

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, West Tanfield

Mowbray Terrace, West Tanfield, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 5JN

Inspection dates 11–12 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.

- Over the last two years the executive headteacher has brought stability to the school. She is highly ambitious for every pupil and has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils make better progress than previously.
- From starting points that are slightly below those typical for their age, children get off to a good start in the early years. They are taught well and are ready for Year 1.
- Teaching is typically good and, as a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are given a range of opportunities to engage in a variety of activities and clubs. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful to each other and to all adults in school. Pupils of different ages get along very well together and relationships are strong.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they know they are well cared for.
- The school has a range of excellent partnerships, particularly with parents. Parents value the school and the work teachers and other staff do.
- Governors are relentless in their desire to improve the school further. They are both challenging and supportive of the headteacher. Consequently, leadership and management at all levels are good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that tasks are demanding enough. As a result, work for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics, is not always hard enough to fully challenge them.
- Not all teaching assistants work closely enough with individual pupils, particularly in explaining tasks at the start of a lesson.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities in mathematics to use and apply their skills to solve problems arising from real-life situations.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons, including three observations carried out jointly with the executive headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils reading. She looked at pupils' work and observed pupils at lunchtime and break times.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and one representative from the local authority. She spoke to a parent as they brought their child to school.
- The inspector took account of 10 questionnaires returned by staff. There were 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' current progress across the school, the school's view of its own effectiveness, and how the school checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Emma Jackson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is larger than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The executive headteacher supported the school in her role as a Local Leader of Education in 2012. In 2013 she was officially appointed and a formal partnership was created with a local school.
- 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.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff.
- Early years provision in the school is full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - making sure that teachers provide work that is well matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able, so that it is not too easy, nor too hard
 - ensuring that teaching assistants give more individual explanation to the pupils they work with so they understand from the outset of lessons what they need to do and so learning time is not lost for them
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to apply their skills to real-life situations in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Described by one governor as, 'emphatic, challenging and someone who inspires others', the executive headteacher has brought stability to the school and provided a new-found sense of purpose and drive for further improvement.
- Governors and other leaders are highly ambitious for the school. Over the last two years decisive action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and raise the achievement of all pupils.
- Senior leaders are correct in recognising that the next challenge is to ensure that all lessons are sufficiently demanding for the most able.
- A range of training and professional development is available for teachers. This has been particularly successful when carried out with the partnership school, as it allows skills and knowledge from both schools to be shared. Rigorous performance management systems ensure that teachers' pay is linked to their performance.
- An excellent school improvement plan ensures that priorities to improve the school further are clear. The school's own view of its effectiveness is both accurate and realistic.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and tackle discrimination is effective. A very effective special needs coordinator champions this equality and, as a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress
- The school's new curriculum is engaging and interests the pupils. For example, the work on Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot ensured that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 were enthused and understood the links with the past.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well both within lessons and more widely through a variety of opportunities such as assemblies, visiting speakers and trips to different places. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school promotes British values well through a range of activities including taking part in the 'Ripon ambassador project' with the local Member of Parliament.
- Additional funding to develop sporting opportunities is used well to promote and develop pupils' skills both in lessons and after school. As a result, nearly all the pupils now take part in a sporting activity.
- The school uses the pupil premium effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Extra intervention groups support these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and the school's current data show these are helping to close the attainment gap with other pupils.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school and was instrumental in helping to establish the school partnership, which allows expertise to be shared across St Nicholas's and its partner school.
- The school has very good relationships with parents. Parents speak highly of the school and feel they are kept well informed of the progress their children are making.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements and are effective in keeping pupils safe in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the executive headteacher's high expectations for the school. The high-quality information they receive and their visits to school ensure they have a very good understanding of the school's performance. Minutes from governors meetings show that they challenge the school very well and rigorously hold leaders to account.
 - Finances are managed very well. Governors hold the school to account for the spending of pupil premium funding and recognise the performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving as a result.
 - Governors check carefully that teachers' performance is linked to pay progression and that good performance is rewarded and underperformance is tackled.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils attend regularly and are proud of their school.
- Staff, pupils and parents speak positively about the behaviour in school. Pupils mostly have positive attitudes and work hard in lessons. However, on some occasions when work is either too easy or too hard, a few pupils lose interest and are restless.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults in school.

In particular, they get along well together at lunchtimes, when pupils of different ages all engage happily in a range of activities including football, netball, knitting and drawing.

