

Warthill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121523
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314023
Inspection date	5 March 2008
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	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Clare Wood
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Dowie
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Warthill York North Yorkshire YO19 5XL
Telephone number	01904 489296
Fax number	0

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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: the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage; the curriculum; and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, observations of the school at work, discussions with pupils and representatives of senior staff and the governing body, a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. 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 form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Warthill Church of England Primary is a very small, rural school serving the villages of Warthill and Holtby and farms in the surrounding area. In January 2005 the school confederated with Sand Hutton Church of England Primary School and one headteacher leads and manages both schools. All pupils are of White British heritage. Attainment on entry into the Reception year is usually slightly below age related expectations although this varies from year-to-year as does the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently no pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school is a member of the Ryedale Modern Foreign Languages Network, has held the Basic Skills Quality Mark since 2002 and received the Activemark in 2008. The new Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classroom came into use two weeks before the inspection, after several months of extensive building works.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This small Church of England school gives pupils an outstanding education. Standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve exceptionally well. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because the school takes exceptionally good care of everyone and pays great attention to individual needs. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet current government guidelines. Attendance is well above the national average and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They are happy, active learners, very sure that it is important to lead healthy lives, to respect other people and to share. Older pupils' aims for themselves sum up those of the school: 'To have a happy year and to work hard.' Behaviour is exemplary. Parents fully appreciate what the school provides, saying, 'It challenges all pupils and with so much one to one teaching they can progress at a pace that suits them.' Pupils agree that this is, 'A school to be proud of.' In their view, 'We wouldn't change anything apart from the colour!'

High standards over a five-year period in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 place the school in the top quarter of schools in the country. Standards are consistently above to well above average at the end of Year 2. From a slightly below average starting point pupils' achievement is outstanding. The school's results are remarkably consistent given the very small year groups where minor variations in performance can have a disproportionate impact on results as a whole. With very few exceptions, pupils reach nationally expected levels and between two-thirds and three-quarters of pupils exceed them each year. This is because teaching quality is outstanding. Results in national tests confirm that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptional progress.

One of the main reasons for the school's success is that pupils have a great deal of autonomy in their learning. Many pupils follow individualised learning plans which mean their needs are exactly catered for in two classes with four different age groups. Pupils are fully involved in setting their own challenges and deciding whether they have met their targets. They are expected to look at their work closely and spot ways in which it could be improved. The more able pupils do extremely well because teachers set work which requires them to think and to work things out for themselves. Science is a notable strength because of the emphasis on learning practically and on pupils asking questions to which they want to know the answers. Pupils explained that they find learning fun, giving the example of 'moving round the classroom being blood cells and arteries', which gave them a clear picture of how the body worked. Teachers are adept at providing for different ways of learning, moving swiftly from practical to theoretical or visual learning seamlessly. As a result pupils are very attentive and learn at a fast rate, as demonstrated in a lesson where pupils grasped the relationship between compass points, grid references, angles and degrees because they tried it out physically first. They then went on to use this knowledge successfully to solve mathematical and geographical problems.

An outstanding curriculum ensures that pupils make connections between subjects and draw on their skills in several of these when undertaking individual long-term pieces of work, such as a recent one on the Ancient Greeks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed considerable resourcefulness when they wrote 'large books' containing reports, historical information, diary entries, even interviews with an ancient god or photographic sequences demonstrating step by step instructions for making an Ancient Greek costume. Teachers make sure that pupils have a suitable audience for their work, in this instance younger pupils and the local community, and so pupils know they have to present their work neatly and methodically. As a result, their presentation, including punctuation and paragraphing, is outstanding and contributes to their

high standards. Pupils in Key Stage 1 follow a curriculum that continues the Foundation Stage areas of learning so that right from the start they largely direct their own learning. The school's individual approach to teaching literacy and numeracy clearly works.

The school quite rightly evaluated most aspects of the school's work as outstanding but then concluded this was a good school with good leadership and management. In fact leadership and management are outstanding. As a result of confederation with a local school, an assistant headteacher was appointed to support leadership and management. This fruitful partnership has benefited teaching, learning and the curriculum because the headteacher now has time to lead and manage more creatively through not having a teaching commitment and subject leaders have more opportunities to lead and develop their subjects. The confederation has opened up further opportunities for professional development and has sharpened the school's focus on 'making learning relevant' through teachers in both schools sharing ideas and observing each other's lessons. This has given rise to more innovative practice. Finally, pupils are now involved in leading too, preparing fortnightly presentations for which they decide the focus, to give just one example.

Governance is outstanding because governors are highly supportive and pro-active, with the result that the school is growing in size. With strong links between two small schools, the church and local community as well as further afield, the school demonstrates its outward-looking nature and its strong capacity to improve further. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives as a result.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and by the end of the Reception year they are working securely within expected levels in all areas of learning. This is because they are well taught and the provision is well led and managed. The new classroom has opened up further opportunities for working outdoors, but understandably this is an area requiring further development. Currently, outdoor activities favour physical and personal development rather than all areas of learning. Children settle in quickly and respond well to the class routines, benefiting from older pupils' excellent example. Assessment is accurate and used well to chart children's progress. Children show increasing maturity as they organise themselves to make pirate hats, for instance, helping to stick materials together so the hat fits. They are busy, happy learners who work and play together well, and show initiative as when mopping up spillages without asking or pointing out when the next door farmer drove his sheep and lambs into the fields, commenting, 'This is the time of year when the lambs come out.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the Foundation Stage curriculum gives children access to all areas of learning whether they are inside or out.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	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?	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

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

I really enjoyed meeting you all and watching you work and play. Your new classroom looked lovely and the youngest children clearly enjoyed going outside often. I was impressed by your presentations in assembly and the way you all spoke so clearly. I also very much enjoyed talking to a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils afterwards and looking at their work. I agree with you that you go to an exceptionally good school. These are just some of the many things that make your school outstanding.

- You achieve exceptionally well because your teachers make learning fun.
- Your teachers also set you lots of challenges so you reach high standards.
- Your work is extremely interesting and makes you think because teachers connect subjects together to help you understand them more easily.
- Your school is extremely well led and managed and this means that everyone has a say in what goes on.
- You behave extremely well and work very hard and your attendance is much better than in most schools.
- Your school prepares you extremely well for your future lives.

I have asked your school to do one thing to make it even better than it is already. It should make sure that the youngest children have many different activities outside to choose from. This would mean that whether children chose to work or play inside or out they would have equal opportunities to develop different skills in all their areas of learning.