

Withernsea Primary School

Hull Road, Withernsea HU19 2EG

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have made significant improvements to early years provision. As a result, children are making a strong start in building their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They take decisive action to secure improvement. Consequently, the gaps in the progress made by different groups of pupils are diminishing.
- Pupils are making good progress in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils' progress in key stage 1 is particularly strong. Pupils are developing a range of exciting vocabulary in their writing. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are weaker.
- Pupils who are experiencing significant turbulence in their lives are well supported. As a result, they stay engaged in their learning.
- Teaching is improving. Teachers are successful in keeping pupils on task. They offer pupils activities which catch their imagination and motivate them to do well.
- Pupils behave well in the classroom and around the school. Teachers support pupils with identified behaviour difficulties well. Pupils' attendance is below the national average.
- Most-able pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities generally make good progress because teachers match tasks carefully to their needs.
- The curriculum supports pupils in developing positive attitudes to learning. Leaders have linked activities closely to pupils' interests and aspirations. This has been particularly successful in engaging boys.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. Some pupils find it difficult to give reasons for their answers or explain tricky problems. This is hindering the development of their reasoning skills, especially in mathematics.
- The school's assessment system is not sufficiently precise in helping teachers to offer exactly the right amount of challenge to pupils of middle and low ability.
- Leaders' planning and record-keeping sometimes lack sharpness. While they can identify the success of their actions, it is difficult for them and governors to be precise.
- Teaching and pupils' progress in foundation subjects are not as strong as they are in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment remains low despite the good progress pupils are currently making.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment so that it is closer to national averages by:
 - embedding approaches to improving pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics
 - improving pupils' speaking and listening skills, especially boys', so that they are confident in talking about their learning and feelings
 - improving pupils' presentation and spelling skills
 - improving the school's assessment system so that it provides a consistently effective tool for teachers
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' work are as high in foundation subjects as they are in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - sharpening leaders' record-keeping and improving development planning so that desired outcomes are precise and measurable
 - ensuring that governors continue to develop the effectiveness of their challenge to leaders
 - increasing parental involvement in supporting children's learning in the early years.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is closer to the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including governors, have high ambitions for pupils. Senior leaders recognised the need to raise their expectations following a period in which there were difficult staffing issues. They have refreshed the curriculum and this has had a marked impact on improving pupils' attitudes to learning and progress.
- Senior and middle leaders are dogged in tackling the significant barriers to learning facing many pupils. They seek external challenge and are unflinching in identifying where things need to improve. For example, the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 2 in mathematics was weak in 2017. Leaders responded by ensuring that teachers put more emphasis on developing pupils' reasoning skills, and this is showing some early signs of success.
- Leaders' most marked success has been in improving the early years provision. The deputy headteacher has engineered a remarkable transformation and has been successful in building a confident team of adults.
- Teachers and other adults are fiercely loyal to the school and fully committed to improving their practice. Leaders have secured improvements to teaching by establishing learning communities in which small groups of teachers use research and observation to develop new teaching approaches. Teachers and teaching assistants value the effective feedback they receive from each other and from leaders.
- The curriculum is broad, and is effective in raising pupils' aspirations. All adults contribute to making the offer to pupils lively and vibrant. For example, site staff regularly support pupils with gardening and construction tasks. Pupils enjoy challenges brought by the 'forest' and 'beach' schools, which make the most of the local environment and instil pupils' pride in their local community.
- Leaders have worked effectively to make sure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well. Teachers and specialist staff have high expectations of pupils regardless of the barriers they face. As a result, most pupils are making strong progress. Consequently, the SEN funding is spent well.
- Leaders' planning is sometimes too vague in identifying what success will look like. As a result, while leaders can identify improvements, they cannot be precise in evaluating the extent of the improvement.
- Leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and learning. They intervene effectively when they spot underachievement. However, the school's assessment system is too blunt a tool for teachers to use effectively. Teachers meet the more obvious needs of the most able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, but they are not as effective at matching tasks precisely to the needs of middle- and low-ability pupils.
- Leaders have been successful in improving pupils' progress in reading and especially in writing. They have been less successful in ensuring that pupils make the same strong progress in foundation subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and they are prepared to take difficult decisions when needed. They also regularly review the quality of their own work and act to ensure that they are up to date.
- The pupil premium funding has been spent well and is focused on the barriers facing disadvantaged pupils. Extra staffing has supported pupils in developing their reading skills. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has seen some modest improvements, but this remains an ongoing problem for the school.
- Governors have ensured that physical education and sport funding is used effectively. As a result, an increasing number of pupils regularly participate in clubs and activities.
- Governors ask challenging questions of leaders. They make regular visits to school and write useful reports to keep other governors up to date. However, these notes of visits do not routinely result in further challenge to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are trained regularly in the warning signs to which they should be alert. They act promptly and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. There are a significant number of pupils who experience a great deal of turbulence in their lives and the school has effective systems to support them, working successfully with several external agencies.
- The nurture room staff offer valuable and tailored support to pupils and their families. There are many compelling examples of where nurture staff have intervened successfully to prevent problems faced by families becoming critical.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made on staff and that statutory duties are met. Occasionally, record-keeping of interviews and staff training do not capture sufficient detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are very successful at maintaining pupils' interest and engagement. They are particularly skilled in ensuring that pupils with identified behaviour difficulties are supported in developing positive attitudes to learning. Teachers are adept at spotting when pupils are struggling with maintaining their good behaviour, and intervene effectively so that learning continues smoothly.
- Teachers generally use questioning skills well to check on pupils' understanding, and challenge them to think through problems. Strong teamwork across subjects and year groups is diminishing inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work.
- Teachers have made best use of displays to create lively learning environments to provide prompts, tips and key vocabulary to support pupils' learning.

