teachers are great and learning is fun.' The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are some outstandingly taught lessons, but occasionally some teaching gives too many instructions without putting the onus on pupils to get thoroughly involved. The inconsistencies in teaching in Year 1, for example, lead to pupils not always making the progress of which they are capable. Good systems to assess standards and progress throughout the school engage pupils in targets designed to help them improve their learning. In some lessons

these systems are applied with ease and enjoyment, such as when, in Year 3, pupils were expertly tutored in the difference between formal and informal letters, leaving them in no doubt how to judge the success of their own draft copies. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included skilfully, by talented assistants, so they succeed as well as the others. Able, gifted and talented pupils learn well generally. The school recognises, however, that the scope of their learning could be enhanced, particularly in relation to the development of the skills of investigation and problem solving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been successfully enhanced, so that pupils are making good progress in English, mathematics and science. The provision for ICT is adequate, but the school is only at the beginning of equipping all classes with interactive whiteboards and new desk- and lap-top computers. This has tended to limit the application of pupils' skills in their work. The curriculum for personal development has a very good effect, particularly since pupils enjoy talking about their feelings and experiences so much. Physical education, music and French are provided for well by visiting experts. Clubs for trampolining, fencing and gardening add extra zest to the already exciting opportunities provided. Programmes for teaching pupils about keeping safe and contributing to school life are exceptionally good. For example, pupils in Year 5 take full responsibility for running a school stationery store. The skills of business planning, customer service and re-ordering are all sharpened remarkably.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive high quality support at all levels, which includes that given by the pupil council. Members of the council take their supportive role very seriously. Child protection arrangements and risk assessment procedures are in place fully and working well. A strength of the school's work is the way in which parents are engaged very closely in their children's learning. They certainly appreciate the advice provided and the response if things get out of balance, temporarily. For example, the new homework policy in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, agreed by parents, took a little time to bed in. Parents' views were considered and the majority now see the benefit of the new system. Moreover, all pupils receive very good guidance about their academic targets. Additional help is used well for any pupil who needs it; the school's successful programmes of intervention have brought acclaim from parents and the local authority.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and developing fast after some temporary absences. Since stability has been resumed, advances have notched up a gear. The most beneficial effect, emanating from the insightful leadership, is the way in which all aspects of management are knitted together seamlessly. The performance management of staff, the targeted use of in-service training and the close involvement of governors at every stage, for example, are all successfully integrated. There is more to do in making sure that all subject leaders are as influential as the most effective. Nevertheless, this aspect is being tackled with some good results already. This is a school which knows precisely where its strengths and development points are. There has not been time, as yet, for all its weaknesses to be resolved. However, it

has a good capacity to succeed as judged by its recent successes and the improvement from 2002.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Ralph Butterfield Primary School, York, YO32 3LS

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day with you all.

You go to a good school with some first-rate features. I know that you are enormously proud of it because everyone that I spoke to told me so. As you know, I had lunch with the core group of the pupil council. They fascinated me with what you have all done to improve the school and how you all help each other to have a happy time. Apart from that, they convinced me that you all know your targets by reciting, in great detail, what they are currently aiming at in class. You told me that teaching is good and helps you to learn well and I agree. I really like the way that some of you are so keen that you kept trying to persuade me to come and see particular lessons. I am only sorry that my busy schedule stopped me seeing everything that you requested.

I know everyone wants to do even better and I have suggested two things that will help. Firstly, pupils in Year 1 should make quicker progress so that, when they get into Year 2, they can reach even higher standards. Secondly, you need more chances to develop skills of investigating and solving problems. It would help you to do this if the content of different subjects was linked more closely together. This will appeal to those of you who have a particular gift or talent, who could flourish a bit more, but actually everyone will benefit. It will be a lot easier when you get your upgraded computer system.

You can all help the school do better by doing your very best and trying hard at the problem solving and extra investigations when they come your way.