

Pickhill Church Of England Primary School

The Green, Pickhill, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4JL

Inspection dates 29 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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 majority of pupils make expected progress for their age in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but the more-able pupils are not achieving as well as they should be.
- Leadership has not yet ensured that good teaching is a feature of all lessons in all year groups.
- Teachers do not always set pupils work that is sufficiently challenging or provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- The performance management of teachers and teaching assistants is not rigorous and therefore does not promote improvement.
- Subject plans to raise achievement in English and mathematics do not indicate precisely how the actions to be taken are to going to make a difference to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to widen their knowledge and awareness of other faiths and cultures.

The school has the following strengths

- The determination and drive of the headteacher to improve the school since the previous inspection are evident. This is why teaching is getting better and achievement is rising.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork. This is evident in the way staff are united in their determination to provide the best for all pupils.
- Good strategies are in place to support the teaching of reading, including the ability to understand the relationship between letters and their sounds.
- Pupils' enjoy school and feel safe. They are polite, considerate towards each other and their behaviour is good.
- The governing body is well-informed and checks the work of the school effectively.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons or parts of lessons taken by teachers and teaching assistants. The headteacher accompanied the inspector on two of these visits.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons, at break times and in meetings. Pupils were also heard to read.
- Pupils' work in books, particularly in English and mathematics was scrutinised.
- The inspector analysed three responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and subject leaders for English and mathematics.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, subject plans, information on individual pupils' progress, teachers' plans and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Christopher Keeler, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils is White British.
- There are no pupils currently in receipt of the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been two changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the learning and progress of all pupils but particularly the more-able by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - teachers use assessment more effectively during lessons so that more-able pupils are challenged effectively
 - opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - performance management for individual teachers includes reference to specific targets for improvement
 - subject leaders' action plans are more closely linked to raising pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to widen their knowledge, awareness and understanding of other faiths and cultures.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not as good as it should be due to a legacy of weak teaching that has resulted in gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge in relation to English and mathematics. However, pupils are currently making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection.
- While the majority of pupils is now making expected progress in English and mathematics, this is not always the case for more-able pupils. In 2012, no pupil at the end of Year 2 exceeded age-related expectations in writing and mathematics. While pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to exceed age-related expectations in English and mathematics this year, this level of performance has not been a consistent feature of the school for some time.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects such as history and geography and this restricts their learning. This is one of the reasons why pupils are not realising their potential in terms of achievement.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is the same as that of other pupils due to the support given by teaching assistants.
- Pupils receive a good start in reading with due attention given to the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics) and are developing the confidence to try unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with understanding and are able to talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read. There is a culture of reading for enjoyment throughout the school and pupils read with an adult regularly.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- For too long the quality of teaching has not been good enough. Progress was too slow and this resulted in inadequate achievement. This is no longer the case. The overall quality of teaching has improved noticeably, lessons include some good features and this is why pupils are making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. However, there still remains room for improvement and recently introduced strategies to improve teaching now need to be consistent features of classroom practice.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage staff plan appropriately challenging activities to develop children's phonics and mathematical skills. Children access practical play-based activities both inside and outdoors and this reinforces their learning. Opportunities are provided for children to develop their language, physical and social skills.
- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of assessment over the past eighteen months. Teachers are now adept at identifying pupils' misconceptions during lessons and taking action to tackle them. As a result, work is generally matched to pupils' ability better and this is enhancing progress.
- Teachers' expectations of more-able pupils are not high enough so they do not always recognise when they are not being sufficiently challenged. As a consequence, these pupils are not progressing as quickly as they should.
- Teachers' explanations are clear and they use their subject knowledge to good effect when responding to pupils' questions. The careful use of questioning by teachers was a feature in the lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils were required to manipulate ideas and organise their thoughts. This process helps to consolidate their understanding especially in mathematics.
- Marking is used well to provide feedback to pupils as to the quality of their work and also to indicate ways in which they could improve. Younger pupils however, would benefit from written examples of what improvement should look like so that they have a clear understanding of what is required.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils demonstrate high standards of behaviour, a respect for others and an enthusiasm for learning. Behaviour is judged to be good because it is making a difference to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Staff manage behaviour well and all follow the school's policy. Pupils are aware of what is and is not acceptable behaviour and this influences how they act.
- Pupils settle quickly and concentrate on their work during lessons. They accept responsibility and are developing the ability to work independently. Pupils engage positively during discussions and when responding to the teachers' questions.
- A feature of the school is the way in which pupils of all ages play well together. No-one is excluded from playground activities and older pupils look after and care for younger children. This promotes a strong sense of family and well-being.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They feel safe and do not experience bullying or harassment in any form. If it were to happen they are extremely confident that it would be dealt with quickly and firmly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and the governing body have taken appropriate action to improve the work of the school since the previous inspection. It has not been an easy road to travel and many issues have had to be resolved along the way. Leaders have demonstrated resilience, determination and vision. As a result, this is an improving school. However, leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not good enough over time.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher staff are working well together and share a common purpose, that of providing the best possible education for all pupils. It is this teamwork that is beginning to bring about effective change in the way pupils are taught.
- The quality of teaching is monitored by the headteacher on a regular basis. Strategies include formal observations to check on the link between teaching and pupils' progress and working alongside staff to provide support and guidance. However, the link between the performance management process and the targets for improvement in respect of individual teachers is not evident.
- The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on generally accurate evaluation. The school improvement plan covers all the right areas that need to be tackled if it is to become a good school. However, the timescale to realise this objective is too long.
- Subject leaders' action plans which are designed to raise standards in English and mathematics do not make specific reference to the intended impact on pupils' achievement.
- The school leadership ensures that there is no discrimination so all pupils, regardless of background or need, have full access to all aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but they are not given sufficient opportunities within the curriculum to widen their knowledge, awareness and understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided good support to the headteacher which has helped to bring the school out of special measures.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well-informed and is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what steps are being taken to tackle the latter. Governors monitor the school closely, have a good understanding of data in respect of the school's performance and support and challenge the school leadership effectively. The governing body has played a significant role in the drive to secure improvement. Governors visit school on a regular basis and have a clear idea about the quality of teaching. They understand the purpose of performance management but need to ensure that all teachers are set individual targets for improvement.

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	121510
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	409635

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Wadsworth
Headteacher	Christine Gabbott
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2011
Telephone number	01845 567339
Fax number	01845 567339
Email address	headteacher@pickhill.n-yorks.sch.uk

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