

Sessay Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Sessay, Thirsk, York, YO7 3NA

Inspection dates 11- 12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils' progress and attainment are particularly strong in reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils' progress has improved rapidly from a low point in 2010.
- The teaching staff are successfully turning around the decline in pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics. This has been achieved through highly effective, well-implemented professional development and the robust tracking of individual pupil's performance in this subject. However, pupils' attainment remains average rather than above average.
- The strength of the good teaching lies in the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Teaching staff are also very adept at planning pupils' work to match their ability and aptitude.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils respect each other and adults. All staff are vigilant about everyone's safety and pupils say they feel safe in school. Attendance is good.
- Senior managers' effective leadership of teaching and the development of the governing body's teaching and learning committee are having a positive impact on improving pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in mathematics. Information gathered from the leadership of teaching is used well in the performance management of the teaching staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is average rather than above average.
- Tracking pupils' progress by year groups is not robust and the information on pupils' progress by gender and ability groups is not easily accessible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, or parts of lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the teaching staff and the business manager of the school and a local authority representative.
- The inspector took into account the seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Barbara Hudson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-size primary school.
- An average number of pupils are supported through school action. A smaller than average number of pupils are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is very low.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British heritage and no pupil is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- In some year groups pupil mobility can be high. In last year's Year 6, pupils' mobility was 25% which is higher than average.
- The school achieved the government current floor standards, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - increasing pupils' understanding of decimals in upper Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that the focus on key instant recall facts is sustained
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they know what they need to do next to improve their work
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum.
- Increase the rigour of the school's tracking systems by:
 - tracking and evaluating pupils' progress by year groups and classes
 - ensuring that the information the headteacher has on pupils' progress by gender and ability groups is presented in an easily understood way for governors and teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overall achievement of pupils is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated to learn. Pupils say that the work they have to do in lessons is nearly always right, not too hard and not too easy. Some pupils commented that they found their work on instant recall of key mathematical facts most useful in helping them to improve their mathematical ability.
- Children join the Reception Year with a wide range of skills. Overall, on entry, children's skills are most often below those expected for their age in personal and social development, reading, writing and mathematics. Through a wide range of very effective activities, children make good gains in their learning, especially in personal and social development and literacy skills. By the end of the Reception Year a large majority reach the levels expected for their age and some exceed these.
- As a result of the small numbers in each year group, overall attainment fluctuates year on year.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above average.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in English has been consistently good. At the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is consistently above average. For those pupils who have attended this school for all their primary education attainment is well above average. Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics has been more erratic. In the last two years, the headteacher, supported by a very committed teaching staff have turned pupils' attainment from below average and poor pupil progress, to attainment that is in line with expectations and pupil progress good that is consistently good and sometimes outstanding from their starting points. The weakest area currently in mathematics is the understanding of decimals in upper Key Stage 2.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are very effectively supported. A rigorous analysis of each pupil's needs ensures interventions are appropriate and well planned, enabling them to make good progress. Pupils who are known to be entitled to pupil premium make similar progress to the rest of their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality teaching is recognised and greatly appreciated by pupils and parents. Teachers provide interesting lessons using the whole school site, including the well-developed grounds, to motivate pupils and increase their enjoyment of learning.
- Throughout the school, the strengths in teaching are:
 - the relationship between staff and pupils
 - the way in which the teaching staff adapt the tasks that pupils are given to do, to their ability
 - all teaching staff have high expectations for pupils
 - that teachers now have high expectations in all subjects due to their effective way in which they adapt pupils' work to their abilities and aptitudes.
 - that teachers effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through creating a very positive environment in which pupils work purposefully, and also through carefully planned activities requiring pupils to work with a partner or in small groups.
- The introduction of specific times when pupils focus on their targets has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides an opportunity for highly focussed intervention activities that particularly help those pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. It also provides opportunities for all pupils to focus on their literacy and numeracy targets, to improve their work, and reinforce what they are working on in other lessons.
- The weaknesses in teaching are:

- in mathematics there is a lack of a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work that includes what pupils need to do next to improve
- upper Key Stage 2 pupils are insufficiently enabled to understand decimals
- teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is consistently good. They are courteous and thoughtful, showing a real awareness of the need to care for and respect each other. From the time children join the Reception Year they learn to adapt themselves to the needs of others. Pupils are keen to learn and they make positive contributions in lessons and around the school.
- A relative weakness in pupils' behaviour is noted very occasionally at the end of a lesson, when the pace of learning sometimes drops and a tiny minority of pupils become less engaged.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed consistently and the school has good examples whereby their actions have supported and improved the behaviour of individual pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that bullying in any form is rare. When it does occur staff deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in school, in their community and whilst using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are frequently absent from school due to the work done by staff. Punctuality is good.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors demonstrate the ambition, determination and expertise to improve the school, currently showing a good capacity for improvement. However, overall improvements since the last inspection are only satisfactory because of the issue with attainment and progress in mathematics.
- The local authority provides effective support for this good school.
- The strengths within leadership and management include:
 - the positive relationships the staff have with parents and the community
 - the headteacher shares her clear ambitious vision by leading through example
 - high levels of communication, teamwork, professional dialogue and the sharing of good practice from within and beyond the school, which are the norm for all staff and governors
 - the close monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching and the effective tracking of individual pupils' performance has led to more rigorous accountability and the management of staff performance.
- There are, however, weaknesses in the tracking of pupils' progress. They are the robustness with which individual pupil's progress is effectively tracked and used to celebrate successes and identify and remedy problems is not applied to year groups and classes.
- The information the headteacher has on the progress of gender and ability groups is not presented in a coherent enough way to be immediately useful to the governing body and other staff in the school. The school's rich curriculum is well matched to pupils' interests and needs. The teaching staff make excellent use of the facilities within the school site to provide pupils with an exciting and motivating curriculum which makes a positive contribution to their behaviour.

- Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
 - Staff actively promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons, assemblies and visits and visitors to the school.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in the school
 - governors are ambitious for the school and in so doing are holding the school to account effectively
 - governors are effective financial managers who target resources well to ensure pupils' overall good progress.
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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	121514
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	395440

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	G Thornton
Headteacher	A Buckton
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
Telephone number	01845 501239
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	headteacher@sessay.n-yorks.school.uk

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