

Leeming RAF Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121333
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	313951
Inspection date	11 March 2008
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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul O'Neill
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Potter
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2005
School address	Gatenby Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 9NQ
Telephone number	01677 422675
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement; the quality of teaching; and curriculum provision. Evidence was gathered from the school's judgements about attainment on entry, test results, teachers' records, observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' current work and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school situated 'behind the wire' on RAF Leeming. Virtually all of the children are from service families. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; few have a statement of special educational need, although these factors can change very quickly. The attainment of children on entry into the Reception class is below average. The number of children in the school fluctuates depending on issues related to military deployment. There is a very high pupil turnover. Family life is often disrupted owing to a parent being deployed abroad. The average stay for each pupil is two years but many come and go within a year. Few pupils have attended the school for a whole key stage. Leeming has a Healthy School's Award, an Activemark for physical education and an Inclusion Award. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I think this school performs outstandingly - I wish that I never have to move away.' This typical parental comment sums up Leeming Primary. The vast majority of other parents and children think in a similar way. Inspection findings confirm these views. This is an outstanding school, which has a remarkable effect on pupils' academic achievements and on them as individuals. This influence is even more remarkable given the limited time that pupils spend in the school.

Achievement is excellent. Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently above average and sometimes exceptionally high as was the case in 2007. In some years the number of pupils in Year 6 is too small to rely on statistics alone to judge how well pupils have done. This was the case in 2007 and currently in 2008. However, the school keeps meticulous records of individual progress, which demonstrate the rapid gains made by all pupils from their entry into Reception or at any other stage along the way.

The welcome shown by pupils to visitors is overwhelmingly polite, warm hearted and mature. They are very keen to relate how the school keeps them safe, happy and healthy. Being relatively isolated on the base, they love the frequent trips, and opportunities to email friends in other schools and family members abroad. Many speak with authority about how good Leeming is because they can compare it with several other schools. Pupils' overriding opinion is of a school that provides: stimulating and practical lessons; plenty to do at breaks, lunchtimes and after school; and frequent chances to get involved and help out. As a result, their personal development is superb. Behaviour is excellent; pupils are considerate and self-disciplined. They fit in and make friends quickly, which is a credit to their social skills and the reception they receive.

The school is successful because of the principled and nurturing leadership provided by the headteacher. Staff at all levels have been developed professionally by high quality guidance from the headteacher and by the demanding training they have undertaken in the last few years. This has resulted in a skilled team managing pupils' learning magnificently in a context of constant change. Governors have also played their part very well. Their close contact with the school allows them to judge how well it is doing and suggest areas for improvement.

The care and support provided for pupils and their parents is excellent. This means that the process of induction is very fast. It allows pupils to pick up from where they left off at other schools, and receive very well considered extra help if they are finding learning difficult. Equally, preparation for secondary school or another primary school is handled very smoothly in a way that boosts confidence. Many older pupils possess a bearing in advance of their years.

Major improvements to the school's accommodation, in recent years, have enabled teaching to flourish. For example, the well equipped new room for computers and a well resourced library have enhanced pupils' learning. Teaching is excellent in its probing questions and insistence on discussion. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the problem-solving approach in which fun type games are the means by which they learn. When asked to sum up what makes lessons interesting, they always comment on the way in which teachers inject enjoyment into everything. For example, in Year 1/2 classes pupils love the responsibility of getting their passports stamped when they have completed various challenging tasks. In Years 3 to 6 there is often a buzz of excitement as pupils try to solve mathematical problems, draft ideas for writing from an exciting stimulus or share their thoughts about how well they have done in the form of 'top tips' for learning. Teaching draws on a well devised curriculum that includes plenty of additional

opportunities such as 'World Weeks', residential trips and French. It is the relative lack of learning in the school's extensive grounds that makes the curriculum good rather than outstanding. The school is aware of this and is beginning to make plans to broaden the scope of the science curriculum, for example.

The school's self-evaluation is precise and accurate. Everyone involved knows exactly how successful the school is and what needs to be improved. Leadership and management are very well versed in review and development because the needs of pupils are subject to constant change. The progress made from 2005 is top quality, as is the capacity to progress even further. In relation to the costs involved and the standards achieved, value for money is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start. They make outstanding progress in the Reception class. Children reach nationally expected levels by the end of the year and many go beyond them in social skills, reading and mathematics. Book corners, investigations about how much and how many and teaching about letter sounds are also thorough. Leadership and management, which are first-rate, show great insight into how children learn best. As a result, opportunities to play are expertly organised with sufficient challenge to stretch children's thinking and their ability to talk about what they are doing. For example, investigations into how levels changed when a large tray of water was tipped at different angles caused a great deal of debate and scientific thinking. In response to the imaginative activities, children behave very well and play happily together. As one child said enthusiastically when filling a pot of water to pour into the tray, 'This is fun isn't it?' The outdoor area is limited in its provision, but nevertheless the staff make the best possible use of what they have. All staff are committed to the highest levels of support and care and this results in children's high level of personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve opportunities for learning in the school grounds.

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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?	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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	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?	2
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?	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

Inspection of Leeming RAF Community Primary School, Northallerton,
DL7 9NQ

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit because everyone was so friendly. The children who spoke to me at break and lunchtime convinced me that lessons and the way that you are cared for at Leeming are really special.

You go to an outstanding school. I know that you are truly proud of it. These are some of the things that I found to be particularly impressive. I agree with you that learning is full of enjoyable and practical activities. In the lessons I saw, pupils were busy solving problems or writing imaginative pieces. Some of the writing in Year 3/4 about the forest, for example, was quite spine tingling. Of course, school is more than just lessons and you told me about all the other engaging things that you do. I was particularly taken with the way that you mix with other schools in the area since in many the ways the RAF base is quite remote.

By the end of Year 6, your standards are always above average and sometimes well above it, which is wonderful when you realise how many times many of you have changed school along the way.

The pupils I sat with at lunchtime chatted away in a very friendly way. I learnt from them how much you all care about good behaviour and helping out in the school. The list of ways in which you can contribute seemed endless. You talked without drawing breath about the school's strengths and are correct in mentioning the development of the school grounds as a priority.

You can all help by discussing the plans to improve the grounds and eventually enjoying what they bring in terms of, for example, increased opportunities for scientific investigation in a natural setting.