

Lythe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121507
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327502
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

This 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.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	104
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Peronel Cruz
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Foord
Date of previous school inspection	April 2006
School address	High Street Lythe Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 3RT
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He visited ten lessons. Most of these were joint observations of teaching with the headteacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors, other staff members and groups of pupils. A range of documentation was scrutinised and a sample of pupils' work was examined in lessons. Twenty six parental questionnaires were received and the content was considered.

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

- the progress made by the school in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection
- the accuracy of the school's assessment and tracking evidence in identifying under-achievement. and how effectively this information is being used by teachers to enable all pupils to achieve in line with their capabilities
- how well the school's curriculum is meeting the needs of learners and particularly in developing pupils' literacy skills in other subjects
- the contribution which the school is making to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school serves the village of Lythe and the surrounding area; it is located four miles from Whitby in North Yorkshire. Just under half the pupils live outside the school's catchment area. Year groups vary in size ranging from eight pupils currently in Year 2, to 17 in Year 3. A small number of pupils are entitled to free school meals reflecting the relative social advantage which characterises the local area. A few pupils are from minority ethnic communities, but all speak English as their first language. A relatively large proportion of pupils (25%) have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved a number of nationally accredited awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Inclusion Mark.

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

Lythe Primary is a good and improving school. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection and the school is well placed to make further progress. Accurate self-evaluation provides staff and governors with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is required. Effective actions have resulted in progressively higher and above average standards, good pupil achievement, and predominantly good teaching and learning.

The large majority of pupils make good progress because learning is almost always finely personalised to their individual needs through effective use of the school's detailed assessment information. Teachers interact with pupils well by challenging them through pertinent questioning and well planned activities. Expectations are high and lessons have good pace. Occasionally, teachers' knowledge of pupils is not used well enough when lessons are being planned, so that activities are not sufficiently reflective of pupils' capabilities. This is a limiting factor in the progress they make. Greater consistency of practice is also required in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that the very effective and well designed experiences which children receive in the Nursery are more securely built upon in the Reception class.

The headteacher has placed significant emphasis on making sure that all pupils, irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are supported to access the full curriculum and work productively alongside their class peers. This strategy has been outstandingly successful, particularly for those pupils with the most extensive needs, and this contributes very effectively to the good progress which these pupils make. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good and this is reflected in their good attendance. In lessons, the majority listen carefully to their teachers and respond well, whether working individually or by cooperating with others. The large majority show maturity by taking full responsibility for completing tasks. Pupils consider that they are safe and well cared for. They exhibit confidence in staff, knowing where to obtain help and guidance when required. This provides them with a secure basis from which to learn.

The headteacher and staff are industrious and self-critical. The rigour with which they have tackled revisions to the curriculum has resulted in a major change to the way that learning is organised and delivered. Results are encouraging, particularly in relation to pupils' enjoyment of learning and positive attitudes towards their work. Of particular note are the opportunities afforded for pupils to write extensively in other

subject areas. This is helping to improve pupils' attainment in English as well as impacting on their willingness to write and to write productively at length. Work being produced about 'The Tempest' by pupils in Years 5 and 6 offers clear evidence of pupils' enthusiasm being encouraged by this approach, with resulting improvements in both learning and standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable all teachers to learn from the practice of the best so that full use is made of performance information to make sure that learning is finely differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, enabling them to acquire new knowledge and skills and achieve as well as they can.
- Improve consistency in learning and teaching across the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that the manner in which children learn in the Reception Year builds seamlessly from the very effective practice in the Nursery.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Standards at Key Stage 1 vary each year, mainly because cohorts are small and some contain a relatively large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards were highest in 2007, significantly so in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. Standards in 2008 were lower but remained just above average. Pupils' attainment was highest in writing and mathematics, although few pupils attained the higher Level 3.

