



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report

Welburn Community Primary School

North Yorkshire Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 11 and 12 October 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Welburn Community Primary School
Type of school:	Community
Status:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Ms H Thompson
Address of school:	Welburn York North Yorkshire YO60 7DX
Telephone:	01653 618301
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mrs J Wotherspoon
Local education authority area:	North Yorkshire
Unique reference number:	121327
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr A Bennett HMI
Dates of inspection:	11 and 12 October 2004

Introduction

1. Welburn Community Primary School is situated in a small rural community on the Castle Howard estate to the east of York. Most of the pupils come to school by bus from outlying villages and farms. There are 55 pupils on roll, 20 fewer than at the time of the last inspection. They are taught in three mixed-age classes. All of the pupils come from white British families where English is the home language. About one tenth of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs but none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. These figures are well below average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year but overall, the range in each cohort is broadly average. A new headteacher took up post in January 2004; over the summer, a substantial building programme provided a new classroom and secure play area for the youngest pupils, additional office space and remodelled hall and dining facilities.

2. The school was inspected in January 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of January 2003. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on three occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In October 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2003.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- standards are rising throughout the school because the curriculum is better planned, the quality of teaching has improved and more is expected of the pupils;
- standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 1 tests fluctuate because of the small numbers of pupils in each cohort but, overall, standards are rising broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. In 2004, pupils attained results similar to national figures in reading, writing and mathematics;
- in the end-of-Key Stage 2 tests, standards are now much closer to the expected levels in relation to the pupils' prior attainment. In 2004, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 improved in English, mathematics and science, arresting the decline of recent years; however, the number of pupils attaining Level 5 was too low in English and mathematics;

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- standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving and are satisfactory because better use is made of the equipment and resources in the school;
 - there is an improving climate for learning in the school and most pupils make at least sound, and often good, progress. Most pupils are active learners; while standards in Key Stage 2 could rise further, the progress made by pupils in Years 5 and 6 has accelerated significantly;
 - the pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Provision for these pupils has improved now that they are taught in the appropriate class in relation to their chronological age;
 - in lessons, the pupils apply themselves conscientiously to work; they enjoy opportunities to work independently and collaboratively. When encouraged to make their own decisions by the teachers, they choose sensible and appropriate ways to solve problems;
 - the pupils behave well outside of lessons; they treat each other, adults and the fabric of the school with respect. The older pupils often show care and thoughtfulness in the way they include the younger pupils in activities, and help them when necessary;
 - the pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults; adults are good role models for the pupils in the values they demonstrate through their daily work and conduct;
 - levels of attendance, at just over 94 per cent in the last school year, are broadly in line with national figures. Punctuality is good;
 - the school's ethos is very good. It promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively in lessons, assemblies and through extracurricular activities;
 - the quality of teaching is good overall; it was good in nine of the ten lessons. The staff plan and work effectively as a team; they have a well-developed understanding of each other's strengths;
 - the school is implementing good systems for assessing the pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress. Assessment information is used with increasing effectiveness to ensure that learning tasks meet the needs of all pupils;
 - curriculum planning has improved; closer attention is given to ensuring that pupils in the mixed-age classes cover the requirements of the national programmes of study. However, many older pupils still have significant gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - the headteacher provides clear, decisive and purposeful leadership; she has developed an appropriate long-term strategy for the school's continued
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development. Within the whole school community, there is a shared determination to succeed;

- the school's self-evaluation of progress is good; the headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- the strategic role of subject leaders is underdeveloped; their awareness of provision across the school is sound but their influence on raising standards is limited;
- the governing body is loyal and supportive; it has developed its confidence in challenging the school, holding it to account and in monitoring its progress. It has worked hard to improve communication with parents and the broader community;
- the local education authority (LEA) has provided the school with good support in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Advice and training have been well targeted at the school's needs and helpful evaluations of progress have been provided for the headteacher and governors.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards throughout the school, and especially for the higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2;
- ensure that pupils continue to develop as active and independent learners;
- further develop the strategic role of subject leaders.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Standards of attainment are rising throughout the school because the curriculum is better planned, the quality of teaching has improved and more is expected of the pupils. However, standards are not yet as high as they should be in all subjects or in all classes.

8. Standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 1 tests fluctuate because of the small numbers of pupils in each cohort. In 2004, only ten pupils sat the tests. This makes year-on-year comparisons difficult but, overall, standards are rising broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. In recent years, pupils have attained results similar to national figures in reading and writing, and in 2004 most pupils attained the expected Level 2 in reading and writing, while several attained the higher-than-expected Level 3. In mathematics, all the pupils attained at least Level 2 and several attained Level 3.

9. In 2004, nine pupils, six of whom were identified by the school as having special educational needs, sat the end-of-Key Stage 2 tests. Most pupils' results were close to the expected levels in relation to their prior attainment and school assessments; revised, challenging targets set by the new headteacher were only just missed. However, few pupils made better-than-adequate progress overall. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in the tests improved in English, mathematics and science, arresting the decline of recent years, but the number of pupils attaining Level 5 was too low in English and mathematics.

10. Standards in English are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and are improving overall but remain unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. In English lessons most pupils now make progress that is at least sound, and often good. In other lessons, standards of literacy are generally satisfactory, with an increasing emphasis on using subject-specific terminology correctly in talking and writing. Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils are keen to talk about their ideas and they listen courteously to each other. As they move through the school, the pupils do not always develop sufficient fluency in expressing their thoughts and their vocabulary remains somewhat limited in range; even higher-attaining pupils are often reluctant to talk at length or to use detail to expand their ideas. The youngest pupils show great pleasure and involvement in responding to well-known texts or in predicting the outcomes of unfamiliar stories. The majority of pupils read accurately at the expected level for their age, although few vary their tone of voice or pace sufficiently when reading aloud. Pupils are given an increasing range of material to read, including electronic texts, and most enjoy this variety. Opportunities for extended writing, and for using a broader range of writing genres, have improved and many pupils take pride in the accuracy and presentation of their work, whether handwritten or word-processed. However, some pupils are slow to develop a fluent style of handwriting and spelling is occasionally weak, showing a lack of confidence in applying common rules, especially in lower Key Stage 2.

11. Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall. The pupils receive a good start in the Foundation Stage where their early knowledge and understanding in mathematics are promoted through planned activities and play. The pupils in Key Stage 1 develop good mathematical language, for example to describe shapes and to use numbers and measurements. In Key Stage 2, progress is adequate overall; in Years 5 and 6, the pupils are confident in using fractions, percentages and ratios but many lack confidence in explaining their strategies and a few lack basic arithmetical skills.

12. In science, standards are at least satisfactory and are sometimes good. The teacher's assessments indicate that all pupils in 2004 attained the expected Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1; in the end-of-Key Stage 2 tests, all nine pupils attained the expected Level 4 and four attained the higher Level 5. Science lessons include an appropriate variety of practical explorations that develop the pupils' investigative skills. The development of investigative skills is being addressed systematically and there are increasing opportunities for pupils to make scientific predictions, to evaluate their findings and to apply their understanding to different contexts. The pupils have a sound understanding of the requirements of a fair test, and are able to evaluate the reliability of their results.

13. Standards in ICT are improving and are satisfactory because better use is made of the equipment and resources in the school. Since the last inspection, some laptop computers have been purchased; other hardware and software has been updated. The new building has

made it easier to use this equipment both in classrooms and in resource areas where pupils can work independently.

14. There is an improving climate for learning in the school. Most pupils are active learners; they make at least sound, and often good, progress overall. While standards in Key Stage 2 could rise further, the progress made by the pupils in Years 5 and 6 has accelerated significantly since the previous inspection.

15. The pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Provision for these pupils has improved now that they are taught in the appropriate class in relation to their chronological age; classroom assistants are sensitive to the individual needs of the pupils, but their progress is not monitored consistently in all classes.

