

Fountains Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121584
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314047
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Savage
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Gill
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Grantley Ripon North Yorkshire HG4 3PJ
Telephone number	01765 620631
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a very broad range of social and economic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is around what is expected nationally for their age although there is a very wide range of ability. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average although the number with a statement of special educational need is very high. The school has strong links with the nearby Fountains Abbey run by the National Trust. There have been several changes in teaching staff in the last four years. Currently, the headteacher also manages a nearby school for two days a week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with above average standards overall. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because an outstanding curriculum ensures that they receive an exceptionally broad education. This makes learning exciting as well as preparing them exceptionally well for their future lives. Attendance is above average and pupils develop into confident, responsible individuals who care about other people. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say the most important thing they learn is 'to tell the truth', a clear reflection of the school's moral ethos which underpins all it does.

Pupils achieve well because they are taught well in every class. Standards are above average in English with reading a notable strength. Standards in writing are very nearly as good because of the school's strong focus on this aspect. High achievers do exceptionally well in literacy. Pupils become confident and articulate speakers because they benefit from talking and listening to others in informal situations, such as the 'Friday Talk Shop', as well as with talk partners in lessons. In comparison, standards in mathematics while generally above average are less strong. This is because pupils have comparatively fewer opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects and so they have less practice. This also limits the potential of the most able mathematicians. The homework club gives excellent additional support to those who want a little more help with reading, spellings and learning times tables. Outstanding provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make extremely good progress. Standards in science are broadly average. While all pupils benefit from a lively investigative approach older pupils do not always use sufficient scientific vocabulary when recording and interpreting results.

The care, support and guidance given to pupils are outstanding and play a large part in pupils' good progress and outstanding personal development. Pupils are closely involved in assessing their own learning which means they are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Similarly, the school has an excellent overview of each pupil's progress so that support can be targeted where it is needed. Pupils feel secure at school and say confidently that if anything is wrong 'you go to an adult, they always help.' It is a measure of the large part that personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) plays in the curriculum that many pupils say, 'We all really like it because we like talking about something real and things that have really happened.' They have an excellent awareness of why it is important to lead healthy lives. Fruit monitors distribute healthy snacks at playtime, shed monitors take charge of giving out different play equipment each day while older pupils supervise younger ones in energetic games. As a result, pupils learn to play pleasantly and cooperatively, with close regard for the safety and well-being of others.

Good leadership and management have ensured an effective school during a period of significant change in staffing. Governors give good support because they are well informed. They know the right questions to ask to help the school on the road to achieving its aim of 'holistic education of the highest quality'. Most parents agree with this but a sizeable minority expressed concerns at changes in teaching staff especially given the headteacher's temporary part-time commitment to another school. The school, however, runs well and staff with management responsibilities effectively carry out their tasks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 volunteered that they 'like having different teachers for different things'. It prepares them well for the next stage of their education and achievement continues to be good. The headteacher gives a strong lead to the curriculum and to the overall care of pupils. The school knows its strengths and has an

