

Spennithorne Church of England Primary School

Spennithorne, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 5PR

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement in mathematics.
- Teaching is not good enough in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. More-able pupils in particular are not set hard enough work and so they make slow progress.
- Outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not give children good enough opportunities to practise early skills in literacy and mathematics. Role play is not used well enough to develop children's language and communication skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading. They are keen readers and read well.
- Achievement is improving rapidly because of good leadership and management.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 because teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are keen to learn. They enjoy doing responsible jobs around school.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is now very thorough. Support is available promptly and this is why pupils are making up lost ground quickly.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Teaching is improving at a good pace as weaker aspects are being tackled through support and training.
- Governors are knowledgeable and give good support. They have a positive impact on school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by the headteacher, three teachers and teaching assistants.
- The inspector held meetings with staff, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, two groups of pupils from Years 5 and 6, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took into account the 16 responses from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- There have been staffing difficulties and changes since the last inspection, including a year of leadership and management by an executive headteacher who led and managed this school and another one. The current headteacher started in September 2012. She teaches part time in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 in order to raise achievement, especially for the more-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that staff expect the best from pupils
 - improving the teaching methods and learning resources to enable pupils to work productively and independently
 - ensuring that questioning is high quality and makes pupils think
 - matching work closely to pupils' capabilities in order to provide greater challenge.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - improving the speed and accuracy of pupils' mental and oral mathematics
 - making sure that mathematical skills are taught systematically so that pupils build on what they know and understand and do not have gaps in their knowledge.
- Improve the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - including more practical activities to extend literacy and number skills
 - ensuring role-play experiences include opportunities for discussion to develop children's language and communication skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are broadly typical of those expected for their age. Although most pupils make the progress expected of them in literacy and mathematics, overall achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated since September and the majority are currently making good progress. However, pupils have gaps in their learning in mathematics. This makes them quite slow and inaccurate when calculating mentally and orally. Pupils confirm that the recent 'times tables challenges' have spurred them on to learn their times tables and this is helping.
- Although in Key Stage 1 most pupils make the progress expected from their individual starting points it is not fast enough especially for more-able pupils, because the work does not challenge them to think and to work things out for themselves. They repeat work that they are already familiar with.
- The outdoor learning environment is not used well enough to help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make good progress in learning skills in literacy and mathematics. Children have limited opportunities to develop their language and communication skills through purposeful role play. They do not have reading, writing and number resources to hand so they can incorporate these into their self-directed learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils read well. Effective leadership has strengthened the focus on learning how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics). Older pupils read fluently, with good understanding and huge enjoyment. Librarians read to younger pupils at lunchtime and showcase 'good reads' for different age groups.
- Pupils write competently. Their writing shows considerable progress recently in terms of using a wide vocabulary and varied punctuation. Pupils are beginning to write at greater length as a result of the school's recent focus on this aspect of literacy.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Their progress has accelerated recently because they are getting good quality extra help both in lessons and individually.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. Their attainment exceeds that of similar groups nationally in English but is a bit below in mathematics. They do as well as other pupils in the school.
- The school has compelling evidence to show that it is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination robustly. Attainment is rising and is now slightly above average overall in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching quality varies from inadequate to outstanding and overall requires improvement. It is not good enough in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in Key Stage 1. In particular, staff do not meet the needs of more-able pupils in these years sufficiently well. They give them tasks and activities that are too easy. This is because they have not taken into account what pupils know and can do already.
- For example, more-able pupils in Year 2 were asked to estimate and then count the number of 100ml cups of water needed to fill a one litre bottle. They explained that they knew that 10 times 100ml equalled 1000ml which equalled one litre and therefore why did they need to estimate. The activity occupied their time but did not extend their learning.
- Teaching methods and learning resources are not always used to best advantage. This means that younger pupils rely on adults to guide them through their tasks and activities. This limits their opportunities to learn through discovery and to practise new skills on their own.

