

Cowling Community Primary School

Gill Lane, Cowling, Keighley, BD22 0DF

Inspection dates 10–11 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a happy and caring school where expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Pupils take part in a range of activities which foster individual skills and talents, and which develop their understanding of the wider world.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has enthused staff at all levels, and they are all equally committed to doing the best for the pupils. There have been rapid improvements to teaching and achievement since her appointment.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They plan work which is well matched to the needs of different pupils and explain things clearly to them. They check carefully that pupils understand what they are learning.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants work alongside teachers to provide valuable support for pupils so that they all make equally good progress.
- Pupils behave well. They are friendly and welcoming and clearly proud of their school. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their consistently high attendance.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after in school. Staff know individual pupils and their needs well.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They are eager to learn and quickly develop confidence and independence.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. They usually reach standards which are above average overall by the end of Year 6.
- Governors are well informed and involve themselves in the life of the school. Their support and challenge have helped to drive improvements. The school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils across the school, particularly boys, do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils, including the children in the early years, do not have enough exciting opportunities to write.
- Pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not sufficiently secure.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show pupils how to make their work better. Pupils do not always have time to respond to teachers' comments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes, including two observations carried out jointly with the headteacher. She observed the teaching of reading skills and listened to pupils reading. She observed teaching in small support groups and looked at examples of pupils' work, together with the headteacher, to gain a view of teaching over time.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- She took account of 42 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own survey of parents' views, and 10 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's most recent data on pupils' attainment and progress across the school, the school's own view of its effectiveness and its plans for improvement, and information relating to checks on the quality of teaching.
- In addition, the inspector looked at arrangements for safeguarding pupils and at records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average, although this varies widely between year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The Reception class provides full-time early years provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2013.
- The school is part of the Harrogate and Rural Teaching Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further, particularly in writing, by:
 - making sure that marking consistently shows pupils how to make their work better and that they always have time to respond to teachers' comments
 - giving pupils, especially boys, more exciting and stimulating opportunities to write, including in the early years
 - developing more effectively pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. Since her appointment she has set high standards for both teaching and achievement. Staff and pupils alike now have high aspirations and want to do their best. This is contributing to ongoing improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- All teachers willingly take on leadership roles and contribute to checks on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, they look at pupils' books to check how well pupils are doing in the subjects that they lead and they make sure that new curriculum requirements are being met. Leaders at all levels, therefore, know the school well and know what still needs to be done to improve.
- Good systems are in place to track individual pupils' progress across all key stages. Regular meetings between teachers and senior leaders ensure that pupils who are not doing as well as they should are identified at an early stage. They are quickly provided with the extra support that they need. Their progress is then followed closely to make sure that this is working.
- There are good procedures in place to check on and improve the quality of teaching. When leaders watch lessons or look at pupils' work, they give staff helpful feedback. Teachers work together to share good practice. Staff at all levels receive high quality training to help them improve their skills, and benefit from shared working with other local schools. Staff are set challenging targets for their performance which relate clearly to the school's priorities for improvement.
- Leaders make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent on providing specific additional support for eligible pupils so that they make similar progress to that of other pupils. They also make sure that all pupils are able to take part in all school activities. The needs of each eligible pupil are carefully assessed and their progress is tracked closely. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Good relations and respect for others, both in school and in the wider community, are fostered well. Links with other schools mean that pupils join in activities with those from very different backgrounds. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the school. Pupils say that no one in school ever makes racist remarks or criticises anyone for being different because they all know that 'you should never judge others'. The school, therefore, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides an exciting range of activities which enrich pupils' skills and experiences. There is an emphasis on using the outdoors and encouraging pupils to challenge themselves, such as when abseiling or rock climbing. However, opportunities are missed for using such exciting experiences as a stimulus for pupils' writing.
- Pupils show a good awareness of British values. The local Member of Parliament has visited the school to discuss the relevance of values such as justice and democracy to pupils' own lives. Visits and visitors provide pupils with first-hand experiences of different cultures and religions. During the inspection, the hugely popular choir was rehearsing enthusiastically for a schools' event in Manchester. The school, therefore, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sport funding. Pupils are now able to experience a range of physical activities as diverse as ballroom dancing and fencing. Many more pupils now take part in different sports and the school is proud of their success in competitions. Staff have improved their skills and confidence in teaching physical education through working alongside experienced coaches.
- The school readily accepts outside support. The local authority provided strong support for the headteacher during her first year in post and continues to offer 'light-touch' support to this good and improving school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are proud of the school and offer strong support. They are regular visitors and involve themselves in all aspects of school life, so that they know the school well.
 - Governors bring a broad range of expertise to the school. They have been determined to improve their skills, particularly in interpreting the school's performance data. They are aware of the need to raise achievement further, especially in writing, and they ask challenging questions about the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve this. They are kept well informed about the quality of teaching, and make sure that teachers' pay increases are linked to their performance.
 - Governors have a firm grasp on school finances. They are particularly keen to ensure that the pupil-premium funding is spent wisely on supporting eligible pupils, and have nominated a governor to keep a close watch on this. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly and polite towards each other and towards adults in the school. They know that they are respected as individuals and, in turn, they show respect for others. Pupils of all ages enjoy playing together. They say that they do sometimes fall out, but that they usually manage to sort things out themselves and 'forgive each other'.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are keen to do well and are eager to talk about the work they are doing. They support each other in their learning and happily share ideas with one another. Pupils usually work hard and take pride in the way that they present their work. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is consistently high.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility in school. Older pupils look after younger ones and make sure that they walk sensibly along corridors. The eco-committee has successfully organised an interesting bird-watching challenge. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of their responsibility towards others who do not have as much as they do. They sensitively described to the inspector how children in Sierra Leone have been affected by the Ebola outbreak and they work particularly hard to raise money to support a school there.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that they feel absolutely safe in school. All parents who completed the online questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils know that they can always talk to an adult in school if they have any worries at all.
- Pupils are adamant that there is never any bullying or name-calling in the school and that these would not be tolerated. They are well aware of the different forms that bullying can take and know what steps to take, should it occur.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations, including when using the internet or mobile phones, through lessons and assemblies. They are well aware of how important it is to dress appropriately and have the correct equipment when taking part in outdoor activities, such as caving and climbing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books, the school's assessment information and records of checks carried out on teaching, all indicate that the quality of teaching over time is good and continuing to improve strongly.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve in their work are high. Pupils work hard and present their work neatly because of the praise and encouragement that they receive. Clear explanations mean that they know what they are expected to learn.
- Pupils' understanding is checked regularly so that their learning builds well on what they already know. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to discuss their ideas and explain how they are doing things. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 explained what they had learnt previously about the structure of sentences within paragraphs, before applying this in their independent writing.
- Planning is thorough and work is usually well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, were consolidating their understanding of question and exclamation marks, while others were extending their ability to use speech marks in sentences.
- Teaching assistants are involved in assessing the needs of different pupils and in planning activities to meet these needs. They prepare resources carefully, including practical equipment where they know that this will help pupils to learn. They therefore provide valuable support, both in lessons and in groups.
- From an early age, pupils learn the importance of working independently and testing their ideas. They understand the value of trying again if they find things difficult. Older pupils, in particular, have good opportunities to assess their own work in order to check and improve it. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 experimented with a range of different ways to start an exciting adventure story in order to capture the reader's interest.
- Pupils develop a love of reading because it is taught well throughout the school. They appreciate the range and variety of books that are available to them. There is an emphasis on making sure that pupils understand what they read.

