

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Report by H.M. Inspectors

on

²⁹⁹⁹WHITCLIFFE COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL (JUNIOR MIXED),

SPENBOROUGH, YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING.

Inspected on

16th and 17th October, 1956.

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CURZON STREET, LONDON, W.1.

This building erected in 1880 houses an infant school as well as the junior school. It stands on a restricted site with a foundry adjoining and dwelling houses immediately behind and at one side of it. The grim exterior has been brightened by the addition of window boxes, hanging baskets and flower beds. The interior despite its age, is light and pleasant. Good use has been made of available space to store equipment and for display purposes; for this Head Master and staff as well as the Authority are responsible. The furniture in all save one of the classrooms is of a modern type; equipment in general is in good supply and the school has an unusual number of beautiful books. A strong feature of the school is the scrupulous attention given to organisation shown in arrangements for assembly which is taken in an atmosphere of reverence, to the midday meal which is friendly and orderly, to the care of plants and flowers and to the appearance of the classrooms.

The Head Master has a staff of four teachers with a total of 156 children on roll. During each morning, children with poor attainments from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years come together in what was the staff room for remedial work in rudimentary subjects. A member of staff takes this group whilst the head master makes himself responsible throughout the morning for the teaching of the fourth year girls and boys. For the last half hour of the session the group disperses and special attention is paid to children in the first year who are just beginning to read. This first year group presents a problem as standards of attainment, particularly in reading, vary so greatly. It is likely that these children lack sufficient opportunities for the practice necessary to consolidate a skill that is just developing. The individual tuition given to the special group of older children is having its effect and all the others can read though in the third year some children are unable to settle to private reading for any length of time and therefore the organisation of the reading period may need re-consideration. Good use is made of reference books by many of the older children who are encouraged to seek their own information which is then passed on to others. The Head Master is particularly anxious to widen the children's vocabularies and to encourage easy unselfconscious speech; successful measures are taken to achieve this. Writing is regarded as an exercise applicable to all subjects and some promising work in History and Geography was seen. Stories and imaginative writing also have their place. Thought has been given to ways of helping children to understand as well as use the language of mathematics. This work is in its early stages in some classes and still further thought is needed. Straightforward calculations are well and accurately done.

Work in art and craft is in a flourishing condition. Needlework is allied to art and children are given unusually good opportunities for imaginative and accurate presentation in a number of media. Moreover these periods serve also as excellent discussion times. Music gives great pleasure. As well as time spent on singing and listening to records of music, which are thoroughly discussed, there is an enthusiastic group of recorder players which meets for practice during the lunch hour.

There is strong evidence of a determined effort not only to teach children, but also to find out how children learn most satisfactorily and to apply knowledge gained to succeeding groups so that an impression is given of a developing community constantly concerned with ways of giving children maximum opportunities.