

Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121332
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	367423
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Gater

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	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nikki Gray
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Lyon
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and four teachers were seen. Discussions were held with staff, parents and carers, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation that included safeguarding policies, assessment data, monitoring records and pupils' work. They analysed 29 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The way in which teachers use assessment information to plan activities that challenge the range of abilities in each class
- How effectively leaders monitor the attainment and progress of pupils; in particular, of those who join the school at different times
- The impact of actions taken in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve outcomes for children

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than the average sized primary school situated on a military base. All pupils come from service families. Due to military postings the rate of mobility is very high: between September 2009 and July 2010, 28 pupils left and 13 joined the school. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently well above the national average. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved a number of recognitions. These include Healthy School status, Inclusion Mark, and Eco and Global Awards. The school has set up and manages an after-school club to support arrangements for childcare.

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

1

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care for all its pupils. The headteacher, staff and governing body are passionate in their commitment to promote a safe learning environment that supports the best personal and academic outcomes for all pupils. The school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers acknowledge that their children enjoy school and they are extremely confident that the school keeps them safe. They comment on 'the fantastic teaching' and 'the amazing progress' that children make academically, socially and emotionally.

There are many opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to learn how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles and as a result they have an excellent understanding of these two aspects. They participate enthusiastically in a range of clubs, such as football, cricket, running and dance. Pupils confidently assume roles of responsibility and are keen to improve their school. They are proud of their work with an artist to create a maze on the school field. Pupils' involvement in the Eco-club has raised awareness of sustainable development within their school and community.

Pupils enjoy learning because of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum that is responsive to their needs. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from their relative starting points. This is because of the highly effective system for tracking pupils' progress and the fact that school leaders carefully analyse each individual's progress. This is especially rigorous for pupils who join the school at different times and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Well trained teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide targeted intervention programmes that result in these groups making outstanding progress.

The school constantly evaluates its context. A homework club is attended well and provides pupils with good extra guidance and access to resources. During this term the headteacher has acted quickly and highly effectively to address staff absence. This has resulted in accelerated progress for the pupils concerned. Her excellent understanding of effective teaching and learning has impacted on the way that assessment is used very successfully to plan activities that challenge the wide range of abilities within each class. The high priority on ensuring that pupils develop their reading and writing skills across the curriculum has resulted in some pupils now making outstanding progress in these aspects of literacy. The school recognises that still more can be done to raise attainment and is placed well to accelerate progress in mathematics in the same way as it has in English.

Since the last inspection the governing body has grown in strength and now makes an exceptional contribution to the school. Its members are fully involved in monitoring the school improvement plan and know what steps are needed to secure further success. The issue from the last inspection has been addressed successfully. In addition, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now outstanding. A

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focus on linking sounds and letters has led to improved outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Strategies to improve pupils' performance in reading, based upon tightly focused systems for monitoring progress, have proved to be very successful. Self-evaluation procedures are sharp and accurate. Through systematic performance management and subsequent professional development the headteacher has developed leadership roles at all levels. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers regularly share effective practice although the school's leadership recognises that this process could be even more extensive. The school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment and further accelerate progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - further sharing and embedding the outstanding elements of practice that exist across the school
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their mathematical skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say they learn a lot at school. They enjoy and respond well to the challenges set in lessons. Older pupils were seen confidently formulating lower- and higher-order questions to test the teacher during a mathematics session. Younger pupils quickly acquire new words in French because of the teacher's fluency and interactive approach through games and music. Behaviour is good and pupils cooperate well with each other.

Small numbers in each year group, the high level of mobility and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make it difficult to compare the school's performance against national data. The headteacher recognises this and is meticulous in tracking individuals during their time at the school. Generally, when children start school their skills are often below those typical for their age, especially in social and emotional development and aspects of literacy. Because of good teaching and high-quality support that is targeted to the needs of individuals, all children make good progress. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, with an increasing number of pupils reaching the higher levels. For some pupils across the school gaps in mathematical understanding are wider than those in literacy and this causes some variation in outcomes between the subjects. Current data show that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants act as excellent role models and pupils show tolerance and respect for each other. They are keen to help others less fortunate than themselves through a range of fundraising activities. Sports and arts partnerships offer pupils the opportunity to interact with others in the local community. Throughout school pupils gain self-esteem and interact well with different groups of people. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their enterprise skills. They develop confidence in speaking and listening, work well in teams and have good skills in the use of information and communication technology. All these, including good attendance, prepare pupils well for the future.

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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	1
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	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?

Pupils say that their lessons are fun. Relationships are excellent; there is a positive learning climate in which teachers' constructive praise raises self-esteem. Teachers engage pupils' interest with effective use of the interactive whiteboards. They provide clear explanations so that pupils settle quickly to group or independent work. Excellent use is made of assessment information in planning tasks to enable all pupils to make good progress. Skilful questioning is used to extend thinking and to prompt pupils to explain their reasoning. The way in which pupils receive immediate feedback has a positive effect on their learning and their confidence. Teachers evaluate each other's practice and this is increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching.

