

Northfield Primary School: With Communication Resource

Northfield Lane, South Kirkby, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF9 3LY

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and boys, do not make good progress. Although standards in Year 6 improved in 2017, they were below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The interim headteacher, governors and leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, recent initiatives have not yet had enough impact. Attendance of some pupils, for example, is still too low.
- The skills of middle leaders in judging and influencing the work of others are underdeveloped.
- High levels of staff change have adversely affected leaders' efforts to secure consistently good teaching.
- Although the school is calm and orderly, pupils' behaviour is not consistently good in lessons.
- In key stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is variable. Planned tasks do not always meet all pupils' needs.
- In writing, teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work are not high enough. The teaching of letter formation and handwriting is inconsistent and sometimes weak.
- In mathematics, the teaching of problem-solving and reasoning is inconsistent. This limits pupils' ability to succeed in national tests.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not spent well enough to ensure that they attend well or make as much progress as they could.
- Leadership of the communication resource, in partnership with the local authority, has not ensured that there is a clear agreed view of the effectiveness of this part of the school. As a consequence, the impact of the work of this part of the school is variable.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the early years because teaching is effective and planned activities are interesting and meet children's needs well.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It effectively promotes pupils' personal development. As a consequence, pupils are caring, polite and welcoming to visitors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially for boys and disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring the consistent and accurate teaching of handwriting and letter formation in line with the school's agreed approach
 - encouraging pupils to read often and widely
 - identifying early any weaker key stage 2 readers and providing them with opportunities to improve their reading skills
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving and reasoning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, including the communication resource, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - tasks are matched more carefully to the range of pupils' abilities
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and quantity of work they expect pupils to complete
 - time is used well to maximise learning.
- Work with parents and carers to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce persistent absence.
- Improve the quality of leadership, management and self-evaluation by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are able to better judge and influence the work of others across the school
 - working more closely with the local authority special educational needs (SEN) service to better and more accurately evaluate the work of the communication resource, and identifying how time can be used effectively and pupils' academic progress maximised
 - maximising the use and impact of the pupil premium funding so that disadvantaged pupils attend regularly and make good progress.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the school's work may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Staff change is a significant reason why pupils' progress is slow and pupils are not reaching the standards they are capable of, particularly boys and disadvantaged pupils. Over time, the quality of teaching has been too variable to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- The interim headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with governors, are ambitious for the school. Together, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although some initiatives have been put in place, it is too early to see any impact.
- Although middle leaders are keen to fulfil their roles and are committed to doing their best for the pupils, their skills at judging standards, teaching and the work of others are underdeveloped. As a consequence, they have yet to support their colleagues to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- A success of leadership has been in securing improvements to the early years so that this is a strength of the school. Children get off to a flying start in their learning. Improvements to the teaching of early reading and phonics have also helped to ensure that the proportions reaching the required standard in the Year 1 national screening check have improved year on year.
- Although requiring improvement, there have been some recent improvements to the leadership of teaching. For example, the recent monitoring of exercise books and guidance to teachers on providing feedback to pupils have led to some marked improvements in some books. As a consequence, there is evidence that some teaching is improving.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Pupils say they enjoy sport and find PE fun. Pupils say they understand the value of healthy eating and physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Leaders have correctly identified that there is scope to further improve their use of the pupil premium. The published strategy does not identify barriers to pupils' successful learning. The impact of last year's work in this area was evaluated appropriately. Although there were some successes for a small proportion of pupils, overall the funding did not have enough impact on the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- In some aspects, the leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is sound, but leaders know more needs to be done. A wide range of support for individual pupils and small groups contributes to some effective provision, but uneven progress, for these pupils. There is evidence of ongoing liaison between the special educational needs coordinator and the teacher in charge of the communication resource. Although school leaders have begun to evaluate some aspects of this provision, there is not a clear evaluation of the communication resource's effectiveness.
- Some aspects of the leadership, management and organisation of the communication resource require improvement. The effectiveness of this aspect of the school's work is

not robustly evaluated and the development plan is a list of actions that reflect the day-to-day running of the resource, rather than clear areas requiring improvement. The local authority school improvement adviser has an accurate view of the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the main school but this does not include the resource base.

