

# Sinnington Primary School

## Inspection report

---

Unique Reference Number	121355
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327464
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Coppack
Headteacher	Mrs J Wells
Date of previous school inspection	January 2006
School address	Friars Hill Sinnington York YO62 6SL
Telephone number	01751 431725
Fax number	01751 431725
Email address	headteacher@sinnington.n-yorks.sch.uk

---

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	29–30 April 2009
Inspection number	327464

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited seven lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils, and talked to some parents. She observed the school's work and looked at data about pupils' progress; examples of pupils' work; school policies; plans for the curriculum and lessons; and the school improvement plan. She read the 29 parental questionnaires sent in and looked at the school's own survey of parents' views. She observed playtime, attended assembly and had lunch with the pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following.

- Progress in English, especially writing.
- Standards in science and in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school's systems for assessing pupils' progress.
- The curriculum.
- The support for individual pupils, including any vulnerable pupils.

## Information about the school

Sinnington Primary is a small rural primary school. There are very few pupils who are eligible for free school meals and no pupils are in the care of the local authority. The school serves a predominantly white rural community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The pupils are grouped into four classes, three of which are mixed age: Years R/1, Years 2/3 and Years 5/6. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Sinnington Primary is a good school. The outcomes for pupils are good. The pupils are happy at school. They and their parents appreciate the school's small size which means that the pupils are well known and cared for. The school is particularly active in its local community. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

The school has good capacity to improve further. The track record over the last three years is one of a continuous upward trend in statutory attainment tests. The school has maintained the good quality of education it offers and has improved further since its previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1. The pupils' writing skills are improving and are now average. Pupils' standards in English, though much improved and now broadly average, remain lower than in mathematics and science. Teaching approaches are not yet consistent in English.

The new headteacher has quickly and accurately determined the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has established appropriate priorities for the next steps it needs to take. She is ably supported by a small, but keen team of teachers each taking a lead on improving aspects of provision.

Teaching is good overall. Pupils make good progress but lessons do not always focus sufficiently on the needs of individuals to enable them always to learn effectively. As a result, in the mixed-age classes the inspector observed that in a few lessons the progress of some pupils slows down at certain points. The school has a good overview of how each pupil is doing over time but its assessment systems do not show step-by-step progress in each subject. Consequently, teachers do not readily have the information they need to help them plan lessons that challenge all the pupils equally and pupils are not sufficiently clear about how best to improve their work in each subject.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine assessment systems to better show how individual pupils are progressing and use this information:
  - to help teachers plan the next steps in learning
  - to help pupils to know how to improve their work.

- Set up a suitable assessment system, in core subjects first, that will:
  - show the progress that individual pupils make in lessons and
  - identify how best to move these pupils forward in their learning.
  
- Promote higher standards in English through:
  - a continued emphasis on the development of literacy skills, including writing; and by
  - ensuring a more consistent approach to the delivery of this subject.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
---

Achievement and enjoyment are good. The pupils say that they enjoy school. Parents' questionnaires and the school's analysis of its own questionnaires bear this out. Boys and girls perform equally well. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and a few make even better progress.

Good foundations are laid in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this good rate of progress is maintained, so that attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Pupils progress quickly in reading.

Attainment is above average by the end of year 6, and notably so in mathematics. Attainment in science is also above average. While attainment in English is not as strong, evidence from lessons is that standards are average. Data show that standards in English are much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress in English. They write accurately and teachers stress the importance of good handwriting and spelling. Pupils are confident in speaking, reflecting the emphasis the teachers place on developing these skills.

Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is average. Pupils acquire the skills that they need and are now ready to begin to use these skills across different subjects. The school's systems for recording progress do not yet demonstrate clearly the levels that the pupils are attaining.

Pupils' learning and performance in lessons are good. They behave well, but occasionally in lessons a few become a little silly. This tends to be when they are not sufficiently clear about what they have been asked to do, or when group work is not sufficiently well-managed.

Attendance is average although adversely affected by holidays taken in term- time. Governors have introduced a new policy aimed at improving attendance which is beginning to show some impact.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They take up the many opportunities the school provides to keep themselves fit and active. Pupils have good social skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers are enthusiastic and relationships with the pupils are very good. Lessons are challenging. Teachers have high expectations of what their classes can do. Teachers make good use of ICT to present interesting lessons and to make teaching points clear. Science lessons focus well on enjoyable, practical activities that help pupils to understand underlying concepts. Teaching assistants work effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in lessons.

Progress in lessons is good overall. Pupils get frequent opportunities to work in groups with others of similar abilities. This helps in matching work to their different rates of learning, but assessment systems do not yet pinpoint what each pupil needs to be doing next to foster their learning. Nor are systems sufficiently refined to help each pupil know how to improve their work.

At times progress in lessons varies. This tends to be related to the larger class sizes with a range of ability, or to how effectively group work is managed. In English, teaching approaches are not yet fully consistent across all year groups.

