

Armley Primary School

Salisbury Terrace, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS12 2AY

Inspection dates

20–21 November 2012

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

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. In some classes, pupils learn well and in others they make expected rather than good progress.
- Most teachers do not give pupils enough chances to work things out for themselves.
- Not enough of the more able pupils are reaching the standards they should.
- Many pupils do not recall number facts quickly enough.
- The curriculum does not give pupils enough time to practise their speaking skills.
- The school's leaders do not always thoroughly monitor how well new plans are working.
- Middle leaders are beginning to take on more responsibility but this is at an early stage.
- Pupils' attendance remains below that of pupils across the country. Pupils are regularly arriving late for school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and many take part in lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- A programme that links letter sounds, writing and reading is helping to speed up children's progress at an earlier stage so that many more are becoming confident readers.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils. Pupils are happy and feel extremely safe.
- Leaders and managers, supported by governors, have done much to eradicate inadequate teaching and more teaching is good than previously.
- Leaders have the right plans in place to bring about good improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out without notice. The inspectors observed 11 teachers teaching 13 lessons or part lessons.
- Inspectors visited two classes to hear pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including pupils' work over the last year, tracking of pupils' progress, safety procedures and the school's evaluation procedures and plans for development.
- The inspectors analysed seven completed on-line questionnaires (Parent View) and six completed by staff. The school does not routinely seek parents' views, for example, using a questionnaire, so there was limited evidence of parents' satisfaction with the school's provision. .

Inspection team

Brenda Clarke, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Keefe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. An above average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, changes in staffing have been considerable. Four teachers are working on temporary contracts.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that lessons run at just the right speed and that no time is wasted
 - setting work that helps pupils to learn well, especially the more able
 - using different ways to make learning fun, for example, role play or working in groups
 - ensuring that lessons allow pupils to add their ideas and to plan some of their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills through exciting activities such as drama
 - making sure that pupils take notice of the teachers' marking, make corrections and use this information in their future work.
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics to match that in reading by:
 - planning more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to practise their skills when working independently in the classroom and outdoors
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to complete longer pieces of writing in interesting ways and using different styles
 - giving pupils more chances to become faster at recalling number facts and providing opportunities to use these when solving problems.
- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - finding out how well new ways of working have been taken up by staff and what impact they are having on speeding up pupils' progress
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they play an active part in developing the curriculum
 - finding ways to seek parents' views about the school and using this as part of the school's development process.
- Improve attendance so that it is similar to schools nationally and to make sure that more pupils arrive at school on time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills much lower than those typically expected for their age, particularly in their communication, numeracy, personal and social skills.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they enter Year 1 with skills below those expected. Their skills in writing and early calculations remain weaker.
- The recently introduced programme that links letter sounds to writing is already speeding up children's progress so that almost 50% become confident early writers.
- Since 2009, in Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils have not made good progress. As a result, by the end of Year 2, standards were significantly lower than similar pupils across the country. This was partly due to staff absence. Staffing is now stable and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning at a faster rate. In 2012, teachers' assessments showed that in Year 2 pupils achieved standards below average. However, no pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in any subject.
- There is a significant rise in how well pupils learn by the end of Key Stage 2. In 2012, pupils' attainment rose from well below to similar to those standards seen across the country. Pupils attained highly in reading but writing, while improved, lagged behind. No pupil attained the higher Level 5. Too few more-able pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils sometimes lose confidence when writing and their lack of well-developed speaking skills means that some pupils do not experiment with interesting words to add flair to longer pieces of writing.
- Standards in mathematics are below average and have not risen at the same rate as those in English. Pupils' work slows in lessons because they cannot quickly recall number facts or multiplication tables.
- A variable quality of teaching at Key Stage 2, together with staff absence, has resulted in pupils making the expected rate of progress rather than good progress overall. In Year 6, where teaching is always at least good, far more pupils make better than expected progress.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are now strong. This, together with a consistent approach to the teaching of reading and writing, is beginning to show a more even picture of pupils' progress across classes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, together with those who speak English as an additional language, do as well as other pupils because of the good support they receive in lessons.
- The pupil premium funding is used wisely to support small groups of pupils and to reduce class sizes, successfully narrowing the gap in attainment between those pupils' eligible for the funding and that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Across the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught the skills of sitting still and good listening so that most are attentive when learning new things. Staff and children get on well together and children are happy and settled. Teaching in the Nursery class is good. Children are taught regularly in small groups and they quickly gain confidence and make good progress.
- In the Reception class, adults have enthusiastically introduced the new letters and writing programme. Careful, step by step learning taught in an interesting way is really catching children's interests. Most are already confidently spelling out the sounds that letters make and using this to write simple sentences. Although adults plan activities that children enjoy, they do not plan enough activities that children choose independently. This means that opportunities to improve children's early number and speaking skills are missed.
- Teacher's plans for children to learn outside in both the Nursery and the Reception classes is not

focused enough on developing children's skills and speeding up their progress.

