

Castlefields Infant School

Field Top Road, Rastrick, Brighouse, HD63XB

Inspection dates

27–28 September

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because progress in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently fast enough to raise attainment to be above average, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Teaching requires improvement. Learning in lessons is sometimes not good enough, especially for the most able, and some weaknesses, for example, in the level of challenge in learning activities, hold pupils back.
- Subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are not yet able to make a full contribution to improving pupils' achievement.
- Monitoring of teaching by the leadership team does not focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning.
- The governing body is not playing a full part in improving links with parents or holding the school to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and like their school. The vast majority behave well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their schooling.
- Diversity is celebrated.
- Much teaching in Year 2 is good.
- Senior leaders are committed to improving the school and teamwork is strong. There is firm evidence of improvement.
- Good relationships exist at all levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by seven teachers.
- They held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors also studied a range of documents including: the school improvement plans; safeguarding policies and records; assessment information; attendance information; the headteacher's monitoring of lessons and pupils' work in all classes.
- Sixteen parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed together with the results of questionnaires sent to parents during the previous term. Inspectors also spoke with a small number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Derek Pattinson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized infant school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are above what is typical nationally, and rising.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is above average.
- The school also provides sessional day care for two- to three-year-olds, pre-school for three-year-olds and before- and after-school care for a small number of three to 11- year-olds, which were part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching becomes consistently at least good in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment for all pupils and especially for the most able by:
 - checking that activities are always at the right level of challenge
 - reducing the amount of teacher talk so that pupils always have enough time to work independently
 - ensuring that pupils are always clear about what they must learn and how well they are doing
 - ensuring that pupils always have opportunities to share their achievements and how challenging they found the work, to help inform teachers' planning for the next lesson.
- Accelerate progress in literacy and mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
 - promoting more talk among pupils through focused questioning to build confidence , increase oral fluency and aid learning
 - ensuring that pupils' reading books are matched to their abilities, especially for the least able, and that they are heard to read often to help them become fluent readers
 - ensuring that leaders continue to give the highest priority to the development of writing
 - ensuring that, in mathematics, pupils have more opportunities to solve problems and that they are not asked to complete work they already understand.
- Strengthening the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - building on the good work already undertaken to further develop the skills of subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants so they can make the best possible contribution to improving pupils' achievement
 - developing further the roles and responsibilities of the governing body so that it increasingly holds the school to account and leads its direction
 - forging good relationships with all parents to help eliminate negative views
 - ensuring that the regular monitoring of teaching focuses more sharply on how pupils learn rather than on how teachers teach.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children enter the Reception Year with skills below those typical for their age, especially in language and social development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children make good progress from their starting points because of generally good teaching and provision. As a result, they have made up much lost ground by the time they enter Year 1 and their attainment is broadly average.
- Pupils' progress as they move through Years 1 and 2 is mostly as expected, but not enough make the better than expected progress needed in order to raise their attainment overall to above average. As a result, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is close to the national average. However, writing is the weakest element, especially for the more able pupils.
- Pupils make the best progress when they enjoy their learning and when the curriculum is matched to their precise needs. For example, in brisk literacy sessions and in Year 2 lessons, observed during the inspection, on 'the race for Space'.
- Pupils make expected progress in reading. Progress in linking letters with the sounds they make (phonics) is as expected. Teachers use correct pronunciation and a variety of resources that help pupils read for pleasure and information. However, some readers, especially the least able, do not make the best possible progress because their reading books are too difficult and they are not heard to read often enough.
- In mathematics, pupils' skills of numeracy are improving steadily and they make sound progress as they move through the school. However, they have too few opportunities to solve problems, and in number work are sometimes required to complete tasks they already understand, which slows progress.
- Most pupils known to be eligible to the pupil premium, those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, performing better than similar groups nationally.
- An increase in the number of pupils entering the school at different times during the school year has affected overall attainment levels because these pupils do not always have the same benefits of starting their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the school is improving the progress of these pupils with more rigorous tracking and closer attention to individual needs. Gaps in performance are narrowing but still too few of these pupils reach above the levels expected for their age.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers work diligently and, mostly, successfully, to establish good working relationships with pupils. As a result, most lessons are typified by effective management of pupils' behaviour and skilled use of encouragement and praise.
- Many lessons include strengths, especially in Year 2. In the good lessons, pupils are well motivated because work and activities are well matched to their different needs, presentations are lively and resources are used effectively to enhance learning. Questions are probing and the use of 'carpet buddies' provokes thought and discussion. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoy writing stories, using time connectives and adjectives to help embellish their work.
- Much teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. For example, children were observed happily engaged in activities designed to help them make progress across all required areas of learning.
- In lessons where teaching is less effective, mostly in Year 1 but sometimes also in Year 2, activities are not always at the right level of challenge and this slows progress. Teachers sometimes spend too long on explanations, restricting time for independent work. Pupils occasionally do not have enough time to talk about their learning and this fails to extend their vocabulary for writing and reading.

