

West Heslerton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121541
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292153
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Wells
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001
School address	West Heslerton Malton North Yorkshire YO17 8RD
Telephone number	01944 728286
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small village school serves a mixed rural area. The proportion of pupils having free school meals is below average. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Pupils join and leave the school at various times other than the usual times of admission. The school recently gained a Healthy School award, ActiveMark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Heslerton Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils but has some good features. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school is emerging well from a period of staffing reduction. Parents are supportive of all aspects of the school's work and express positive views about the spacious outdoor playing field and wildlife area. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Pupils make satisfactory progress, which reflects the overall satisfactory teaching. An exception to this is the very effective teaching of Year 6 pupils as a discrete group by the headteacher. Actions to improve the teaching of writing are beginning to have an impact on raising standards, although there is still some way to go in Key Stage 1. The wide age range in each class makes matching work to the individual needs of pupils a challenge which is met better in some lessons than others. This sometimes results in too little support for pupils with additional learning needs, who are expected to do the same as everyone else. Standards by the end of Year 6 were average in the national tests last year. Standards in Year 2 have been below average for the past few years with too little challenge for the more able pupils. Attainment varies considerably from year to year because the numbers in each year group are so small. The good curriculum provides much enrichment through visits to places of interest and the high priority given to promoting physical fitness using skilled professional coaches.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils enjoy school and learn about healthy food and keeping fit. They all value the spacious playing fields. Safety is of prime importance and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for, and know who they can turn to if they are upset. They really value the woodland area that is their den, where they discuss social and emotional problems. Systems to record the pupils' learning are developing satisfactorily and providing a clear picture of their progress throughout school. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads well by the example of her effective teaching. Governors and staff are working hard, with some success, to address previous underachievement. Delegation of leadership responsibilities is working well and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Children are taught as a discrete group for much of their time in the mixed age class. Good provision is provided for outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching challenges all pupils to achieve as well as they can, particularly in writing.
- Make sure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported more effectively and provided with activities in line with their individual education plans.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Children make a solid start in the Foundation Stage. Their early literacy skills are improving as a result of the introduction of more effective teaching methods,

but standards in communication, language and literacy are below average when they enter Year 1. However, their mathematical skills are above expectations. Progress slows somewhat in Key Stage 1 and standards are generally below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Nonetheless, attainment and achievement are rising because the school has taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. Writing remains an area of particular concern and the more able pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 2. Although the school has not met its challenging Key Stage 2 targets for the past two years, standards in the current Year 6 class have risen. This acceleration in progress has come about because of the additional support pupils have received from the headteacher, which prepared them well for the national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils really value a healthy lifestyle, including the physical activities they are able to take part in on the large playing fields around school. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy foods in science. Pupils say they are safe because they feel well protected by their teachers. Weekly 'suggestions' assemblies are used effectively to gather pupils' views about how to improve the school. This helps them to take responsibilities when they are offered. A strong sense of community is fostered when parents attend assemblies and when rehearsals are underway for performances in the village. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their average attendance and good punctuality each day. Pupils are confident in their understanding of career options following a preparation day for this. They are also developing a number of skills such as information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy which will equip them for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with exemplary teaching of the oldest pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used confidently by all staff and make a good contribution to pupils' learning throughout school. Pupils are keen to learn and in the main enjoy their work. Pupils are appropriately challenged most of the time, although less so in Key Stage 1. Good use is made of resources, for example ICT, to foster independent learning. Children in the Foundation Stage have exciting, active opportunities to learn outside and, as a result, learn well in all areas of learning. There is good diagnosis of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but this is not always well reflected in practice. Assessment is good and much improved in the past year. Learning intentions are shared and pupils know what to do to meet these objectives. Marking is good and gives pupils very precise advice on how to improve, although references to achieving their targets are not yet made. Teaching assistants play an admirable role in supporting the youngest children in school. Parents are very happy with the school because they are kept well informed by detailed newsletters.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their good curriculum, especially the wide range of after-school clubs and sporting events such as the gymnastics coaching. The Activemark award is a reflection of the priority given to keeping fit. The teaching of pupils in a whole key stage means that they are well known to their teachers and their learning is built on well from year to year. Provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is good. Enterprise is fostered, for example, by growing potatoes, recycling and fundraising to support worthy causes. Education for health and safety is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is developing well. It provides the youngest children with distinctive provision which values independence and making choices. The outdoor area is well used to promote learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides a high level of care for its pupils and works in close partnership with a range of outside agencies to support the needs of vulnerable pupils. Recent developments to improve the academic guidance for pupils are progressing well. Older pupils are confident about their targets for improvement, about which they talk very knowledgeably. The recently introduced system to track the progress of pupils through school means that the progress of individual pupils can be checked and actions taken where required; this is in its early stages. Healthy lifestyles are appropriately fostered. All staff are well briefed on arrangements to deal with child protection issues should they arise. Risk assessments are diligently carried out to ensure the safety of all pupils in and out of school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership is competent and committed to raising standards and the personal development of all pupils. The headteacher is enthusiastic and challenging. Actions to improve standards in English throughout the school are having a positive effect. Improvements to the leadership of literacy are beginning to make a good impact across the school, well exemplified in the detailed assessment records which regularly track the pupils' progress in reading and writing. This is beginning to lead to improvements in standards in Key Stage 1. There is a common sense of purpose among staff following a period of staffing changes. Statutory requirements are all met and arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements.

Self-evaluation is good and based on rigorous monitoring and analysis. It has provided an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Actions taken are beginning to result in progress in most areas. School improvement planning is thorough. The inclusion of all pupils is given a high priority and is well captured in the school's aims: 'Children are at the centre of all that we do.' Although the procedures to keep detailed records for all the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exemplary, this is not always evident in the pupils' day-to-day work and in the support they receive. A phased reduction in staffing due to falling rolls in the past two years has been well managed so that pupils are not disadvantaged. The increase in the headteacher's teaching commitment has been a considerable contributory factor in smoothing the changes. The school is well resourced and space is all well used. Provision for specialist equipment for ICT is particularly good. Improvements since the last inspection

have been good because results by the end of Year 6 have improved and the curriculum and role of subject leaders have developed well. The school has a good capacity to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of West Heslerton Primary School, Malton YO17 8RD

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my two days with you and your teachers. I have judged your school to be satisfactory. There are some good things as well. You all behave well, like school and work hard. Your school has been through many changes recently so that you now have two classes. Your teachers are working hard to make this work for you all and, as a result, you are all achieving more and standards are rising. Teachers keep good records so you know how well you are doing. There are lots of opportunities for you to take part in sport in school and after school. This helps to keep you fit. You are skilled at using the computers and are lucky to have a well equipped ICT suite. The grounds around school are very spacious and you have time to learn outside frequently.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure you do really good writing and to make sure that those of you who need help with your work are assisted even more.

Your headteacher has a good plan to improve your school. You can help by continuing to work hard. Good luck to you all.