The school curriculum has been revised to take into account the specific needs of the school. There is a commitment to ensuring that pupils new to the school feel emotionally secure and that very accurate assessment pinpoints the next steps in their learning. Support programmes are timetabled so that many pupils receive small group or individual tuition that improves their basic skills. The school recognises that there is not yet the breadth of opportunity for pupils to apply and practise mathematical skills across the curriculum that is provided to develop skills in literacy. Whole-school topics make links between subjects and each topic incorporates a community, global and enterprise project. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the current 'Banquet' topic which culminated in a

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Tudor-style summer fair and an end-of-term feast. In partnership with a local artist they have also developed their art skills by using chalk to create impressive Tudor portraits.

Outstanding care and support for all pupils are at the heart of the school. The headteacher, governors and staff make it a priority to welcome new pupils and their families and are always on hand to answer any queries. A teaching assistant is in charge of 'Arrivals and Departures' and works closely with all involved to make induction as smooth as possible. One child comments, 'I was only here a day and I felt like I had been here forever.' All staff know pupils extremely well and are quick to identify barriers to learning. They work closely with external agencies to provide appropriate support. The parent support adviser values the close liaison she has with the school and acknowledges the headteacher's determination to help all pupils succeed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 headteacher has been instrumental in creating systems that are tightly focused on monitoring pupils' progress. Careful analysis of data identifies priorities and leaders and managers are highly committed in their drive to address any variation in attainment and progress. The leadership of teaching and learning and the use of assessment information to underpin this are outstanding. Strategies and interventions that have been very successful in reading are now being targeted to improve standards in mathematics. The headteacher actively encourages and invests in the development of all staff, empowering them as leaders. As a result, morale is high. There is an open dialogue and actions are in place to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

The governing body provides excellent support and challenge and frequently evaluates its own performance. Members of the governing body take a proactive role in ensuring that robust procedures are in place both for safeguarding arrangements and for the wider safety and welfare of staff and pupils. The governing body has excellent communications with parents and carers and has established a 'Parents' Forum' in order to seek and act on views. The school also ensures that parents and carers are fully informed of their children's progress. Everything possible is done to provide exemplary care for pupils. The school is successful in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. For example, it has developed an exceptionally thorough checklist to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with the result that these pupils are supported very well and make outstanding progress.

The school is a very cohesive family unit and promotes links within the local community and beyond. The leadership team and governing body have conducted an audit and have

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a detailed action plan in place to further improve pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Excellent use is made of partnerships to secure funding for a range of programmes that offer pupils a breadth of experience outside their immediate locality. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills that are generally below those typical for their age, particularly in social and emotional development and some aspects of literacy. Because of good teaching they make good progress. A focus on linking sounds and letters has led to significant progress in this area of learning. This is beginning to impact positively on children's reading and writing. All adults use questioning well to extend children's thinking and their acquisition of vocabulary.

The teacher and teaching assistant have high expectations and children settle quickly into the welcoming, secure environment. Established routines lead to good behaviour. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those which children confidently choose for themselves. Planning is beginning to ensure that learning opportunities are threaded through these free-choice activities. The environment stimulates children's imagination and the teacher's enthusiastic approach to developing writing has led to children actually asking to write. Children clearly enjoy their time at school and are eager to show visitors around their castle and offer a range of food and drink at their banquet. Care and support for children who are potentially vulnerable are excellent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has transformed the outside area into an exciting learning environment. Planning is based on detailed observations and assessment as well as taking account of children's interests. Children's achievements and progress are innovatively recorded and shared with parents and carers. The teacher is very

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accomplished in ensuring that Year 1 pupils who share the class are appropriately challenged. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the information sessions that are provided throughout the year and as their children start school.

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

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are in agreement that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle. All respondents say that teaching is good and that the school makes sure that their children are well prepared for the future. A very small minority raised issues personal to themselves about leadership and the quality of information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors judged leadership and engagement with parents and carers to be outstanding. There were many additional positive comments, including praise for the headteacher for 'bringing about improvements all round' and commending the school for working so closely in partnership with themselves.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dishforth Airfield 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 inspection team received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	48	15	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	69	8	28	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	52	11	38	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	55	11	38	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	62	9	31	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	62	11	38	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)	13	45	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	59	11	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	48	13	45	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	55	11	38	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	66	7	24	3	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	72	7	24	1	3	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School, Thirsk

YO7 3DL

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing how proud you are of your school. Even the very young children in Class 1 were keen to invite me into their castle!

You go to a good school that provides excellent care and supports you in your learning. You obviously feel very safe because of this. I was impressed with how much you know about keeping safe and healthy. Many of you are very fit because you walk or cycle to school and take part in a range of clubs, such as football, cricket, running and dance.

You are caring towards others and raise money for worthwhile causes through community events such as Dishforth Airfield's Got Talent'. Your summer fair was a great success and the photographs of you all in Tudor costume are very realistic. It seems that some of you enjoyed seeing your teachers in the stocks!

You enjoy lessons and say that teachers make them fun and that you learn a lot. You work hard and make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Many of you have been to other schools and you claim that this one is the best! You are reaching higher standards than expected in your reading and writing. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that you do the same in mathematics by having the opportunity to practise your skills in different subjects.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard on your targets.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Gater

Lead Inspector

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