

Skelton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134095
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	381606
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2012
Lead inspector	Lee Owston

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Clarkson
Headteacher	Sarah Walker
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lee Owston

Zoe Westley

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Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 34 lessons or part-lessons taught by 20 different teachers, including one joint observation with the headteacher. Short visits to a number of reading sessions were also conducted. The inspectors spoke formally with two groups of pupils and informally with others during work and play. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a community governor, the headteacher and leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics. The inspectors listened to pupils reading and discussed the work they have been doing in class this academic year and during their time in school. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including those related to school improvement planning and safeguarding, records of pupils' progress, pupils' work and the school's self-evaluation procedures. Responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were used to assist in planning the inspection. The inspectors also scrutinised the 89 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average size primary school. The number on roll is increasing and extra accommodation is being built. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that found nationally. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. No pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is well above that found nationally. The school hosts an early intervention support base for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school meets the current floor standards which are the minimum expectations set by the government for attainment and progress. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality mark and Artsmark Gold. It is also a UNICEF Rights Respecting school.

The school has undergone significant staffing changes. The headteacher and senior leadership team are different to those in post at the time of the last inspection.

The school has a children's centre on site and provides before- and after-school care through a private provider. These did not form part of this inspection but reports of their quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because attainment at Key Stage 1, whilst improving rapidly, remains below average and not enough teaching across the school is of an outstanding quality. The school’s strengths lie in the drive, vision and commitment of the headteacher to improve continually. Initiatives introduced to improve the quality of teaching and establish accurate information about pupils’ attainment have been highly successful. Attainment is rising year-on-year.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. From starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage that are well below age-related expectations, pupils make good progress overall to attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good progress to their peers and achieve well.
- Teaching is good. All staff are committed to improving their practice. As a result, assessment information is now accurate, lessons proceed at an engaging pace and learning activities are well matched to individual pupils’ needs. However, pupils, especially the more able, are not always given enough time to work independently to reinforce and apply their developing skills.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. They are kept safe, behave well in their lessons, around the school and at play, and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is improving so that it is now broadly average overall.
- Leaders and managers know their school well. Robust systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school’s work lead to insightful improvement planning. The headteacher offers strong and clear direction. Judicious management of teachers’ performance by senior leaders has led to consistent improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement. Some middle leaders have not always had the same opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and hold their teams to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, especially at Key Stage 1, and build upon the good progress being made across the school by:
 - increasing the proportion of teaching that is outstanding
 - providing pupils, especially the more able, with greater opportunities to work independently and make choices about their work
 - sharing best practice in marking and feedback across the school so that pupils respond more frequently to their individual improvement points
 - ensuring middle leaders are given increased opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement
 - working with parents and carers to reduce the number of term-time holidays and raise pupils' attendance to above average.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are accurate in their view that pupils' achievement is good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, from starting points in the nursery which are well below expectations, children make good progress. This is because every opportunity is taken to target children's specific needs and address the significant deficits in their language, communication and number skills. While children's attainment at the end of the Reception Year remains below that expected, it is improving year-on-year so that children achieve increasingly nearer to national expectations on entry to Year 1.

Over time, pupils have made satisfactory progress across Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average. However, the progress pupils make is improving rapidly so that the gap to national averages is narrowing quickly and securely. Over recent years an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving at the expected level and above in all subjects. As a result, pupils are reading and writing with greater confidence and are able to use their developing knowledge of number facts to solve problems. Progress accelerates across Key Stage 2 due to pupils' increasing understanding of their learning and direct involvement in setting targets for their own improvement. This secures good progress and leads to broadly average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. School tracking data and direct observation of pupils at work indicate that, as a result of strategies implemented by senior leaders, progress continues to improve and attainment is rising even further. The work of current pupils in Year 6 is higher than that of previous years, including at the higher level. Across the school, pupils show interest in their learning, exhibit good listening skills and interact well with their peers to clarify their thinking and deepen their understanding.

Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable make equally good progress to their peers. This is because of the effective and timely intervention strategies implemented to meet their needs, including that within the early intervention support base and the school's nurture group.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, parents and carers greatly appreciate the good teaching and very positive relationships between pupils, their teachers and support staff. In the vast majority of lessons, teaching is good; some is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are skilful at modelling learning so that pupils know exactly what to do and how to make a success of their tasks. Probing questions encourage pupils to think and explain their views so that there is a greater depth to their learning. For example, in a successful Year 6 English lesson, pupils were able to empathise with the main characters' situation through the teacher's careful unpicking of pupils' thoughts and constant challenge to provide justification from the text. This increased pupils' motivation to read and accelerated their achievement.