accurate understanding of what it needs to do next. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Careful financial management ensures that the school gives good value for money. An innovative curriculum, good teaching quality and good management mean it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception class from a level on entry that is broadly what is expected for their age. They are taught well. An outstanding curriculum ensures that they have ready access to a huge variety of interesting and stimulating activities both indoors and outside. There is a good balance generally between children choosing for themselves and adults directing their tasks. For example, following a recent visit to the seaside, children were busily engaged in painting pictures of the sea and sand, mixing primary colours and discovering the effect of dribbling water onto powder paints. Then, prompted by their teacher's careful questions, they set about constructing lighthouses out of cardboard boxes and tubes, working out how to attach them to the large-scale canvas. By the end of the year, most reach the levels expected of them in all areas of learning and a good number exceed them. Assessment of children's ability is precise and based on frequent observations of what children know and can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects so they practise what they learn.
- Improve older pupils' use of scientific vocabulary so they record and interpret information with greater accuracy.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results in national tests vary depending on the mix of pupils in what are small year groups. At the end of Year 2 in 2006, test results showed standards were close to average. However, they rose to well above average in 2007 because a large proportion of pupils exceeded national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2006 and 2007 dipped slightly, especially in mathematics. Despite its generally above average performance the school missed its targets in 2007. The reasons for this drop included pupils' insecure grasp of calculation methods from earlier gaps in learning in mathematics and some issues with attendance. Standards in science are broadly average; pupils are not as precise as they might be in interpreting the results of their practical work. The school's tracking information shows pupils have made good progress over the last two years with roughly a third making outstanding progress. The school is on track to meet its realistic targets in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be part of the wider world through links with schools in other countries. They have an excellent sense of community through the fortnightly lunch club for local residents and projects with the National Trust. Pupils really enjoy school because they have a say in what goes on through their school council. Those with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities are fully represented on the school council. Pupils work and play with consideration and tolerance. They say there is no bullying, 'just the occasional flair ups'. Special awards such as 'tea for two' are prized. Despite the poor attendance of a very few last year, attendance levels are above average because the majority attend well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well and are fully involved in checking their own progress. They know what they have to aim for and what they need to do to improve their work. Lively discussions and well directed questions help pupils to understand new concepts. Teachers match work carefully to the different age and ability groups in their class but sometimes the most able could move on faster. The quality of teaching is excellent when pupils are encouraged to try things out for themselves and draw their own conclusions. Learning is linked very well from subject to subject although a slight drawback is that most links favour literacy over numeracy. Teaching assistants give excellent support to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who become confident learners as a result. Occasionally, teachers' explanations and demonstrations are a little too long and this cuts down the time when pupils practise new skills. In all classes, teachers use up-to-date technology effectively to clarify and enliven pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

As well as making very good provision for basic skills, the curriculum goes that bit further to link most other subjects creatively together to bring education alive. Plenty of time to talk and to learn through investigation is the hallmark of this innovative approach. All pupils learn French and this, together with ample opportunities to practise their computer skills, helps prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education. Outstanding links between the Foundation Stage curriculum and that in Key Stage 1 means that younger pupils forge ahead as they build rapidly on what they know and understand.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection procedures are robust and fully meet current government requirements. The systems to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are outstanding and the school has the capacity to cope successfully with a wide range of needs and abilities. Strong links with other schools give pupils confidence, preparing them well for the next stage of their education. Checking on how well pupils achieve is extremely effective and systems to involve pupils in assessing their own learning are outstanding. Pupils feel happy about saying they have not understood something fully because they know support will be offered. The school provides outstanding attention to individual needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong features of the good leadership and management are teamwork and the commitment to professional development. This means there is a buzz about the school. New staff develop their leadership responsibilities and the deputy headteacher takes the role of headteacher twice weekly while the headteacher helps manage a local school. This example of sharing and learning together is mirrored in the way pupils are taught and is proving effective. The school's accurate self-evaluation means the school improvement plan gives a clear outline as to what needs to be done next. Sometimes the detail of how exactly this is to be achieved is slightly less clear, but this aspect is strengthening. The checking of teaching and learning is accurate and gives helpful advice to teachers. Governors give good support and have a firm grasp of what the school needs to do next if it is to be outstanding.

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Annex A

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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1

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	2
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?	2
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for talking to me so readily both in school and outside at break and lunchtimes. I really enjoyed talking to so many of you and hearing your views as well as watching you work and play. I was impressed at how well you understand what you need to do to improve your work. You behave extremely well and take exceptionally good care of each other. This is why your school is such a happy and friendly place to be in. You go to a good school and your teachers and other staff take excellent care of you. Your curriculum helps you learn about yourselves as well as many different subjects, including French. The way your teachers link subjects together gives you an extremely broad curriculum, this is why it is outstanding. You are well taught and you achieve well as a result. Those of you who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported exceptionally well. Your school is well led and managed.

There are two things which would improve your school and help you to achieve even more in mathematics and science.

- I would like you to be given more opportunities to use your mathematical skills in other subjects so you practise more what you learn.
- For older pupils to develop and use more scientific vocabulary so they can record and interpret information with greater accuracy.

I hope you continue to enjoy your work, develop your mathematical skills in lots of different contexts and have fun understanding and using more scientific words and concepts.