

Knavesmire Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121279
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	313933
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Schofield
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Weston
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Trafalgar Street York North Yorkshire YO23 1HY
Telephone number	01904 653279
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and inspected the following issues: the quality of the Foundation Stage; standards and pupils' achievement; personal development and well-being; and leadership and management. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons, examining a sample of pupils' work in books and on display, scrutinising the school's documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils, the chair of governors, the senior leadership team, subject coordinators and the local authority locality advisor. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but the inspector found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were accurate and justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Knavesmire is an average sized primary school located within the south of the City of York. The number of pupils has increased over the last three years because of its increasing popularity, reversing a previously declining trend. The number of classes and nursery places has been expanded to meet demand although the Reception class is oversubscribed. Most of the children are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is below average. About 10% of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is lower than in most schools. The school has several awards including a national Healthy Schools Award, an Artsmark, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and a School Achievement Award. The Foundation Stage is used as an example of best practice by the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Knavesmire has improved significantly since the last inspection in November 2003. It is outstanding in all aspects of its work and provides an excellent quality of education and a high standard of care for all of its pupils. This is because of expert leadership and the commitment of all the staff who know each pupil very well and set their sights high in order to achieve the school's everyday aims to, 'be positive, know more, succeed together and care for each other'. This enables all pupils to progress as well as they can, utilising their individual gifts and talents whatever their starting point. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding as is their personal development and well-being. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate portrayal of its effectiveness. It indicates that the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has a clear understanding of what it needs to do next. As a result the school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

The quality of teaching is excellent and the standard is consistently high throughout the school. Pupils are active and engaged participants in lessons which are carefully planned to incorporate a variety of strategies: teachers' skilful questioning and strong subject knowledge enthuses and includes all pupils. Activities match pupils' abilities well so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress and achieve well in lessons. Learning objectives and success criteria are used effectively to monitor progress and understanding. Classrooms are vibrant and inviting places to learn, making the best use of available space. Teaching assistants and resources are deployed effectively. Additional support is available for those who need it for whatever reason. Booster sessions are successfully targeted at those who are at risk of missing their targets as well as at the more able pupils who require more challenge. Pupils' work in books and displays around the school is of a high standard. Marking is good overall. It incorporates ways to reward pupils for their success and clearly indicates what they can do to improve their work further. Some subjects work particularly well together. For example, information and communication technology (ICT) is used in science to explore how the heart works and in English to word process and edit book reviews. Some students have used ICT to create an illustration of a healthy pizza and explain the balance of nutrients needed in it for a healthy diet. An assembly which actively included all pupils, and supported spiritual, moral, cultural and social and emotional aspects of learning very effectively through a 'phone a friend' role play, also reinforced literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils respond very well to the high standard of teaching and care they receive. As a result they are keen and happy learners who look forward to coming to school and enjoy all it has to offer, including the good and increasing range of extra-curricular activities and trips and visits. The pupils' outstanding behaviour and excellent attendance - which at over 96% is well above the national average for primary schools - bears witness to this. The stimulus, positive experiences and challenge they are provided with ensures pupils' achievement is outstanding compared to national expectations as they move through the years and between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Consequently, academic standards are also outstanding. Despite some variation between different year groups, an improving trend has been maintained throughout the last three years in all three core subjects. The school consistently exceeds the challenging targets it sets itself. Results throughout this period at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been well above national averages. Between 2005 and 2007, almost every pupil at age seven and eleven gained the nationally expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. A significant proportion of pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the time they leave

the school. This prepares them well for the next phase of their education and makes a strong contribution to their future economic well-being.