Sometimes, teachers talk for too long and this prevents pupils from having enough time to work independently to secure or apply their newly learned skills. Some lessons can also be overly-structured. While this supports lower and middle ability pupils to make good progress, it can also prevent more-able pupils from having the independence and choice needed to demonstrate their higher level of understanding. Marking and feedback are consistently good across the school. Pupils are routinely aware of their successes, areas for improvement and, in Key Stage 2, their current level of attainment. However, not all pupils across the school are given the same opportunity to consider their teacher's comments and make the amendments suggested. This prevents some pupils from making even greater progress.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with tasks that are engaging, build on their prior learning and challenge them to think. For example, some were excited to explore their indoor beach and rock pool where learning opportunities were carefully crafted to develop aspects of vocabulary, physical development and early number skills. However, this quality of experience is not always replicated outdoors due to restrictions of space, especially in the Reception class. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is effectively taught across the school. In particular, accurate assessments allow the careful grouping and regrouping of pupils according to their ability and emerging gaps in learning. This leads to highly targeted teaching. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in their reading so that deficits apparent on entry to the Nursery class are being eradicated. The teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good due to the high levels of support provided by skilled classroom assistants.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful to each other, adults and their school surroundings. They enjoy coming to school and they take an active role in school life. Members of the school parliament are rightly proud of their work and show an impressive understanding of their school through their own school self-evaluation. Pupils overwhelmingly say that they feel safe in school and that adults are very approachable if they have concerns. Parents and carers are similarly positive and unanimously agree that their children are kept safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, including those presented by modern technology, such as social networking sites, mobile phones and the internet. While pupils understand the definition of bullying, they are not as knowledgeable of the different forms that it may take, especially those relating to prejudice. Nevertheless, pupils, parents and carers were unanimous in saying that bullying at the school is rare. Pupils say that this is because the teachers know

them all so well that, if there was a problem, they are confident it would be resolved quickly.

The vast majority of parents and carers agree that, overall, there is, typically, a good standard of behaviour at the school. School records and discussions with pupils also indicate that behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The effective work of the nurture group and early intervention support base to deal with pupils' emotional, social and behavioural difficulties allows the successful reintegration of many back into their mainstream classes. This work is demonstrably removing barriers to learning and allowing pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable the opportunity to achieve well, both socially and academically.

The school works diligently to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. For the majority of pupils, attendance is now broadly average. However, families taking extended holidays in term-time hinder further improvement.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's inspiring leadership has led to significant improvements in many aspects of the school's work. Together with senior leaders, she has empowered staff to continually improve their practice. Staff morale is high and an open culture of accountability has been created where everyone strives for the very best. Members of the governing body offer good levels of support and challenge. They bring a wide range of expertise and are highly supportive of the school, contributing effectively to the monitoring and evaluation of priority areas. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work are rigorous so that the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement is clearly known. This allows a perceptive analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the most pertinent areas for improvement to be identified. Curriculum teams have been developed to distribute leadership responsibilities more widely across the school. This approach is still embedding and some middle leaders do not always get enough opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement within their teams. The effective management of teachers' performance is aligned to good professional development opportunities, including peer observation and coaching to share best practice. As a result, teaching has strengthened, assessment information about pupils' attainment has become more accurate and attainment in all key stages shows a trend of improvement. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

A broad, rich and varied curriculum, including a good range of visits and visitors meets the needs and interests of learners well. There is a strong emphasis on developing basic skills and applying these within all areas of learning. Pupils say that the curriculum is exciting and interesting. They keenly participate in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and experiences which offer artistic, musical and sporting opportunities. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The school has a range of effective partnerships, for example to provide opportunities in music and sport, and to support pupils who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural and their families. The school's work to promote equality is good. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the achievement of all groups is improving. The school's safeguarding procedures fully meet current government requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skelton Primary School, Saltburn by the Sea, TS12 2LR

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and particularly appreciate how helpful you were when you spoke with us at playtime, shared your work or explained what you were learning during lessons. We were very impressed by your politeness and the care you show for one another so that you behave well most of the time and feel safe.

You told us you enjoy coming to school and we can see that many of you take on extra responsibilities to make the school the very best it can be. Well done to the school parliament for working so hard on your own school evaluation! The inspectors agree that you all go to a good school. You are all working very hard to listen carefully in lessons and think about your answers. This is helping you to get better at your reading, writing and mathematics. Your teachers are also working very hard to give you work that is not too easy and not too challenging so that you can all make good progress in your learning. All of the adults who work with your headteacher are determined to make sure that your school keeps getting better and better. To help your school to do this, we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following things:

- ensure that even more of the teaching inspires and excites you so that you all make even better progress
- give you enough time to work on your own to practise your reading, writing and mathematics skills
- build more time into your lessons for you to look at the comments your teacher has made about your work and make any improvements
- work with your parents and carers so that everyone comes to school more regularly.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and attending school each and every day so that you can all achieve the very best that you can.

Yours sincerely

Lee Owston
Lead Inspector

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