At Key Stage 2, standards rose markedly in 2006 and 2007 in English to significantly above average. They were also high in mathematics and science. All pupils attained Level 4 in English and science and 89% did so in mathematics. Standards at Level 5 in each subject were also above average, demonstrating significant improvement compared with the time of the previous inspection, confirming pupils' good achievement. Test results in 2008 remain unvalidated, but they show a decline in standards in each core subject. This small cohort contained a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and half the pupils had joined the school during the Key Stage. Inspection evidence and detailed school assessments confirm that effective interventions by the school resulted in pupils achieving in line with their capabilities. In addition, most current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The robust use of assessment evidence and a thorough knowledge of pupils with physical needs

ensure that provision for these pupils is of high quality. Sensitive support enables them to have wide access to the curriculum and to have extensive involvement in most aspects of school life.

Pupils enjoy school and confirm that they feel safe and secure. Attendance is good. Behaviour observed during the inspection was also predominantly good in lessons and around the school. Pupils show a keen understanding of the needs and safety of others, with older pupils in particular showing maturity in taking care of their younger peers. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are active in the playground and physical education lessons and engage willingly in wider sporting opportunities. Most talk with good knowledge about how to eat healthily. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to engage with the local community, including parish activities, regular involvement at sporting events, drama performances and fundraising events. Their good basic skills are being further enhanced, particularly in literacy, where the new curriculum is providing many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subject areas. Pupils work cooperatively with each other with some displaying leadership skills when required. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is reflected in their behaviour and their conduct around school. They understand the difference between right and wrong, making good choices which give careful thought to the safety and welfare of others. They take part in assemblies demonstrating genuine interest and showing maturity when reflecting on important messages.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	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	2
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

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good. In most cases, teachers plan learning effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's accurate assessment information is used well by most teachers to plan learning which effectively meets pupils' needs. Important emphasis is placed on what will be learned and what pupils can achieve, which results in activities which are both relevant and personal. Time is taken to carefully explain the content and purpose of lessons providing a secure context from which pupils undertake their tasks. Most lessons are characterised by teachers' efforts to make learning interesting. They use their good subject knowledge to enthuse pupils about planned activities. They support learning effectively by enabling pupils to work independently, offering regular opportunities for them to cooperate in pairs or small groups, jointly solving problems. Teachers challenge pupils to think critically about their work and how to improve it, using their time well to interact with individuals and groups. While this approach is becoming established practice, it is not yet commonplace. Not all staff take detailed account of assessment information to plan activities which fully reflect the learning needs and maturity of all pupils, all of the time, and this limits their progress. Pupils are at ease when working independently, but are keen team players when tasks are shared. In all circumstances, the large majority are mature and confident in their attitudes towards their work and are keen to succeed.

The school has invested wisely in re-modelling the curriculum to take better account of pupils' needs and interests. Teachers' planning is theme-based, linking a number of subjects together and successfully providing a vehicle through which pupils' core skills can be developed further. This has added significantly to pupils' progress, particularly in writing, providing them with time to craft longer written text and explore ideas in greater detail. The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities which pupils enjoy.

Staff demonstrate a high level of care for pupils in all classes. The quality of care exhibited for pupils with the greatest level of need is exemplary. This is reflected in the very good relationships between adults and pupils, and contributes greatly to a harmonious school community. Procedures for monitoring attendance are robust and well managed, administrative staff are diligent in pursuing unexplained absences. Transition arrangements and liaison with parents are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Governors, the headteacher and staff demonstrate high expectations of pupils in relation to their academic and personal development. There is a strong commitment to the school's traditions based on inclusion, valuing the contribution of all and respecting differences. Evaluation of the school's performance is rigorous and routine. Staff articulate a clear understanding of where improvement is required and this is fully reflected in the school improvement plan. Pupils' targets are challenging. Standards and achievement have improved since the previous inspection because of actions taken to improve teaching and learning, to develop effective assessment systems and improve the curriculum. Resources are well used to support pupils' learning. Staff deployment is effective, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and increasingly for those who are more able and talented.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity in all matters is exemplary, with significant efforts made to meet the needs of all pupils and offer access to the full curriculum. Safeguarding procedures, including risk assessment, are secure and regularly reviewed.

Governors have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They receive timely and accurate information about the school's performance and use this to good effect when making decisions. This ensures that governance is challenging, although the level of support offered to the school by governors is acknowledged and valued by staff. Performance management is rigorous, there is a clear line of sight which links school targets to staff targets and assures their accountability for individual and school performance.

