

Drax Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121389
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359003
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
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 of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Greenwood
Headteacher	Mrs J Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2007
School address	Castle Hill Lane Drax, Selby North Yorkshire YO8 8NP
Telephone number	01757 618320
Fax number	01757 618815
Email address	admin@drax.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed six lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school's documents for self-evaluation, the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress and the work pupils were doing in their books. Inspectors studied the 29 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- Additional information about year groups and groups of pupils to support the view that learning and progress are good rather than satisfactory as statistical data suggest.
- An apparent discrepancy between the seemingly satisfactory outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the good quality of provision, as judged by the school.
- Methods of self-evaluation used by the school to justify its judgements.

Information about the school

Drax is a small school compared to a typical primary school nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. There are below average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, but currently no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. In some year groups a large majority of pupils have special educational needs or are vulnerable in other ways, such as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The number of classes was reduced from three at the beginning of this academic year. In the last three years, the school has experienced a significant change in staff. Since its last inspection, the school has been awarded the Active Mark and Healthy School status. It has also been recognised for its skills in financial management (FMIS).

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

Pupils learn well and make good progress. Good learning has been maintained well since 2007 despite several key changes in staff. Overall, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at below the typically expected level and achieve broadly average results by the end of Year 6. Underlying this success is a thorough attention to the needs of particularly vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Good teaching promotes a lively interest in learning. Results in Year 6 vary from year to year owing to the small number of pupils involved, sometimes as few as two. Pupils make good progress. Assessment information is used well in teaching to set work at the correct level. The marking of pupils' work and their understanding of the next steps in learning are not yet consistently good across the school.

The school engages well with parents and carers and forms productive partnerships with a wide range of organisations, which have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and well-being. Some parents are concerned about the progress their children are making, particularly in Year 2. Inspection findings show that these and other pupils in Key Stage 1, progress well when being taught directly by teachers or the assistants. However, the pace of their learning sometimes slows because extension or play activities are not always challenging enough and do not give pupils good opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is committed to tackling them.

The headteacher has a firm knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Other staff share informally in the role of monitoring practice but so far lack enough formal opportunities to develop the skills of evaluation needed in depth. Nevertheless, self-evaluation, largely conducted by the headteacher, has identified the correct aspects to be developed. A much more relevant curriculum and strengthened links with other small schools have promoted pupils' personal qualities and much improved outdoor learning facilities for Reception children demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 by:
 - - raising the level of challenge in independent work and educational play activities
 - - making sure that pupils have regular opportunities to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

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- Raise standards even further by ensuring that all pupils receive clear advice on how to improve their work through marking and discussion about how to reach the next level of attainment.
- Provide opportunities for staff to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluation so they can be more involved in the process of school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well because lessons command their interest. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 often make first-rate progress in writing compared to their good progress in reading and mathematics owing to the enthralling methods used. By the end of a writing session, in one lesson, older pupils were very proud of the advert they had composed that incorporated persuasive vocabulary. This practice illustrates why pupils achieve so well in writing as they progress through the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also learn well, especially when teaching is persistent at probing their understanding and extending their use of apt description.

Different groups of pupils progress well. For example, the higher proportion of boys thrives, as well as the girls, on the demanding practical work, and chances of working with older pupils in mixed-age classes. Higher attainers and pupils with special gifts and talents in music and sport also learn well because careful thought is applied to meeting their needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well owing to the painstaking consideration given to meeting their needs related to, for example, dyslexia, emotional difficulties or autism.

Current standards in Year 6 are above average. This represents, for the very small group of pupils concerned, at least good achievement. The pace of learning has only dipped slightly in Key Stage 1 this year since the introduction of two classes. Moreover, this dip only occurs when pupils are practising their basic skills or choosing their own play activities. Pupils sometimes encounter tasks that do not challenge them sufficiently.

Consistently good personal qualities help pupils to enjoy and achieve well. An interesting curriculum, coupled with the positive care provided, ensures that pupils grow in confidence. For example, they raise money for Haiti, play golf and learn street-dance with pupils from other small schools, and build scarecrows for the village festival. Their enthusiasm spills over into all aspects of school life such as the notable school productions, taking part in a Royal Shakespeare Company project and the joy they derive from sharing their achievements with older citizens at a local residential home. Behaviour is good. Pupils are rightly proud of how safe they all feel. They know about how to lead healthy lives and try hard to practise what they have learnt.

They use basic skills of English and mathematics well, particularly when older pupils use these skills in subjects such as history. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good although pupils' cultural development is limited slightly by the lack of international connections.

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

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	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

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching provides learning that is pitched well for different groups and abilities. Pupils are provided with well-planned activities suited for all levels such as asking them to think hard about how to present data in graphs or when experimenting with sounds on violins, cellos or saxophones. Those who require extra help owing to special educational needs receive good support. Assessment is generally good and teachers know at what level pupils are learning and what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not always clear about the level at which they are working and what they need to do to improve.