- Younger pupils' learning is further slowed because adults ask questions that require simple answers. They do not use questioning to see how much pupils have understood or to prompt them to think things out for themselves. As a result, more-able pupils underachieve.
- It is a different picture in Key Stage 2 where much of the teaching is good. It is clear from looking at pupils' work that teaching over time is consistently better at this key stage but that pupils spend time catching up, especially in mathematics, because it is not taught systematically. Pupils confirmed, 'We find mental maths too fast, too difficult.'
- Good teaching is enabling pupils to make faster progress, especially in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is sometimes outstanding. Teachers ask very searching questions to get pupils thinking and to see how much they have understood. For instance, pupils suddenly understood number patterns which enabled them to work confidently with four-digit numbers.
- Imaginative teaching of literacy sharpens older pupils' vocabulary and their awareness of how to punctuate and paragraph to best effect. For example, older pupils analysed a film extract to determine how flashbacks were used and how to incorporate these effectively into their writing.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils read every day and adults give extra help and timely support to those who need it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well. They arrive early, keen to learn and settle quickly to their morning tasks. Older pupils say they are still coming to terms with the changes this year. 'We work harder now because lessons are longer and we have less time to play.' Although they think this is a mixed blessing, they are pleased with their progress and proud of the improvements in their work.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school is working closely with a few families to reduce some absences.
- Pupils are invariably polite and friendly. They say they enjoy coming to school because, 'We can be friends with everyone.'
- Pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of internet safety and cyber-bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe from harm. Pupils are sure that there is 'not really any bullying' but admit 'there is a bit of falling out and calling names.' They also explained that the playground buddy system helps them to sort out problems themselves.
- Pupils are adamant that the school 'won't stand for racism or homophobia' and they can explain why. They have a strong sense of right, wrong and fair play. The school's behavioural records confirm their positive views.
- A quarter of pupils have highly responsible jobs around school. Lunchtime helpers sit with younger children and help them to use cutlery properly and to make conversation. School councillors discuss real issues in earnest and come to sensible decisions such as having class council meetings so that everyone is included. The result is a happy school where pupils' views are valued.

The leadership and management are good

- Well organised leadership and management have accelerated the rates of pupils' progress. Much has been accomplished in a short time. Staffing is stable and staff work well as a team.
- Effective actions include tightening the systems to check pupils' progress. Staff now have to explain when a pupil is not doing as well as expected. This has made teachers more accountable. Teachers who underperform do not pass the pay threshold until their teaching is shown to be effective at securing good rates of progress for the pupils they teach.
- Changing the timing of lessons has maximised quality learning time. The roles of subject leaders have been strengthened so they have more leadership responsibility and time to manage their subjects. The school has identified the need to teach skills in mathematics systematically.

- The leadership of teaching is good. The headteacher leads both by example as an excellent practitioner and through rigorous checks on teaching quality. As a result, support is provided where needed and teaching is improving at a good pace. Subject leaders check progress through scrutinising pupils' work and working with colleagues.
 - Thorough evaluation of what is happening in school ensures the school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Identified areas for improvement are rechecked to see that changes have been made. The impact is seen in pupils' accelerated progress and staff willingness to have further training and support.
 - As part of this improvement process, the school asked the local authority to carry out a 'health check'. As a result, the local authority is currently giving intensive support, to help the school deal with weaker aspects of teaching and personnel issues.
 - The local authority support has helped the school to improve rapidly through providing training, consultant advice and support from leading practitioners. The school has driven the process.
 - The curriculum is lively and interesting for the most part, despite weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Safeguarding meets requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have strengthened their role in improving the school. They review data and know how well pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium, are progressing and the reasons why. They are closely involved in the management of staff and make good decisions. Governors have a high regard for changes especially in raising the quality of teaching. They understand the action needed, including local authority involvement, to ensure that all teaching is as good as it should be.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121517
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	402036

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 of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shona Eyre
Headteacher	Lindsay Evans
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2010
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