- Although the quality of teaching seen in most of the lessons observed by the inspectors was good, a significant minority of lessons required improvement. Pupils' work in their books also shows that teaching requires improvement because sometimes pupils' work is incomplete and untidy. Also pupils do not always take up and use the teachers' advice.
- Pupils are not consistently encouraged to work at a good speed.
- Lessons sometimes lack variety and pupils have few opportunities to practise their speaking skills through exciting activities such as role play, and drama. Some teachers give pupils too much help and do not allow them to work things out for themselves. Teachers do not always use their assessments well enough to make sure that all pupils have work at exactly the right level for them. More-able pupils are often given the same work as their classmates and have no chance to work at a higher level. These factors stop teaching from being consistently good and this slows pupils' progress.
- Where teaching is consistently good, teachers ask searching questions that make pupils think. Pupils are encouraged to explain their answers fully. They have exciting opportunities to find information for themselves, for example, using the internet to find facts about Guy Fawkes and then writing and asking their classmates questions about him.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and lessons run smoothly.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that pupils respect others' views, share equipment and get on well together.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils behave well in lessons. They clearly know right from wrong and most play fairly. Pupils enjoy school. They try hard in lessons and many persevere.
- Pupils feel very safe. One pupil speaks for many when saying, 'Teachers have good ears and listen to our problems'.
- Pupils say there is occasional bullying but that this is quickly resolved. They talk knowledgeably about internet safety and know about cyber-bullying.
- School Council members take their roles seriously and enjoy making decisions about such things as the 'Buddy Bench'. Pupils enjoy taking part in community events and they talked with understanding about their recent visit to the Cenotaph.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Most mature into thoughtful young people.
- The learning mentor gives good support to those who may be vulnerable. Her help is much valued by pupils and their families.
- Attendance is below average but is slowly improving. The breakfast club provides a safe, nourishing start to the day and has effectively improved attendance for some pupils. However, the school acknowledges that it has yet to reduce the number of pupils who arrive late each day.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher has resolved some significant issues regarding the quality of teaching during her two years in post. Using the expertise of other schools and local authority advisers she has brought about some important changes especially in eradicating inadequate teaching and in speeding up pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has made an accurate assessment of what the school must do to improve further. Together with senior leaders, she has formed a strong, whole-school team. The staff are trained together and as a result, new actions are introduced consistently across all classes. The school also works closely with partner schools so that teachers can see good practice and use

this in their own teaching.

- Planning for future development is based on the right priorities but does not include systems to check how effectively new initiatives are speeding up pupils' progress.
 - Middle leaders have still to fully develop their roles. They are gaining an accurate picture of the curriculum prior to making important changes.
 - The curriculum has some significant gaps. Opportunities for developing pupils' speaking skills and time for writing longer pieces of work are not carefully built into the curriculum and the needs of more-able pupils are not consistently met. This goes some way to explaining why very few pupils reach the higher levels in national tests.
 - There are rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and there is evidence that more teachers are improving the quality of their teaching so that it is good rather than requiring improvement. Three teachers new to the school are receiving frequent guidance from senior leaders and inspection evidence shows that their teaching skills are developing quickly.
 - The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are thorough. This information is shared regularly with teachers and aspirational targets are set to speed up pupils' progress. This is working well. It is making teachers more accountable and is a key reason why standards are rising.
 - The performance management targets set for individual teachers are tackling weaker teaching. The thorough use of such targets has been a key reason why inadequate teaching is being eradicated.
 - The school takes very good care of its pupils and procedures to ensure pupils' safety are thorough.
 - Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and the school goes the extra mile to meet pupils' differing needs, although there is more work to be done to ensure the more able make the progress of which they are capable. Parents have the opportunity to help their children with homework but the school does not seek their views about how well things are working with homework.
 - The local authority provides frequent and effective support, especially in raising the quality of teaching.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors give good support to the school's leaders. They are well informed and bring a wide range of professional expertise and skills, for example, managerial experience. The governing body does not routinely check the impact of the school's decisions to make sure that money, such as the pupil premium funding, is well spent. Since the last inspection, governors have become more skilled at checking on how well pupils are progressing. They know the strengths and areas of the school's performance that require improvement and have supported the headteacher very well in eradicating inadequate teaching.
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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	107960
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	400955

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Whitehead
Headteacher	Christine Burrill
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
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