Pupils are generally diligent, enthusiastic learners and many contribute well to lessons. Occasionally when pupils are working in groups the pace slows down when the teacher or an assistant leaves one group to work with another. Pupils have not all yet developed into independent learners.

The headteacher is reviewing the curriculum to check how effectively subjects are covered over time within the mixed-aged classes and to reduce any unnecessary repetition of work. Pupils particularly appreciate the range of sporting activities,

---

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

including swimming and the trips out of school to places of interest. They talk enthusiastically about the themed days that extend the curriculum and broaden their cultural awareness, such as the French and Chinese days. The school has fostered links with other schools to enhance the curriculum, for example, to provide dance and drama. The curriculum draws well on the local rural community, with traditional activities such as maypole dancing.

Arrangements for the care of the pupils are well organised. Support for the few vulnerable pupils is very effectively targeted and, as result, these pupils achieve well. Pupils and parents comment on how friendly the school is. A 'worry box' system has been set up recently to enable pupils to call on additional help from adults should it be required. The school council is a further channel for views, but is under-used at present.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has fostered very good links with parents and carers. The weekly newsletter is welcomed by parents as means of keeping them in touch. Parents are fully involved in the life of the school. For example, they lead some sessions on a Friday afternoon programme that introduces pupils to new hobbies and activities.

Pupils achieve challenging targets and outcomes are consistently good. Achievement is celebrated throughout the school, but especially through assemblies. This is linked to improvements in literacy, but awards also recognise pupils' achievements in other aspects of school life and in the development of social skills.

Achievement is the main focus of the new headteacher's vision, which all staff share enthusiastically. In a short space of time she has made her mark. Governors provide effective support and challenge. Together, the headteacher and governors communicate an ambitious vision for the school's continued success. They have worked together swiftly to improve facilities and resources to create a welcoming environment for learning. Robust procedures are in place to help safeguard pupils. Policies to promote equality are implemented effectively as evidenced by the lengths the school goes to ensure all pupils progress equally well, whatever their difficulties.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school and pupils get involved well in their local community. There are fewer opportunities beyond this for involvement in the wider community, given the school's geographical location. However, the school increasingly seeks to compensate by planning activities that introduce the pupils to other communities, for example, by taking the pupils further

afield to learn about other faith communities and through fundraising for a school in Ghana.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children join the school with skills at expected levels for their age. They make rapid progress, especially in speaking and listening and in numeracy, so that by the end of the Reception Year children's attainment is above the national expectations and above the average for the local authority. The children are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1, but work is planned to meet their different needs and stages of development. The teacher provides a good range of interesting and challenging activities for the children to choose, including the use of computers, that foster children's personal development and social skills well. The children play and learn cooperatively together. There is a good-sized base room with free-flow of activities, both inside and outside. The children are encouraged well to exercise choice.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed effectively and children's welfare is promoted well. Teaching is stimulating and the children clearly enjoy their lessons. The teaching assistant is used effectively to move round the groups and note what is being learnt. Suitable emphasis is given to assessing children's progress, but the systems are at an early stage of development. Sometimes opportunities are missed to focus on what the children do outside to reinforce the main teaching point, or to intervene with individual children to move learning on.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sinnington Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 29 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 62 parents and carers registered at the school.

Parents are very positive about the school. Some commented on the high quality of teaching. They raised only a very small number of concerns, but there were no common issues. The points raised were: discipline at lunchtime; timeliness of communications from school; range of after-school clubs; use of bad language; and lack of instrumental tuition.

The inspector discussed these comments with the headteacher and found no evidence for concern. The weekly newsletter is an important channel of communication. Instrumental tuition is planned for the near future. For a small school the range of after-school clubs is adequate. The behaviour of the children is good.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	11	2	0

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sinnington Primary School, York, YO62 6SL

I am writing to thank you for your help when I came to inspect your school and to tell you what I think.

I think your school is a good school. I agree with you that it is a really friendly school. Your parents sent me in some letters. They told me that they are very happy with your school, too.

- You make good progress. Your test results are above average: better than in many other schools.
- You do really well in mathematics.
- You are making better progress now in English. Your writing is getting better and I like the way you speak out clearly. However, you still need to keep working hard on English as this is not yet as strong as your mathematics or science.
- You are learning some useful computer skills.
- It is good to see lots of practical activities in science. I know you like these.
- Your behaviour is good.
- You have an interesting curriculum - that means the range of subjects and activities. You told me how much you enjoyed the sports, the theme days and the trips out.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- The teachers and other adults take good care of you.
- The teaching is good. That is why you are making such good progress.

The headteacher and the governors lead your school well and will help it to improve even further. I have asked your headteacher to make sure you continue to get better in English. Also, I have asked the teachers to look really closely at how each one of you is doing, so that they can help you with what to learn next. You need to know exactly what to do to be able to improve your own work.

Here is something you could do to help.

- Make sure you really concentrate in lessons, even when the teacher is not watching you or working with you.

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon  
Her Majesty's Inspector of schools, learning and skills

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).