- There is an effective system in place to manage behaviour, and good behaviour is rewarded effectively. For example, pupils say they like to receive the weekly class rewards in assembly, or the headteacher's award.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how safe they feel in school. Parents who responded to the online survey also agreed with this view.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are knowledgeable about fire safety, pedestrian safety and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They are also aware of how to keep themselves safe on the internet in school. The school recently held a workshop to make parents and pupils more aware of staying safe on the internet at home.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is extremely rare in school and is always dealt with swiftly and decisively.
- The school works very well with a range of professional agencies beyond school to ensure that families who might require some help get the support they need.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school.
- Teachers mostly plan and deliver exciting lessons, which engage all of the pupils. Pupils respond well to probing questions that move them on quickly in their learning. For example, in Year 5 and 6, pupils were very excited about writing for the 500 words competition and were able to improve their sentences to include more description. In Year 1 and 2 pupils were able to use their knowledge of traditional tales to include characters in their own stories.
- The work provided by teachers is mostly at the correct level. However, sometimes the work set is too hard or too easy and this occasionally limits the progress some pupils are making, particularly the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. As a result, pupils know what they have done well and how they can further improve their work. This marking is particularly effective in writing and contributes to pupils' good progress in writing.
- Pupils demonstrate a love of books and reading. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 particularly enjoyed their work on 'The Highwayman' poem. Pupils who read to the inspector demonstrated that they had a very good understanding of the sounds that letters make as they used their skills to sound out unfamiliar words. Older pupils could also discuss their favourite authors and visits they had taken to the local library.
- Teaching in mathematics ensures that most pupils are making good progress. However, a lack of opportunities to apply mathematical skills in real-life situations means that not enough of the most able pupils are making as much progress as they are capable of.
- Teaching for pupils who find some learning difficult is effective and pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are making good and improving progress.
- Since the previous inspection the school has begun to develop the work of teaching assistants. However, there are not always enough opportunities for teaching assistants to work with pupils, particularly at the beginning of lessons, to ensure that all pupils understand what they have to do.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of each key stage tends to fluctuate year-on-year because of the different composition and small numbers of pupils in each year group.
- Children start school with skills that are slightly below those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and a caring environment, children make good progress in the early years.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils also make good progress through Key Stage 1. The number of pupils achieving higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 was above the national average. There is an improving picture of achievement in Key Stage 1 over the last two years,

because teaching has improved.

- Similarly, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in reading and writing. However, progress in mathematics was slower in 2014. This is because pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills through real-life situations.
- The most able pupils do not always make better than expected progress at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics. This is because sometimes the work presented to pupils is not always hard enough and they are not always moved on fast enough in their learning in every class.
- Staff work very hard to ensure that pupils who join the school part-way through their education settle quickly and, as a result, they make good progress, often after just a short time in school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress by the time they leave school. This is as a result of effective support for these pupils, both emotionally and with their work.
- In 2014 disadvantaged pupils made good progress in reading and writing and improving progress in mathematics. In 2014 the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were more than a year behind their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing. They were also more than a year behind pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, very small numbers mean that these figures vary greatly year-on-year and prevent meaningful comparisons being made.
- Work in pupils' books show that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects including reading, writing and science. This is as a result of good teaching across the school.

The early years provision

is good

- The majority of children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. However this does fluctuate as each year group has small numbers. Children make good progress throughout their time in early years. As a result, by the end of their Reception Year, the majority of children have skills expected for their age and are ready for the start of Year 1.
- The learning environment is warm and welcoming and there is a range of areas in which children can develop skills and play purposefully. The outdoor area is large and well organised; however, it is not always utilised well enough to fully develop children's writing and mathematical skills.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Activities are planned to stimulate the interests of the children and resources are used well to enhance the learning. Some children were planting beans in a boot to grow a beanstalk. One child said, 'My beanstalk is going to grow enormous.' This type of engaging activity contributes to the good progress children make.
- Very good transition arrangements from the on-site nursery setting mean that children settle quickly into their new school. Staff work closely with parents and, as a result, children enjoy their learning, make strong relationships and behave well.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader of the early years has identified where improvements are to be made to further improve children's learning. These include improvements to assessment procedures and to the way all adults probe and challenge children while they are learning.
- There is a range of information about children, including information from parents; leaders and managers use this well to accurately assess the progress of pupils.
- Staff in the early years have excellent relationships with parents. Parents are welcomed every morning and contribute to the children's wall known as 'my space'. Parents say they greatly value this time as it helps them to know how well their children are progressing. Parents also say they feel their children are well cared for and safe in school.

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	121524
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449643

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	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Childe
Headteacher	Andrea Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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