- Pupils are developing a range of exciting vocabulary in their writing. They demonstrate stamina and perseverance, resulting in them being able to write frequently and at length.
- Younger pupils are developing confident phonics skills. This is helping them to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils who did not reach the expected standards in phonics in Year 2 last year are catching up quickly because of effective small-group work. Teachers are skilful in modelling speech and enunciating sounds clearly for pupils to copy.
- The most able pupils make strong progress because teachers ensure that they are challenged and do not waste time working through tasks they can already do. Equally, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities also make good progress because teachers and other adults make sure that tasks are tailored precisely to meet their needs. This is not as strong for low- and middle-ability pupils because the school's assessment tools do not support teachers in identifying exactly where gaps lie in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers have been successful in encouraging pupils to develop basic reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils regularly have opportunities to investigate problems. This development is at an early stage and teachers do not consistently expect pupils to extend their answers and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' handwriting is weak. They do not take enough care with their presentation and spelling.
- Some pupils, particularly boys, find it difficult to listen and retain instructions. They also struggle to talk about their learning and choose the right words to explain their thinking.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. They are developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils understand the damage that all forms of bullying can do. They have faith in adults to deal with bullying effectively.
- The school uses a digital application to send positive messages home about pupils' efforts and achievements. Parents and carers and pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they value the messages and pupils find them motivating.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe, but some pupils struggle with explaining their feelings clearly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in classrooms is calm and purposeful. They enjoy each other's company. Lunchtimes and breaktimes are lively and pupils enjoy playing together. They are kind and good natured.
- Pupils in distinctive red caps act as buddies on the playground. They help any pupils who are unhappy or lonely. Buddies are supported very well by the nurture room team.
- Pupils who have identified behaviour difficulties persevere and are helped by adults to work hard. Staff are skilled in spotting when pupils need support in making the right choices.
- Despite some modest improvements, pupils' absence rates remain above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From their various starting points, pupils currently in the school generally make strong progress, particularly in the early years and key stage 1.
- Pupils are making positive gains in their reading and writing skills. Year 6 pupils have developed effective strategies to tackle unfamiliar texts. Pupils can write at length and vary their style for different purposes, such as stories, letters and diaries.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress. Boys' progress is also improving, especially in key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils are making steady gains in improving their reading and writing. Gaps between them and their peers nationally are diminishing but remain marked.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics improved last year and is closer to the national average. Pupils currently in the school continue to improve their phonics skills, especially in the early years and key stage 1.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics was disappointing last year but teachers and leaders have taken decisive action and pupils are catching up. Pupils are now routinely offering reasons for their answers and developing problem-solving skills. This is at an early stage of development and pupils' reasoning skills remain underdeveloped.
- Pupils' starting points are generally low when they join the school and, despite making strong progress, standards remain below the national average.
- Pupils' progress in foundation subjects tends to be weaker than it is in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the Nursery with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age. They have particularly weak skills in reading, writing and number.
- In 2015 and 2016, the number of children who reached a good level of development was very low. Leaders reviewed the provision, staffing and approaches, and made significant changes. This transformational work resulted in the number of children reaching a good level of development soaring and getting much closer to the national average.

- Adults work very well as a team. Children are developing a range of vocabulary and adults are successful in spotting opportunities to extend children's learning. For example, when a group of children were pouring water, the adult working with them introduced the word 'magical' and added glitter to the water. The children were entranced by this and the adult encouraged them to talk through their actions, effectively extending their vocabulary.
- Leaders have used additional funding effectively to help children with speech and language difficulties to develop confident skills.
- Children benefit from a wide range of resources which help them to develop an adventurous approach to trying out and mastering new skills. They enjoy playing alongside each other and helping each other. Children are kind and respond well to established routines. Consequently, children are ready for the move to Year 1.
- Parents' opportunities to add their own observations of their children's learning are limited. Children's learning journals capture their experiences in school but the vital learning at home is missed.

School details

Unique reference number	141933
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	10045486

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	570
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Joanne Medcalf
Headteacher	Angela Harper
Telephone number	01964 612 800
Website	www.withernseaprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@withernseaprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Withernsea is a much larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to an academy in April 2015. The board trustees are also members of the governing body.
- The school is in the process of joining Hull Collaborative Academy Trust.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average. There are also high proportions of disadvantaged pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning across the school and made some short visits to classrooms. Senior leaders jointly observed some lessons with inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, and held formal meetings with pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and class teachers. In addition to this, inspectors met with members of the local governing body and a group of staff, as well as staff responsible for safeguarding and attendance. Inspectors also met a representative from Hull Collaborative Academy Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's improvement planning. They also looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's own policies, and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- An inspector considered the views of parents during the inspection, as well as 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils gathered in formal and informal meetings.

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Nimer	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bissett	Ofsted Inspector

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