- The broad and balanced curriculum ensures that pupils are taught about a range of world faiths. Pupils are able to talk about why it is important to know about different religions. The promotion of fundamental British values is effective. For example, some older pupils used persuasive writing to argue the merits of individual liberty, including the right to take part in a Gay Pride parade. Discussions with pupils demonstrate that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

Governance of the school

- Governors are developing a clear understand of their roles and responsibilities. They know the school well, so they know where improvement is needed. Like leaders, they are frustrated by recent staff changes and the difficulties this presents.
- Governors engaged well with the local authority to secure the services of an interim headteacher and are working to secure a permanent headteacher for the school. They are clear about the skills and experience they would like the successful candidate to have.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their role in challenging and supporting leaders. They understand the value of continuous professional development to support the development of all staff. They have a clear overview of what actions are being taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding team fulfils its role well. Collectively, they are committed to ensuring that the pupils in their care are kept safe and well. Appropriate records are kept and, where needed, referrals are made to other agencies.
- Employment checks are carried out appropriately on new staff before they join the school. Checks are recorded appropriately in a single central record.
- The school site is safe and secure. Policies, procedures and records are up to date and fit for purpose. Risk assessments are in place for the site and for some of the individual pupils who attend the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching in the early years is good, in key stages 1 and 2, teaching does not consistently ensure that pupils make as much progress as they should from their starting points and, therefore, requires improvement. Not all teachers routinely use what they know about pupils to set work that effectively meets all pupils' needs.

Sometimes, work is too easy for some and, at other times, it is too difficult for other pupils.

- The teaching of writing is variable. Teachers do not always have high expectations of the quality or quantity of writing they expect pupils to produce. As a consequence, in some classes, only a limited amount of work is produced.
- Although some pupils are forming letters correctly and develop a legible style of handwriting, this is not consistently the case. Sometimes, the teaching of letter formation and handwriting is not in line with the school's chosen approach. As a consequence, some writing is not well presented or legible.
- There are pockets of effective teaching, particularly where the staff are permanent and have been working at the school for some time. However, recent and ongoing staff absences mean that some teachers are quite new to the school. Although these staff are conscientious and hard-working, they have not been in post long enough to plan work that meets the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Improvements in the teaching of early reading and phonics have contributed to good gains in reading and phonics skills. As a consequence, reading and phonics outcomes have improved over time. However, pupils' progress in reading, particularly in key stage 2, is uneven. Pupils who have not secured the required standard in the national phonics screening check by the time they move into key stage 2 are not always identified and supported to improve their reading skills. Pupils are not all encouraged to read widely and, as a consequence, they are not familiar with a wide range of text types.
- In mathematics, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Although the teaching of basic arithmetic skills is secure, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to problem-solving and reasoning are not consistently provided to all pupils. This limits some pupils' ability to make progress in mathematics and reach the expected standard at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching does not always make the best use of time. Sometimes, learning slows when pupils finish a piece of work and they are not directed to another task. Similarly, in the communication resource, pupils sometimes rush work or do not complete work because they are rewarded with 'choosing time', regardless of the quality or detail in their work.
- Teachers are diligent at providing written feedback to pupils, in line with the school's policy. However, the impact of feedback is not always evident in pupils' work and learning, and pupils' responses to written feedback are variable.
- The quality of pupils' work across the full range of subjects is not consistently of a good standard. Not all teachers provide pupils with opportunities to gain the necessary skills and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and science.