Teaching successfully enables pupils to become more confident so that they can assume a good level of responsibility for their own learning and results in motivated pupils who behave well in lessons. The system of providing younger pupils in Key Stage 1 with a range of activities to complete, by way of a follow up to direct teaching, is not wholly effective as the work is not consistently challenging.

The curriculum is good and promotes pupils' basic skills and personal qualities well. There are many clubs and other extra-curricular activities to motivate pupils. Pupils are particularly keen on the joint residential with their peers from other small schools and the way that school councils from across the local cluster meet to share ideas. The positive care, guidance and support provided for vulnerable pupils and their families results in above average attendance and makes it possible for all pupils to reach their potential.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

The headteacher leads well and is able to take a more strategic role since being released from class responsibilities from September 2010. Teachers work well together in evaluating provision and outcomes, which reflects the good sense of ambition and drive that exists within the school. Although yet to develop a more formal structure within which to monitor and judge the effectiveness of practice, they are now poised to tackle such tasks. Governance is only satisfactory as some very new members of the governing body are still being inducted and so do not yet know the school well enough. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their families, receive specific and helpful care, guidance and support. The school's methods for safeguarding pupils are good. The provision for ensuring pupils' safety in the school grounds has been improved and this is welcomed by many parents and pupils. The school has a family ethos and has created productive links with the local small schools, the village and the local church. International and global links are only just being developed, for example, with a school in Tanzania and a possible project with UNESCO. As a result, community cohesion is satisfactory overall.

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

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	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	2
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

Overall, children make good progress from below typically expected levels on entry to reach average standards by the end of the Reception year. Occasionally, some children are still below average in reading, writing and mathematical calculations by the time they enter Year 1 but make good progress against their individual starting points. The school has worked hard to improve the provision outside to make sure that children's play is more purposeful and can continue in all weathers.

Children often make strong strides in their personal development because they are helped to make good choices about what they do and they mix freely with older pupils in Key Stage 1, which has a beneficial effect on their behaviour and attitudes. Teaching is good both from teachers or their well-qualified assistants. Direct teaching, for example of letters and their sounds that they make, is particularly good. Children enjoy greatly the frog glove puppet that tells them how well they are doing and praises the higher attaining children who receive extra challenges. As a result, reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage progresses at speed. By contrast, the rate of progress in children's writing is only satisfactory. The school is aware of this issue and is working to improve children's writing skills.

Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children settle in well and thrive thereafter. Assessment of children's capabilities is undertaken thoroughly as is seen in the children's learning journey folders that are shared with parents and carers. Self-evaluation is effective. The school knows what needs to be done to continue to develop the provision in Reception.

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

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

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire is almost double the typical percentage in primary schools. The inspection questionnaires show that the large majority of parents and carers hold positive opinions about the school. Most are happy with their children's education. A minority have concerns about their children's progress primarily because of the reduction in the number of classes since September 2010 which resulted in all pupils in Year 2 being taught alongside children in Reception and Year 1. The inspection found that pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 could be quicker in contexts where they are choosing their own activities and when playing with the same resources as younger children. The school is aware of this issue and is currently planning to tackle it.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Drax Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	48	14	48	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	52	13	45	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	24	15	52	7	24	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	24	14	48	7	24	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	7	24	15	52	5	17	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	34	14	48	4	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	31	18	62	1	3	1	3
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	28	11	38	3	10	2	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	24	14	48	7	24	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	28	16	55	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	34	12	41	4	14	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	8	28	9	31	8	28	3	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	31	13	45	5	17	1	3

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Drax Community Primary School, Selby YO8 8NP

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed my two days at Drax. What impressed me most was the enjoyment you all have in your daily work but also in the extra opportunities provided for you such as the school productions and helping in the local community. The mock wedding in Class 1 and the performance of Cinderella by the whole school both show how enthusiastic you all are.

Your questionnaires revealed how positive you are about school life. Although a few of you would like behaviour to be even better, you understand that some pupils find it hard sometimes to control their emotions but you think that behaviour is good overall.

You go to a good school and the vast majority of you learns and achieves well by the end of Year 6. I know all staff want you to do even better, so I have asked your school to do three things to improve.

- First, your teachers need to make sure that by the end of Key Stage 1 all pupils are doing as well as possible in their reading, writing and mathematics. This means that independent tasks and play activities will need to contain strong challenges.
- Second, the school should ensure that you all know what you need to do to improve.
- Third, staff need more opportunities to make checks on what is provided for you to ensure things are as good as they can be.

Best wishes to you all and in your efforts to make links with schools in other countries.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Gill

Lead Inspector

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