

Robert Wilkinson Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121545
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	314033
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	470
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diana Gibbon
Headteacher	Mr Richard Ludlow
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West End Strensall York North Yorkshire YO32 5UH
Telephone number	1904 490306
Fax number	1904 490306

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Key Stage 1. Evidence was gathered from national published data, the school's own assessment and evaluation records, observation of lessons, pupils' completed work and interviews with seven governors, staff and pupils. The views of parents were also taken into account through the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but on the whole, the inspectors 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 large school serving a large commuter village close to the city of York. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Almost all the pupils are White British and a small number of the pupils from different backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average and most of these pupils have problems with speech and language or learning difficulties. Children in the EYFS enter the Reception class from a number of different pre-school settings, either in September or January depending on when they reach the age of five. The school has achieved Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark and Basic Skills awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that enjoys an excellent reputation locally. 'Fantastic', 'excellent', 'outstanding', are terms used by many parents when they comment on the school. They believe that their children thrive because it provides high quality teaching, excellent care and support and a range of exciting opportunities for learning. Although the vast majority of parents appreciate the very good information they receive, a few of the working parents would like improved systems to keep them better informed. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about their teachers, their lessons, and the great clubs they attend that range from gardening, filmmaking and science to sports. They feel safe and extremely well looked after, for example, having access to peer mediators or the Jungle Room (for the socially or emotionally vulnerable pupils). They really appreciate that the school and its governors listen to them, for example, through the 'Have Your Say Week', and that their suggestions are taken on board. This has led to significant improvements, including the outdoor play provision and the refurbished pupils' toilets.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is wholehearted and is reflected in their good attendance. Their behaviour around school and in lessons is excellent and everyone gets on and works together exceptionally well. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way. They clearly love the many opportunities to exercise in lessons, in the multi-use games area and at break-time and the many sports based clubs. Pupils mostly make sensible choices with their food, for example, from lunchtime menus that they have helped to devise. This reflects the school's achievement of Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Pupils are very keen to help and take their responsibilities around school very seriously. They act as play leaders, peer mediators and man phones at lunchtimes. They are also fully involved in village events. They have a very good understanding of different cultures and ways of life, in Britain and in the wider world, as a result of Global Awareness and Faith Weeks, and their links with a school in Madrid. The latter has led to pupil exchanges and a very active web blog. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. It supports their learning extremely well and together with their excellent basic skills, ensures that they are exceptionally well placed to face life's future challenges.

Overall, pupils make excellent progress from starting points that are slightly below average when they enter the Reception classes to standards that are high by Year 6. This represents outstanding achievement. For a number of years, standards have been significantly above the national average at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In 2007, although results in Year 6 were significantly above average, they had dipped noticeably compared to 2006. In 2008, standards went back up because strategies, for example, to improve pupils' writing, bore fruit. The school's rigorous tracking suggests that standards are on course to rise further in 2009 and even more in 2010. Pupils in Year 2 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did less well than their peers nationally in 2008. Assessment information shows that, nonetheless, these pupils made good progress and they continue to do so now they are in Year 3.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. There is great consistency in the use of effective practice across the school. All lessons have very clear objectives that are explained carefully to pupils through the 'Steps to Success'. As a result, pupils work purposefully and successfully to achieve what has been planned. Excellent use is made of interactive whiteboards to introduce new learning. Pupils are given work well matched to their needs, and when needed, very effective additional support by skilful teaching assistants. Feedback to pupils on their work is a particular strength and is greatly appreciated by pupils who have a very good understanding of what they

need to do to improve. Teachers set very clear targets based on regular assessments that ensure pupils know what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning. The school's outstanding curriculum is under constant review and very successfully underpins all pupils' learning, including those at an early stage of learning English. There are excellent links made across subjects that ensure the purposeful use of language, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. A focus on investigation and enrichment through theme weeks, such as, for the creative arts, promote high standards of work across the curriculum. Provision for pupils' personal development through activities such as 'Healthy Minds and Bodies' is excellent. The many extremely effective systems to care for, guide and support pupils, including Rainbow nurture groups and the 'Jungle Room,' ensure that both their personal development and their well-being are outstanding.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction for the school and is very ably supported in this by very professional senior staff. All staff, both teachers and their assistants, are valued and they willingly take on leadership roles within their areas of responsibility. The school evaluates its own effectiveness well and uses this information very successfully to plan improvements. Although the school has rigorous systems to track pupils' progress, the data collected are cumbersome to use and make it difficult for comparisons to be made between groups. This limits the effectiveness of data analysis as a tool for managers. Governors are extremely effective and do not rely on what school leaders tell them. They observe lessons, discuss results and join with staff in producing the school's improvement plan. The school has shown strong improvement since its last inspection and the excellent strength in depth of leadership ensures it has an outstanding capacity to improve further. The school provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good. They enter the Reception classes with skills that are slightly below those expected for their age. The good progress they make means that by time they enter Year 1, they comfortably meet the goals expected for their age.

Provision is good. Activities, which are closely matched to the requirements for each of the areas of learning, are carefully planned for both indoor provision and/or the stimulating outdoor area. These are well balanced between teacher-led class sessions, focused adult-led group tasks and purposeful opportunities for independent learning. Good account is taken of parents' knowledge of their children when assessing what they need to learn. Although there are effective links with all the pre-school settings, which aids transition, there are differences in the detail and the nature of assessments that are made by them. This means that EYFS staff have to thoroughly reassess to obtain an accurate baseline assessment of individual attainment. Despite this, and the short time that the majority of children have in Reception, they make impressive progress. The children are well cared for and well looked after. Leadership and management are good and are ensuring that EYFS requirements are being implemented effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Collect data that can be more efficiently and effectively used to compare the performance of different groups of pupils in school.
- Work with the pre-school settings to establish more consistent and useful baseline assessments of children coming into Reception classes.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

Inspection of Robert Wilkinson Primary School, York, YO32 5UH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what makes your school outstanding. You told us how much you enjoyed coming to school because of all the exciting things you do, both in and out of class, and because your teachers are excellent. We agree that your teachers and their assistants are extremely caring, your lessons are really interesting and that teachers are very careful to explain to you what you will be learning. You also clearly appreciate the comments they make on your work, which help you improve, and the clear targets they give you that explain the next steps you need to take. It is no surprise to us that your achievement is excellent and enables you to reach high standards in your work. We were also extremely impressed with your excellent behaviour; how well you all get on together and how much you help each other, for example, as play leaders and mediators. You have an excellent understanding of what you need to do to keep fit, healthy and out of harm's way.

At present, children in the Reception classes make good progress, although their teachers have to spend valuable time finding out exactly what the children know before they can plan what they need to teach them. I have asked the school to work with the different pre-school's the children come from to find a way of getting this important information earlier so that the children can make even faster progress.

A major reason why your school is outstanding is because the headteacher and all the staff and governors work extremely hard and successfully to ensure that you all do as well as you possibly can. They look closely at what is going well and what needs to improve and then take very effective action to make things better, whenever this is needed. The information that tells them about the progress you make is not easy to use. I have asked them to improve this so that they have an even clearer picture of how well different groups of you are doing.

It comes as no surprise to us that your parents are delighted that you attend such an excellent school.