Many classrooms are calm and orderly places where learning is valued. Teachers and support staff enjoy positive relationships with the pupils in their care. Where behaviour is less than conducive to learning, this typically reflects the fact that work is not at just the right level for all pupils and, as a consequence, they lose concentration.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff share a commitment and determination to make sure that pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Staff promote pupils' personal well-being effectively. Staff are not afraid to discuss sensitive issues with pupils. For example, older pupils watch Newsround and debate topical issues. Pupils say this helps them to think about important issues such as recycling and animal welfare.
- Pupils say they are happy and enjoy their time at the school, and they are polite and welcoming to visitors. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The curriculum offers a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about different world religions.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for. They say that bullying is rare and that staff deal with any incidents effectively. The learning mentors are effective in supporting pupils to deal with personal problems and to become resilient in school. Older pupils support younger friends using the 'buddy bench'.
- Pupils from the communication resource are provided with opportunities to benefit from school life. For example, some pupils join in with breaks and lunchtimes, while others spend the majority of their day learning alongside other pupils in the school.
- Pupils understand how democracy works because of the work of the school council. This provides an effective way for pupils to share their ideas and give their opinions on school matters.
- The daily breakfast club is well attended and enjoyed by pupils. It is much appreciated by parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good. In some classes, particularly where there are temporary staff, pupils' behaviour is not always conducive to learning and low-level misbehaviour is evident. As a consequence, pupils do not always learn as well as they could.
- When work is not matched closely to the learning needs of all abilities within a class, some pupils lose interest and their concentration wanes. When this happens, pupils do not produce work of appropriate quality or quantity.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and levels of concentration are variable. Where learning is effective, teachers make their expectations very clear, but this is not always the case. Where expectations are not consistently high, pupils come off-task and levels of engagement wane.
- Pupils' attendance has declined over the last two years and is below average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is much higher than average. Although initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality have recently been introduced, too many pupils still do not attend regularly enough or arrive on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. Work in books and observations of teaching and learning, along with the school's own assessment information, show that pupils' progress is patchy across the school. This links directly to variability in the quality of teaching in these key stages.
- Pupils do not make strong progress in a broad range of subjects. Work in pupils' books shows that they do not have a firm understanding of all of the topics they have been taught this year.
- The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in 2017 were a clear improvement on those in 2016 but overall in reading, writing and mathematics combined were below average. This did not represent good progress from the pupils' Year 2 starting points, especially in reading and mathematics. In particular, the achievement of boys and disadvantaged pupils was too slow.
- Published assessment information in 2017 shows that the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard at the end of Year 2 also improved from that reported in 2016 and was close to average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. For the majority of these pupils, this represented good progress in reading and mathematics from their previously lower starting points. However, currently in key stage 1, pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that progress in writing for boys and for disadvantaged pupils is sometimes slow and requires improvement.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics because of the improved daily teaching of phonics skills. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2017 improved to be close to average. Pupils acquire the skills they need to help them to read unknown words. The school's assessment information indicates that current pupils in Year 1 are making good gains in phonics.
- The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those in the communication resource, requires improvement because the impact of teaching for these pupils is variable. Although some make good gains from their starting points, progress varies and some do not make as much progress as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the Nursery and Reception classes. The early years leader has taken effective action to improve learning and progress over the last two years. As a consequence, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased and, in 2017, was slightly above average. This reflects good progress from children's starting points.
- Staff are well trained at effectively planning and delivering interesting learning opportunities. The learning environment is well developed and offers well-thought-out provision to interest and motivate children to learn. Although the indoor learning environment is well developed, the leader and staff are aware that there is scope to

further develop the use of the outdoor area to improve learning even further.

- Children's progress across all of the areas of learning is accurately assessed and tracked. Regular moderation of evidence gathered by staff identifies any gaps in learning and enables teaching to be planned in line with children's particular needs.
- Relationships between adults and children and between children and their peers are strong. These, along with well-established routines, ensure that the setting is calm and orderly so that children behave very well.
- Communication between school and home is effective and parents who spoke to inspectors agree. Parents are encouraged to support their children in their learning. Parents value the workshops provided by the school to help them to support their children's learning of phonics.

School details

Unique reference number	130859
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10045063

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Shinn and Claire Secker (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Martin Shufflebottom
Telephone number	01977 651 291
Website	www.northfieldprimary.co.uk/
Email address	headteacher@northfield.wakefield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is a little above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- A communication resource is housed on the school site and provides 12 places for pupils with communication needs from across the local authority. Managed in partnership with the local authority, which employs all of the staff and manages the admissions from across the local authority, it occupies classrooms and offices on the site. All of the 12 pupils currently attending the communication resource have a

diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant change of staff. The interim headteacher took up post in January 2018 following the resignation of the previous headteacher. During the inspection, three of the 12 class groups were taught by temporary or supply teachers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a daily breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons, with some observations conducted jointly with the interim headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, the school's plans for its future development, safeguarding information, a summary of the school's self-evaluation and samples of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The 30 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were examined, in addition to the outcomes of recent surveys by the school of parents' views. Inspectors spoke to parents as they collected their children at the end of the day.
- The 28 staff responses to the inspection survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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