16. Higher-attaining pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, are not challenged sufficiently in all areas of the curriculum.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. In all the lessons, the pupils' attitudes to their work were good; they were keen to learn and maintained concentration through sometimes lengthy sessions. Most pupils apply themselves conscientiously; they enjoy opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively. When encouraged to make their own decisions by the teachers, they choose sensible and appropriate ways to solve problems.

18. The pupils behave well outside of lessons; they treat each other, adults and the fabric of the school with respect. The older pupils often show care and thoughtfulness in the way they include the younger pupils in activities, and help them when necessary both in class and around the school, for example, at lunchtimes. The school promotes good attitudes very effectively through encouraging pupils to co-operate and to be considerate at all times. This message is reinforced continuously, but subtly, through the way in which the pupils are managed around the school. A straightforward system of rewards and sanctions that applies to classes as well as individuals successfully encourages the pupils to work for the good of the group as well as for themselves. Recently, no pupil has been excluded from the school.

19. The pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults; adults are good role models for the pupils in the values they demonstrate through their daily work and conduct. There is a palpable sense of trust and security within the school. Since the last inspection, pupils have developed higher expectations of themselves, their teachers and each other in respect of both academic achievement and social behaviour.

20. Levels of attendance, at just over 94 per cent in the last school year, are broadly in line with national figures. Punctuality is good.

21. The school's ethos is very good. It promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively in lessons, assemblies and through extracurricular activities. After-school clubs, such as tag rugby and gardening, will resume once the builders have left the site; during the summer, many pupils won prizes for drawing and writing in local shows and competitions. Through assemblies, linked each week by themes that are planned as a sequence throughout the year, the pupils and their parents are encouraged to contribute to charities, and they respond generously. A governor with responsibility for the curriculum in personal, social and health education monitors assemblies and reports back to governing body

meetings. The headteacher has established a link with a school in Hull; visits and electronic communication with this school are effective in broadening the pupils' understanding of environments that are quite different from their own. Multicultural themes are well established in the latest curriculum plans, and visitors such as educational theatre groups are welcomed into the school when possible. An attractive and sensitive display about the paralympic games exemplifies the genuine interest pupils have developed in people whose life experiences are very dissimilar to theirs.

22. Elected members of the school council, representing the full age-range of pupils, have taken responsibility for improving the extended playground following the completion of the building works. They are proud of their achievement; for example, in obtaining a seating area, a litter bin and a wood sculpture, and feel that they have an authentic role to play in influencing decisions about the school's development.

The quality of education

23. The quality of teaching is good overall; it was good in nine of the ten lessons. The staff plan and work effectively as a team; they have a well-developed understanding of each other's strengths. Successful teaching was characterised by: carefully planned tasks that were matched to individual needs and so encouraged independent learning; the frequent use of paired and group discussion to promote thinking skills and prevent instant, shallow responses to questions; a demanding pace that engaged and sustained the pupils' interest, often built on a series of probing questions; and the imaginative use of resources such as games to develop co-operation amongst the youngest pupils.

24. Classroom assistants are well prepared for lessons and provide focused support for targeted pupils, enabling them to make generally sound progress. However, although individual education plans are appropriate in format and content, and are regularly reviewed, there is insufficient consistency in the day-to-day recording and monitoring of the progress these pupils make.

25. The school is implementing good systems for assessing the pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress. Records are full but accessible and the targets now set for every pupil are challenging but realistic. Assessment information is used with increasing effectiveness to ensure that day-to-day learning tasks meet the needs of all pupils. Marking is prompt and detailed and usually tells pupils what they have achieved, but the teachers' comments do not always set out clearly next steps for improvement. Homework is used soundly to support and extend class work.

26. Curriculum planning has improved; closer attention is given to ensuring that the pupils in mixed-age classes cover the requirements of the national programmes of study and that they are challenged at the appropriate level. However, many older pupils still have significant gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills because of weaker planning and teaching in the past. Subject co-ordinators have begun to scrutinise the teachers' planning and the pupils' work and have observed some lessons but they have not clearly identified ways in which the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility can support the raising of standards across the whole school.

