

# Yarm Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111554
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	301727
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Farrow HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	431
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pamela Brooks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Spitalfields Yarm Stockton-on-Tees TS15 9HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 782731
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 783680

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Yarm Primary School was visited for one day. HMI investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues: the standards pupils attain and progress they make from Year 2 to Year 6; the quality of teaching and learning, and the effectiveness of senior leaders and governors in continuing to improve the school. This was done by gathering evidence from scrutinising school documentation, pupils' work and inspection questionnaires completed by parents; observing lessons and talking with pupils, the headteacher, staff and chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but HMI found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is significantly larger than the average primary school. It is situated in the relatively advantaged market town of Yarm, within Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, although rising, remains well below average, as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are relatively fewer girls than boys in the school. A higher than average number of pupils have a statement of special educational need, whilst the proportion deemed to have learning difficulties and/or disabilities overall is lower.

The school holds many national awards and these include: Activemark Gold Award, the Healthy Schools Award, the intermediate International Schools Award, Bronze and Silver Eco Schools Awards, and the Drugs Education National Standards Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Yarm is an outstanding school as evidenced most notably in the high standards pupils attain and in the exceptional curriculum, care and support provided. Personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) lies at the heart of the school's vision, underpinning all that staff do in their quest to develop the 'whole child'. This ensures that pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is also outstanding. Yarm is an inclusive school and all are welcomed and supported. Cultural diversity is positively celebrated and promotes pupils' very good understanding, care, tolerance and respect for one another. Pupils talk enthusiastically and with conviction, about the reasons they enjoy school and show very positive attitudes to learning. As a result, their attendance is much higher than that found nationally and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils value all that the school has to offer and they thrive during their time there.

The school has faced a number of staff changes in the past two years; nevertheless, senior managers and governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils continue to be provided with a high quality of education. Most pupils enter school with standards that are above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, standards are significantly above that found nationally, representing good progress given pupils' starting points. School monitoring information indicates the school is well on the way to meet its challenging 2008 Key Stage 2 targets. It also shows pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons. This is due to the very good teaching, care and support they receive from the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, well trained teaching assistants and local authority services.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils say lessons are interesting and fun. High expectations, very good relationships and teachers' good subject knowledge, help ensure that pupils are ready and willing to learn. Good use of data and information ensures that planning is well matched to pupils' individual needs and consequently all make good progress in lessons. Work is regularly marked and assessments inform future planning well. Pupils are becoming increasingly skilful in assessing their own work and setting challenging targets for themselves. They are encouraged to develop self-directed, independent learning skills and their politeness, confidence and maturity are a delight to see.

Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the education and care their children receive. Nearly all say their children enjoy school, are safe and make good progress in their learning. Parents and pupils particularly value the wide range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the outstanding curriculum. The diverse range of creative, sports and scientific activities increase pupils' enjoyment of school. Information and communication technology is a fundamental part of the school's teaching and learning strategy, and is used very effectively to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The curriculum also benefits from exciting cross-curricular theme days such as the Magic Attic and Newspaper Days where pupils work both independently and cooperatively to investigate issues and draw together conclusions in writing, drama and multimedia.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, such as their contribution as school councillors, playground mediators and junior librarians. Pupils value these responsibilities. They are particularly proud of the school council's work to improve the playground area. This now provides exciting places to play, things to do, as well as somewhere

to reflect quietly when needed. Pupils' sense of citizenship and social responsibility is strong and their charitable work noteworthy.

The walking bus and 'Wake Up and Shake Up' sessions provide a stimulating start to the day and contribute to pupils' very good participation in activities that promote their healthy lifestyles and understanding of how to be healthy. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced well through the international element of the school's work. The high standards that pupils reach, together with the very good transition arrangements into secondary school, that also provide exciting glimpses of what secondary school has to offer, ensure pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school's safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and pupils say they feel very safe because of the very good care provided by all staff in school. Pupils say the many listening systems such as 'Top Secret', 'Box of Feelings' and circle time assure that their views are listened to and acted upon. Pupils talk about how these opportunities also help them to share their feelings, build their confidence and self-esteem, and develop a sense of trust that pervades the school. The school works very well with outside agencies to secure additional support and meet the needs and interests of all pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils facing temporary challenges in their lives. Systems to monitor and assess pupil progress are good. Teachers' use of this good information is improving the quality of planning and assessment, and the progress pupils make in lessons.

Leadership and management are outstanding as is the shared vision of the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils alike. The headteacher's leadership style enables managers and staff to take charge of, and be accountable for, their areas of responsibility. Staff value this and the many professional development opportunities provided that enhance their proficiency and develop their leadership skills. Because staff and governors are fully involved in the evaluation of the school's work, they know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They are successfully tackling the few issues they know need improvement. The highly effective governing body provides a good balance of challenge and support, and their collective strengths are being capitalised upon to aid the school's continued improvement. Financial management is robust. The school makes the most of its unusual and, in some cases, cramped buildings, beautifully tended grounds and open spaces, to provide a vibrant environment for pupils to enjoy and contribute to. Good displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements and exemplify the range and diversity of activities they undertake during their time at school. The school has addressed the few areas for improvement identified in the last inspection well and, given the high standards pupils attain and the outstanding practice in so many areas, the school has very good capacity to continue to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage provides a secure, welcoming and vibrant atmosphere where children get off to a flying start. From starting points often above that expected for their age, children embrace all that the Nursery and Reception classes have to offer and they make very good progress towards their learning goals. Clear tracking and assessment procedures ensure targeted action is taken early to support all, particularly those children in need. Teachers plan interesting and creative activities that take close account of the differing needs and interests of each child. These activities extend into the well resourced outside spaces. Children can choose from the whole range of activities available, enabling them to make decisions and have fun as they learn

and develop. Parents say their children are happy, feel valued and develop confidence to meet new challenges. Good reflection on practice ensures staff are aware of things that can improve. For example, they know that transitions into school could be better and have set about improving this. As in Key Stage 1 and 2, PSCHÉ underpins all their work and assures children 'blossom' during their time in the unit. This, together with high expectations of staff and very good relationships, helps children to develop the positive attitudes to learning that last throughout their time in school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- The school is already improving those few areas where it knows it can do better. Consequently this inspection has not identified any further areas for improvement.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yarm Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS15 9HF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was very impressed with your politeness, friendliness and maturity. A special thanks to those of you who spoke to me during the day; you spoke so eloquently and helped me to understand just what it is that makes this school so special to you. The staff are proud of you and you certainly appear proud of the school and all it has to offer.

Thanks are also due to parents who completed the inspection questionnaire. Almost all of those who responded were very positive about the quality of education and care you receive. I agree with them and believe Yarm is an outstanding school. I am sure some of you already thought this before I arrived. Outstanding aspects include:

- your personal, social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural development
- your attendance and behaviour; the very good relationships between teachers and yourselves and the care and respect you have for each other and adults in school
- the standards you attain and the support you receive to ensure you are well prepared for secondary school
- the quality of teaching and learning and the exciting and varied curriculum, extra-curricular activities and theme days such as Magic Attic and Newspaper Day in which you take part
- the care and support you receive by all staff and the many listening opportunities available that help you in times of need and which you say helps to build your confidence and self esteem
- the leadership and management of Mr Davies your headteacher, his senior team and governors.

Mr Davies, governors and staff are constantly thinking about what they can do to continue to improve the school. They are working on those improvements to ensure that you continue to enjoy your time in school and make the best progress you can in your learning.

I extend my best wishes to you all during your remaining time in school and in your ultimate move into secondary school.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector