

Filey Junior School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	121459
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327493
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Wilson
Headteacher	Mr Harvey McCarthey
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
School address	West Road Filey North Yorkshire YO14 9LU
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Age group	7–11
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Amended Report Addendum

A strong lead from the new headteacher has brought the school back on track after a time when pupils were failing to make satisfactory progress.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, which is slightly larger than average, caters for pupils from Filey and the surrounding villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are from minority ethnic groups. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are not at an early stage in the process. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a great deal of change. A new headteacher took up post in September 2008 but before then two assistant headteachers managed the school for a year. The numbers of pupils has reduced considerably as a result of a falling birth rate. Twelve classes were reduced to nine in September 2008 with a commensurate reduction in the number of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which is improving quickly after a period of rapid change. The majority of parents are pleased with it and identify, 'improved behaviour, teachers' liaison with parents and the respect that pupils have for teachers', as strengths of the school. Inspection findings agree. A strong lead from the new headteacher has brought the school back on track after a time when pupils were failing to make satisfactory progress.

The trend is for standards to be broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, since the last inspection, pupils have not achieved well enough in reaching these standards from their starting points in Year 3. Inspection evidence about pupils' achievement in 2008 tells a similar story. The reasons for the previously inadequate achievement are being addressed systematically with positive results. Currently, all pupils, including those in Year 6, are making sound and improving progress. However, targets are not yet challenging enough in all year groups to promote good progress.

There is more to do in raising standards, but the initial thrust of improvement has begun. Initiatives such as effective planning for lessons, the concentration on teaching to pupils' various abilities in the mixed-age classes, specific training for staff in techniques for literacy and numeracy, and improved assessment of pupils' work are all beginning to have a beneficial effect. Higher reading levels, better writing and a sharp decline in temporary exclusions are examples that demonstrate the school's good capacity to continue its upward trend.

Pupils enjoy school life. They know how to keep healthy, safe and involved because the school teaches them about eating sensibly, acting thoughtfully and helping others. The care and support pupils receive are often good but the guidance they receive from teachers' marking and any other assessment of their work is satisfactory. Academic guidance is not consistent across the school because fresh methods employed have not had time to become routine practice. At a personal level, pupils like participating in the work of the school council because they say, 'It gets things done.' They also like fundraising for local and national charities and contributing in school by selling fruit at playtimes.

The quality of teaching is beginning to improve now that the emphasis, in the new mixed-age classes, is on learning aimed at pupils' ability (rather than their year group, irrespective of their ability level). The majority of teachers possess a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, planning is appropriately pitched at different levels of ability and the right resources are available. What makes the difference between the satisfactory teaching (which is the norm) and the small proportion of good teaching that exists is the active involvement of pupils in demanding and practical activities. In some lessons, as pupils say, 'Teachers talk too much; some work is too easy and not challenging enough.' It is this lack of engagement by some pupils in their learning and the low level of challenges that represent barriers to higher standards. The best lessons have an atmosphere of quick and easy banter between teachers and pupils in which pupils gain a lot by asking and answering questions. In a Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils debated the use of adverbs and adjectives in a piece of writing in ways that gave them heightened confidence and a growing command of their use.

The relatively new senior leadership and management team is beginning to have an impact on revitalising the curriculum and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils say that, 'We do less worksheets now that learning has got interesting.' The headteacher has been the guiding light behind the recent improvements. Some parents are not happy because they see mixed-age

classes as a retrograde step but inspection findings show this unavoidable restructuring is being used to raise achievement. There has not been time for the entire team of senior leaders to follow the headteacher's skilful approach in monitoring and evaluation. This limits the breadth of advice that can be given to teachers about improvements needed in pupils' progress and achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use more challenging targets for all year groups to raise standards and promote at least good achievement for pupils.
- Ensure that all lessons give pupils maximum opportunities to participate in ways which extend their learning.
- Make sure that marking and assessment are used fully to assist pupils' progress.
- Develop the skills of monitoring and evaluating among all senior leaders to provide advice about learning and achievement.

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

Achievement, from broadly average starting points, is now satisfactory owing to improved methods of teaching. Average standards since the last inspection have not represented satisfactory achievement. Progress in English has been consistently low while in mathematics and science it has fluctuated yearly. However, achievement in reading and writing has improved, particularly since September 2008, owing to the new methods employed. Pupils are beginning to comprehend better because they discuss text effectively in groups and their writing benefits from a keener concentration on the basic elements of composition. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress satisfactorily. Their progress is a little swifter when working outside the classroom with a specially trained teaching assistant. In regular lessons they do not always have the services of a fully trained assistant. The short timescale of recovery means that there is still more to do in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school, attend satisfactorily and display good behaviour when supervised. They relate well to each other and adults around school. Even the rough play by some is diminishing because there is more to do at lunchtimes and older pupils act as play leaders. Pupils in the main are confident learners who participate in extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm. They appreciate helping to run the school and they join in well with clubs such as basketball and mathematics. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Good aspects flourish in activities such as the Cool Cow Day in which pupils discovered how a cow could alter the fortunes of an African family. Their sense of a global community is fostered well in this respect. Community cohesion is sound at the school and local level, but weaker in pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity in Great Britain. Personal development is not good yet owing to some lapses in self-discipline and pupils' passivity in less challenging lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Planning for lessons now provides different activities for pupils at various levels of attainment, which help to ensure satisfactory learning. All groups of pupils progress at a similar rate partly because the assessment of pupils' learning has improved. However, targets set arising from assessment are not challenging enough to produce good achievement. Pupils are informed about what they need to concentrate on next through marking and personal targets. These methods are not used consistently; success in their application differs from class to class. Pupils have forthright views about the lessons they enjoy the most. The best teaching engages their attention and they become absorbed in 'doing things.' In some lessons, there is too much talk by teachers and not enough practical activity. After all, as some pupils declared, 'We like to have a good think about what is going on and then have time to get on with our work.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes satisfactory achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science. It gives pupils a sound foundation in the basic skills. Moreover, they learn how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils participate in school life quite effectively but opportunities for this are missing in many lessons. All the required subjects are in place but until recently pupils found their presentation a little 'boring' at times. Now, they appreciate the topics that accentuate the links between subjects. For example, in honour of the school's forthcoming centenary celebrations a cross-curricular topic, on the last one hundred years, has been studied across the school. This has caught everyone's imagination, including teachers'. There is satisfactory provision for information and communication technology (ICT), augmented by the use in classrooms of electronic whiteboards. There are some good extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' personal development such as the clubs and local links with Yorkshire in Bloom. These, among other things, develop social skills and community cohesion.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides helpful care and support to pupils and their families. Several parents share the view, for example, that personal support for pupils, whether for behaviour or learning, is excellent. By contrast, some are worried that mixed-age classes, among other things, might mean less preparation for the Year 6 national tests. Inspection evidence shows that the school has not lost sight of pupils' needs in this respect. The school meets the current government requirements for safeguarding pupils. It is in academic guidance that the school's provision is not yet strong enough. At its best, marking is useful because it offers praise and points out areas for improvement, but this is not always the case. Moreover, the thorough recording and tracking of pupils' progress is not yet used rigorously enough to determine areas for improvement and to set demanding targets. This weakness prevents care, guidance and support from being better than satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Driven forward by the headteacher, school leaders have begun to tackle the barriers to progress that caused pupils' achievements to dip in the last few years. The approach to meeting pupils' needs in the reorganised classes has benefited their learning. There is further work to do in setting more demanding challenges but advances mean that the promotion of equality and diversity is now satisfactory. Governors and the leadership team are all closely involved with developments. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' books are beginning to help the school judge the quality of learning. However, teaching does not always benefit from evaluation that concentrates on how well pupils are learning. This limits the rate at which achievement can be advanced. Progress since the last inspection has been erratic, particularly in progressing the issues about assessment, but recent improvements have quickened the pace of development.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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 Filey Junior School, Filey, YO14 9LU

Thank you for being so helpful when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to many of you in the playground, at lunchtime, in lessons and when some of you showed us your work. I could have stopped longer chatting at lunchtime because all the interesting things you do such as chess and table tennis club fascinated me.

You go to a satisfactory school, but one that is improving quickly. This is one of the reasons why I liked my visit so much. Your personal development is satisfactory mainly because some pupils do not possess enough self-discipline. However, things in this respect are improving particularly now that older pupils are being trained as play leaders. You are clear about what makes you healthy, such as the Fruit Tuck Shop. The mixed-age classes are mostly successful in your view. Pupils told us that they like them now because they have made new friends and classes are organised according to ability rather than age. I agree that they are beneficial.

Teaching and the curriculum have improved so that you are all making sound progress. Your headteacher has made sure that literacy and numeracy lessons are more effective. For example, many of you are reading with greater understanding owing to the daily support that you receive. Furthermore, you are finding much to interest you in the new cross-curricular themes.

I have asked the school to do four things to help it improve. More challenging targets should be set to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that you can all extend your learning in a practical, hands-on way in lessons. Any marking and assessments of your learning should be used to pinpoint exactly where you could do even better. Lastly, I have asked that all of your senior staff learn how to check your progress so that your teachers get more advice on how to improve your achievement.

You can all help by trying very hard in lessons, enjoying the practical activities and acting on any advice given to you by your teacher as quickly as possible.