There are good opportunities for parents to engage with staff about their child's education and this is valued. The school has developed effective partnership arrangements with other agencies and organisations to ensure that additional provision for pupils is matched to their needs.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The headteacher and staff are keen to develop further the school's work in this area. Staff are knowledgeable about the needs of the immediate community and of the local area. Regular activities in the parish are promoted well and pupils partake regularly in community events both in school and elsewhere. The school makes determined efforts to engage with other school communities in contrasting locations and profitable relationships exist with schools in Leicester and Kenya, with planning well advanced for visits to work alongside pupils from different ethnic communities in Middlesbrough.

The school provides good value for money and is well placed to make further improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is located in separate buildings. Nursery facilities are housed in a demountable classroom with its own secure outdoor learning space, while Reception age children are taught within the main school building alongside their Year 1 peers. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly in line with expectations although this varies between cohorts. For a small proportion of children, their communication, language and literacy skills are generally weaker than other skills. Good progress ensures that by the time children enter Year 1 the majority attain in line with expectations, with some demonstrating higher levels of attainment. Children receive a very good start to school in the Nursery based on a thorough understanding of their needs and capabilities. Despite the indoor space being relatively small, it is used well. The high level of expertise offered by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has created a well structured and stimulating environment which effectively supports children's learning. The Nursery's outdoor learning area offers an extensive variety of activities to both interest and enthuse the children. A good balance of independent activities for children to select is complemented by well planned interaction with the teacher and this promotes learning very well and leads to good progress. Children move around confidently and safely. They are secure in their routines and work and play confidently both individually and with each other. During the inspection, children's tangible excitement in digging for treasure in the sandpit was matched by excellent discussion with the teacher to develop their language and reasoning skills.

Reception children are also confident in their surroundings. They interact well with each other and with adults. When activities are distinctly planned to meet their individual needs, they engage well and make good progress. This occurred, for example, when they were learning about the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Here, practical indoor activities were linked to opportunities to extend and consolidate their new found knowledge in the outside environment. On occasions, however, not enough account is taken of their levels of maturity or learning requirements and this limits opportunities for them to benefit fully from activities and to make expected progress.

Leadership and management are good. The expertise of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been used to good effect in promoting good practice across the Key Stage. Nonetheless, further progress is still required to ensure the seamless development of practice between the Nursery and Reception classes to ensure that provision for Reception age children is always securely aligned to their needs.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Twenty six parental questionnaires were submitted, including an additional letter. Almost all of the completed parental questionnaires were positive and reflect the inspection outcomes. Additional comments included the extent to which pupils expressed their enjoyment of school; appreciation of the way the school was attempting to liaise with other schools in different contexts to expand pupils' understanding of life in other communities; the high level of care afforded to the pupils; effective communication with parents and carers; the welcoming environment offered in the Early Years Foundation Stage providing a positive introduction for pupils to the school; the range of after school clubs and particularly pupils' enjoyment of music and art; agreement that site security had improved, although a few parents considered this should have been completed earlier.

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:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



13 March 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Lythe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School YO21 3RT

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school recently. Your comments were very informative. In particular, I would like to express my thanks to members of the school council who shared their views during their lunch break and to all those other pupils who spoke with me in lessons and the playground. You all conducted yourselves very well and are a credit to the school.

The report is now complete and I want to tell you what it contains.

Lythe is a good and improving school. All aspects of its work are good, although the way that staff ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum and other activities is excellent. Mrs Foord and the staff work incredibly hard to support your learning and they are constantly striving to make the school better. They are being successful. Teaching and learning are almost always good and great strides have been made to improve the curriculum. You all said how much you enjoyed learning because subjects were linked together well. Your attendance and behaviour are good and I was particularly pleased to see how well you worked together in lessons.

I have asked the governors and staff to concentrate on making two areas better. First, to make sure that the experiences children in the Nursery receive are built upon more consistently when children move into the Reception class. Second, to make sure that the assessment information which the school has about your work is always used to make sure that the tasks you are given are carefully matched to your learning needs so that all of you make the best progress you can.

Through talking to your teachers and your school council representatives you may well be able to support the staff in making these changes. Please accept my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson HMI
Her Majesty's Inspector

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