



Darley Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121410
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292104
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Margaret Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Darley
School category	Community		Harrogate
Age range of pupils	5-11		North Yorkshire HG3 2PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01423 780234
Number on roll (school)	92	Fax number	01423 780234
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J Campbell
		Headteacher	Miss Wheatcroft
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Darley is a small rural village school situated in Nidderdale, on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. It is near Harrogate and close to an American air force base. Pupils come from Darley, the surrounding villages and the base. Almost half of the pupils are American citizens and a few children come from Eastern Europe. Most of the pupils are of White heritage backgrounds with a small proportion of other mixed backgrounds. Almost all speak English fluently. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but very few have statements of special educational needs. High proportions of pupils enter and leave school throughout the year as a result of their parents' military responsibilities. The school holds the Basic Skills Award and has registered for the national Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Darley is a good school with many outstanding features. It gives good value for money. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is the major factor behind the school's success. It has an outstanding capacity to improve because of the successful changes made since the previous inspection, particularly in the use of assessment. As a governor commented, 'The staff team are calm, professional and know exactly what they are doing.' The governing body is led well and supports the school wholeheartedly. Governors bring expertise from different areas to bear on the school's work.

Provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is excellent. Every adult takes a part in nurturing and supporting individual pupils so that they are able to explain and articulate their feelings and ideas. Pupils' personal development is good and the school gives excellent support for pupils' social and cultural development. All children's achievements are celebrated and they are made to feel special. As a result, standards of behaviour are high.

The headteacher has a clear vision and firmly believes that the purpose of the school is to 'Inspire learning'. The integration of the diverse school population together with raising standards is at the heart of the school's work. Children start school with below average attainment especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Because of the good support they receive, they make good progress in the Foundation Stage and quickly gain confidence and develop their communication skills well. Teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress as they move through the school in English, mathematics and science. Because of good and some excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6, progress accelerates so that by the end of Year 6 pupils reach well above average standards. All groups of pupils including higher attainers and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do very well. One parent wrote to the inspector, 'the school is excellent at meeting both my children's needs' and goes on to say that each child is at different ends of the academic spectrum. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully as they move through the school. However, this is difficult for pupils who arrive part way through the year with few records. Induction procedures do not fully cater for the many pupils who join the school at other than the usual time. Nevertheless, induction procedures are effective for the majority of pupils.

In recent years, a good rapport has been forged with the local community and this is still being strengthened. Led by the school council and staff, pupils are increasingly becoming involved in community events and fundraising for charities. The school has built up a good relationship with staff and parents from the nearby American base and liaise with the Family Support Services and the base police who have brought the drugs awareness and relationships education (DARE) programme into school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and make favourable comparisons with other schools they have attended.

The many questionnaires returned by parents support this positive view. Many pupils say that they like the small size of the school. They say it is not too big and that they have plenty of friends. However, they are sad when friends have to leave at short