- Teachers' marking is regular and gives praise when it is due. However, it also contains pointers on how pupils can improve their work so they can make faster progress. This is not always the case during lessons, when pupils are unsure about what they have to learn, how to succeed or how well they are doing, which prevents them from making the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not always provide enough time for pupils to share their achievements and so identify what needs to be included in the next lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour over time is good for the vast majority of pupils. This is confirmed by a scrutiny of behavioural records, observations and discussions.
- Behaviour in the well run before- and after-school clubs and almost all lessons is good and sometimes exemplary, such as in a literacy session in Year 2 seen during the inspection. This is because behaviour is mostly managed consistently well. However, restlessness and inattentiveness occasionally occur when time is not used well and there is a lack challenge. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson on two- and three-dimensional shapes and in assembly, pupils lost interest because of a lack of involvement.
- However, most pupils are unreservedly positive about behaviour, although a small number hold negative views. During the inspection, behaviour was good in the playground and as the pupils moved around the school. Minor accidents sometimes occur because of large numbers of pupils engaging in lively play in restricted spaces.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and believe that all adults in school help them to learn. This helps to explain the improving attendance which is now a little above average.
- Good manners, courtesy and consideration for others are strongly promoted, diversity is celebrated, and building confidence and raising self-esteem are high profile. This means that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully underpins the school's work, and, as a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and say that little bullying takes place and that there is no disruption in lessons. They are consistently well cared for, such as when adults make sure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage wear waterproof clothing when outside in the rain.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is successfully driving improvement in raising standards.
- Key positive features of the leadership of senior leaders include the ability to enthuse others, to promote good team spirit and to sustain high morale. As a result all share in self-evaluation and agree on priorities. These are targeted accurately to weaker aspects and are being pursued increasingly rigorously to help raise attainment.
- Subject leaders are extending their monitoring role and increasingly focus on what works well and what needs doing. However, as yet, as well as other teachers and teaching assistants, they are not yet fully accountable for attainment and progress. For example, the regular monitoring of pupils' work does not focus sharply enough on the progress pupils are making.
- The school's tracking system enables leaders to obtain relevant information to identify how well pupils are doing. The information is used well to set future targets and also to support those who are starting to fall behind. This information is enhancing the promotion of equal opportunities, although as yet action is not secure enough to ensure best possible progress for all pupils. However, the school fosters good relationships among all pupils.
- Regular monitoring of teaching is not fully effective because too much attention is given to the teaching rather than the impact on pupils' learning. As a result, the weaker elements in teaching are not always identified. Nevertheless, the monitoring does identify where training is needed and links to performance management is proving successful in improving teaching.

- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
 - The curriculum covers all subjects and is currently being improved by linking subjects together in meaningful ways and introducing more 'real-life' opportunities. In particular, leaders are rightly focusing on boosting performance in writing, although this work is in its early stages.
 - The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance and provides regular support which is appreciated by leaders and the governing body.
 - Most parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. However, a very small number hold negative views about some aspects of the school's work, such as, of leadership and management.
 - The governance of the school:
 - is steadily improving its involvement in making decisions and finding out what is happening in school
 - gives attention to the detailed reports from the headteacher to gain an insight into school life
 - has at the moment insufficient understanding about aspects of the school's work in order to hold school leaders fully to account for its performance, although levels of challenge are increasing.
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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	107531
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	400916

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Gray
Headteacher	Gemma Elliot
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2010
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