27. Educational visits are used appropriately to develop what is taught and to enthuse the pupils. For example, investigations were undertaken at a local theme park to extend the older pupils' work in science on forces in action; younger pupils were taken to a children's

science museum as part of their work on the human body. Creating purposeful links between different parts of the curriculum is a priority within the school's approach to planning, and the recent visit by an educational theatre group was relevant to the pupils' work in literacy and history as well as engaging their interest in drama and music.

28. The major building work has significantly improved the quality of accommodation. The youngest pupils have a new classroom and, for the first time, a secure and well-equipped outside play area. Playground space and grassed areas are generous. The Year 5/6 classroom has been remodelled, as has the hall, and additional office spaces and resource areas have been created along with a new kitchen. Now that the hall is no longer a classroom, opportunities to develop curriculum areas such as drama and PE are much better. A new library is about to be equipped, with the help of funds provided by the parent-teacher association. New laptop computers have helped improve provision for teaching the programmes of study for ICT. Teachers used the inevitable disruption of the building work as a good opportunity to clear out obsolete resources and to improve the overall tidiness and appearance of classrooms.

29. Links with parents and the community are strengthening. A community lunch and open day were used to encourage local people to come and see for themselves the changes that have taken place in the school, both physically and in its ethos. Discussions about establishing a parent and toddler group are about to take place. Regular newsletters are sent to local homes and a pupil planner is used as a quick and direct means of communication with the school by many parents. Continuing to develop links with parents and the community is a major focus of the school improvement plan.

Leadership and management

30. Leadership and management in the school are good. Since her appointment, the headteacher has provided clear, decisive and purposeful leadership. She has communicated high expectations to staff and pupils and has harnessed quickly the goodwill and determination of the other teachers in accelerating school improvement. In the short term, change has been managed efficiently and single-mindedly. The headteacher has initiated a series of wide-ranging initiatives, for example in staff training, curriculum development and the learning environment, that have the potential to secure further improvement. Within the whole school community, there is a shared determination to succeed. The headteacher has developed an appropriate long-term strategy for the school's continued growth and has consulted widely in developing a new school improvement plan that includes references to the five priority areas of the Every Child Matters initiative.

31. The school's self-evaluation of progress is good; the headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders are beginning to develop their roles so that they too monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify areas for improvement. However, the strategic role of subject leaders is underdeveloped; their awareness of provision across the school is sound, for example through scrutinies of the teachers' planning and the pupils' work, but their direct influence on raising standards is limited.

32. The governing body is loyal and supportive. Governors appreciate the improvements that have been made in the school but have developed their confidence in challenging the headteacher, in holding the school to account and monitoring its progress.

The chair of governors is committed to helping the school to secure its future and has worked hard to improve communication with parents and the broader community.

33. The LEA has provided the school with good support in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Advice and training have been well targeted at the school's needs and helpful evaluations of its progress have been provided for the headteacher and governors.

Implementation of the action plan

34. The inspection report of 2003 required the school to address four key issues. These principally related to: raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; improving the quality of teaching and learning; improving the quality and range of the curriculum; and improving the leadership and management of the school. Overall, good progress has been made in most areas.

35. Training for the staff has been well planned and the quality of teaching has improved considerably as a result. Internal support and monitoring has been supplemented by LEA consultants and advisers; teachers have accepted willingly their advice and suggestions.

36. Although the quality of planning, including the use of assessment and target setting, is not consistently strong, provision in the foundation subjects has been strengthened through the development of thematic approaches to the curriculum.

37. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good; the other teachers are developing their skills as subject leaders and the governing body fulfils its questioning role with increasing confidence.

38. Standards attained in the core subjects by the younger pupils are broadly in line with national expectations; in Key Stage 2, standards are improving but are not yet good enough in all subjects. Some high-attaining pupils are not achieving the results that might be expected of them.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in January 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in October 2003, and in February and June 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of January 2003.

in October 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Ten lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, the chair of governors and representatives from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other adults and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.