- In mathematics, daily practice in basic skills means pupils have a secure understanding of number. Pupils now have a range of opportunities to apply their skills in different contexts. A commercial mathematics scheme used by the school gives pupils the chance to discuss and try out their ideas in order to find the most appropriate strategy for solving problems.
- There has been a similar emphasis on using writing skills for different purposes and in different subjects, and the teaching of writing is steadily improving. Pupils are expected to apply the same high standards to their writing in all subjects. However, pupils of all ages, and boys in particular, do not have enough exciting and stimulating opportunities to write.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. New marking procedures highlight what pupils have done well and what they need to do to make their work better. Pupils relish the chance to respond to teachers' comments in order to correct and improve their work in 'purple pen time'. However, these procedures are not yet used consistently across all classes.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils build on the good start that they make in the Reception class and continue to make good progress throughout the school from their different starting points. Although there are some variations because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group, pupils usually reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were particularly high in 2014.
- Pupils across the school, and boys in particular, do not make such good progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. School leaders have recognised this and taken appropriate action. There is now a whole-school focus on applying writing skills across different subjects. Pupils are learning how to make their writing more varied and interesting. Progress is therefore now improving. However, pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not yet sufficiently secure.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and achieve high standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. They enjoy the extra challenges they are given, such as when pupils in Year 6 were finding areas and perimeters of complex shapes, including circles and semi-circles. There are good links with the local high school which promote problem-solving activities for identified pupils. Pupils are justifiably proud of their success in a recent writing competition for the most-able pupils in local schools.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Early reading skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught systematically and well. The majority of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic screening check each year.
- Pupils use their skills in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects successfully. This makes a strong contribution to their good progress in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 drew pie charts to compare poverty rates with life expectancy in different countries.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs mostly make the same good progress as other pupils, from widely different starting points. This is because staff keep a close watch on how well individual pupils are doing and quickly provide extra support where needed.
- The school's data show that the small number of disadvantaged pupils across the school make progress which is at least as good as that of other pupils in the school. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 each year to make any statistically reliable comparison between their attainment and progress and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally and also within the school.

The early years provision is good

- Most children start school with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age, although this varies from year to year. Good links with the local playgroup, including regular 'Pre-5' sessions in school, mean that staff in the Reception class have an early and accurate view of children's abilities and that children settle in quickly.
- Most of those who are behind at the start soon catch up. Children go on to make good progress in the early years, because the quality of teaching is good. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development varies because of the small number of children in each year group, but it is generally close to, or above, average. Children are well prepared for their future learning in Year 1.
- Activities in the early years are usually carefully planned and meet the needs of different children well. There are good opportunities for children to explore and investigate the world around them. The 'quarry'

area outdoors, where children can act out real-life situations as they dig and build, is particularly popular. Children demonstrated the ability to take turns and work together as they used a pulley system to move buckets of earth and stones. However, exciting opportunities for children to write are not yet consistently part of the daily provision, either indoors or outdoors.

- Children behave well and clearly feel safe and secure. They are confident and independent and chatter happily to one another as they play. They were keen to show the inspector what they were doing as they acted out the parts of characters in the 'ice castle' or described how they had made their own models.
- There is good leadership in the early years. Well-established routines and strong teamwork among staff ensure that children are well looked after and are kept safe. There are good systems in place for observing and assessing how well children are doing. Staff regularly discuss their observations in order to plan what the children should do next. They are quick to provide additional support for any children who are not doing as well as expected. Parents are encouraged to get involved in their children's learning and contribute their own observations to children's 'learning journeys'.

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	121388
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449638

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Batchelor
Headteacher	Susan Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2009
Telephone number	01535 632198
Fax number	01535 632198
Email address	admin@cowling.n-yorks.sch.uk

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