notice. Given this, it is a pity that a few pupils have poor attendance records. The school does all it can to improve attendance. With resolve and persistence on the part of the school, attendance is improving and is close to the national average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop effective induction procedures for pupils and their parents who arrive part way through the year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. This is reflected in the above average standards reached by Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science in 2005. This has been a consistent picture over the past five years, despite the changes in groups of pupils and the very small number of pupils who sit the tests. The most recent school data indicate that pupils' results were even better in 2006. The main improvement was in mathematics and in the increased number of pupils attaining at the higher levels in all subjects. Challenging targets for English and mathematics were met and exceeded. There is good performance by all groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Achievement is very good in other subjects such as art and history. Many examples of pupils' work around the school and in photographic portfolios celebrate their achievements in art and design and history. Pupils' standards on entry are variable from year to year, but children generally begin in the Reception year with standards below those usually found for their ages, particularly in their personal, social and emotional understanding. All children from America who join the school midway through have had one year less schooling than the other pupils. Overall, current standards are well above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this results in exemplary behaviour and good attitudes to work. Pupils' success is celebrated, as is the cultural diversity of their backgrounds. As a consequence, pupils have a good understanding of living and working in a multicultural community. Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful to adults and each other. Older pupils are considerate and helpful to the younger ones and are developing personal qualities to help them contribute well to the community and to their future working life. They know how to keep themselves safe and are beginning to understand the need to keep fit and eat healthily. The school works very hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. The rate of pupils' attendance has improved over recent years and is now satisfactory. However, leave entitlement for military families impacts adversely on the number of unauthorised absences.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching is in Year 5 and 6 so that progress accelerates rapidly. Lessons are planned well and generally proceed at a good pace and teachers question children skilfully. Targets for improvement are shared and understood by individual pupils. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards for demonstrations and to involve pupils in lessons but information and communication technology (ICT) could still be used more extensively to support learning in all lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with complex needs, are very well supported by teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils are catered for well, particularly in mathematics within targeted groups and in their work with pupils of similar attainment from other schools.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is stimulating with a positive emphasis on creativity that contributes much to pupils' personal development. Several subjects are taught through topics which help children, especially older children, to understand the relevance of their learning, as well as giving additional coverage of basic skills. Pupils are positive about how they enjoy subjects such as history and mathematics. One boy commented that, 'mathematics is fun and helps you get a better job'. Pupils are pleased about the opportunities they get to learn French and to play musical instruments such as the guitar and the saxophone. They were also excited about how well their small school did in local swimming and football tournaments. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and suitable emphasis is given to drugs education and sex and relationships education. Visitors and visits, including residential visits, are used well to enliven the teaching of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are outstanding. Pupils feel safe and cared for. They know who to approach when they need help. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Staff know the individual pupils very well and work hard to ensure that all children enjoy being at school, which is confirmed by the views of parents. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well. The school has developed excellent records of pupils' academic progress so that focused support is being used to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good with several outstanding features that are having a positive effect on raising and maintaining standards. The school knows itself well because it has rigorous self- evaluation systems. The school is led excellently by the headteacher who teaches for a significant amount of time in Year 4, 5 and 6 classes and still manages the school extremely well without the assistance of a deputy or assistant headteacher. There is a clear vision for the school and all staff work really well together. The analysis of pupils' progress and the subsequent grouping and organisation of pupils show an impressive understanding of pupils' attainment and a flexible way of working. However, whilst induction procedures for children starting in the Reception and transition arrangements for those leaving in Year 6 are firmly in place, induction procedures for pupils who arrive part way through the year are not as robust. The effective governing body has designated areas of responsibility. It challenges school decisions and sets a clear direction for its development. The headteacher and governors manage well the rapidly changing circumstances the school faces. For example, good arrangements have been made at short notice to deal with an unpredicted rise in numbers by restructuring staffing and classes. The response to the parents' questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive and a significant proportion expressed high praise for the school. Under the Primary Leadership Programme, good links have been made with other schools and the school has made good progress with the issues from the previous inspection.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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.

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	2
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

I enjoyed visiting your school and really appreciated the way in which you made me feel so welcome. Thank you for talking to me when you were working in lessons, at playtime and at lunchtime. The pupils who talked to me from the school council were keen to show me how involved they are in organising fundraising events for charities. Many of you told me how much you enjoy being at Darley and how you find lessons interesting and fun. Here are some of the things that make Darley a good school.

- You work hard and make very good progress so that by the time you leave the school in Year 6 you reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You are polite, friendly and extremely well behaved. You develop into sensible, mature young people who are able to express your views confidently.
- You help each other and the older ones look after the younger ones. I think the playground assistants are a good idea and work well.
- Your teachers teach you well and you have many interesting things to do in lessons.
- Your headteacher cares very much about your school and each one of you.
- All the staff look after you extremely well and know many ways to help you to do your best.

To make things even better, I have asked that your headteacher makes arrangements so that new children starting at the school part way through the year get off to a flying start.

You can make sure that your school becomes even better by doing your very best at all times.