Pupils are rightly proud of the school and their achievements. They know that they matter as individuals and that their opinions are heard. Consequently, they feel very safe and secure and develop into well rounded young people who are very polite, care for each other and want to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils speak confidently and express mature opinions about what matters to them most about the school and why: they can use their initiative and articulate their ideas. For instance, during this inspection pupils talked about the many good things about their school including the links with the Theatre Royal for drama and with a local secondary school for physical education and modern foreign languages. They understood very clearly how their work is marked and reported that there is always an adult they can go to if they had any kind of problem, before proceeding to talk knowledgeably about the 'worry boxes' and point out the 'feelings thermometers' in their classrooms and the displays around the school that help them deal with their feelings. Pupils described how they canvass each other's opinions for the school magazine and supervise and organise the 'Zonepark' activities at breaks and lunch-times - engaging in an intelligent debate about the pros and cons of organised play - before concluding that, 'you can't get much better than this school'.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many believe they are lucky that their children attend this school, 'because of the exceptionally high standards'. Others comment on the clear vision of the senior management team and the warm welcoming and happy atmosphere in the school and the ways in which the school seeks to involve them in their child's learning and keep them up to date with current developments such as phonics, social and emotional aspects of learning and the primary national strategy. They 'have noticed year on year improvements such as the library, the multi-use games area, the ICT suite and the investment in the arts.that their children have benefited from enormously'.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has forged excellent and productive relationships with parents and other external agencies. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and vision. All of the staff and governors contribute to this and are committed to providing the very best educational opportunities and standards of care to ensure that pupils flourish. Managers at all levels fulfil their roles effectively and enthusiastically and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of those areas it should improve. Resources are deployed effectively. The staff form a strong cohesive team and are eager to develop their skills and abilities further. They share expertise and ideas, such as using a topic to link subjects, routinely observe each other in the classroom and undertake a termly scrutiny of pupils' work collectively in order to develop a common richness of experience in all classes and to share best practice. Assessment of pupils' progress is undertaken on a half-termly basis. It is rigorous and comprehensive. Planning is well considered and carefully implemented. Actions are regularly monitored and evaluated. Planning and management information is used consistently throughout the school because it is practical, readily understood and its benefits are tangible. Its impact is seen in the positive outcomes it reaps: for pupils through the high standards they achieve and their outstanding personal development; and for the school through its deservedly good and growing local reputation.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children receive an excellent start to their education during the Foundation Stage because of the outstanding provision and highly effective teaching and learning opportunities. Leadership

and management are extremely effective and constantly driving towards further improvement. A significant and positive feature of the provision, which benefits children enormously, is the excellent partnership between parents, carers and other local providers. They are warmly welcomed into the school to find out about teaching and learning developments such as phonics, how to support children's learning and development in the home and other settings or to access resources.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are broadly average for their age. They settle in quickly and enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. They enjoy free access to the outdoor play areas where opportunities to explore and experiment, for example, by looking at the changes that powder paint makes to puddles, promote good learning. Children know how to keep themselves safe and learn how to eat healthily with fresh fruit and vegetables provided during snack and meal-times. Staff have high expectations and expertly plan for the children's individual learning needs. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make very good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, including their personal development. As a result all meet and many exceed the early learning goals expected of them by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- This outstanding school knows itself very well and is already taking steps it has identified to make it even better. As a result, no issues for improvement are raised.

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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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Knavesmire School, York, YO23 1HY

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was good to meet you and hear about all that you do at school. It was a pleasure to see you all so happy, working so very hard and making such good progress in lessons. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing you all enthusiastically and energetically taking part in the 'phone a friend' assembly (I also joined in with you at the back of the hall). You told me you love coming to school and enjoy learning because there is always so much to do and the teachers make lessons fun and keep you on your toes. You said that in your opinion, 'you couldn't find a school much better than this,' and I agree with you. Your school is outstanding in all aspects of its work. It provides you with an excellent education and it cares for you exceptionally well. You respond to this very well by achieving very high standards and becoming mature and confident young people who have every chance to make the most of your education in your next school.

Your school is outstanding because your headteacher leads it exceptionally well and is helped in this by all of the staff, the governors and your parents. The teachers and teaching assistants teach you extremely well and give you activities that make learning exciting and fun. All of the staff know you very well and keep a very close eye on what you are doing. The headteacher and teachers know what you are capable of and are determined to make sure you succeed. They also provide you with plenty of trips and visits and plenty of extra activities outside of lessons. They listen to what you have to say and encourage you to take part in the life of the school, for example, by collecting pupils' views for the school magazine and taking turns to organise and supervise the Zonpark activities. I liked everything that I saw in your school and think that the headteacher and school staff are doing exactly what is needed to make it even better.

You are quite rightly proud of your school and all the things you achieve. You are excellent ambassadors for your school and talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about what you do. I think that you are outstanding young people who are extremely polite and well-behaved and who respect and look after each other. You and your teachers make a very strong team and work hard to ensure that together everyone in your school achieves its everyday aims: 'to be positive, know more, succeed together and care for each other'. Good luck and all best wishes for the future.