

Sitlington Netherton Junior and Infant School

Netherton Lane, Netherton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF4 4HQ

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils' progress between Years 3 to 6 is not good enough, although they continue to achieve close to the national average by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Over time, there has been a lack of consistency in the practice of teachers, and recently a lot of staffing turbulence. These factors have contributed to falling attainment over the last three years.
- It has been difficult to sustain the necessary pace of change required for the school to progress because of the time being given to newly qualified teachers.
- The acting headteacher has been under considerable pressure in taking over leadership while still maintaining some of her previous professional responsibilities.
- There are too few staff able to carry out the roles of subject leader.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has raised morale among staff and has quickly started to resolve the areas that were correctly identified as needing to be improved.
- Staff, governors and the local authority are strongly committed to restoring this to being a good school.
- Pupils make an excellent start from Reception up to the end of Year 2, where standards are above average.
- Teaching observed during the inspection was good and some was outstanding, so this process of improvement is well underway.
- Pupils, staff and parents all agree that the school is a safe and extremely happy place to learn, where behaviour is good.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection a total of 14 lessons were observed, taught by eight teachers.
- Pupils were heard reading and samples of work produced by each class were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, teachers, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 35 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. The views of staff were gained from discussions and from their questionnaire responses.
- A range of documents were looked at including information on pupils' progress, planning for teaching and learning, the school's current development planning and a range of policies and procedures, including those for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is around the average size for a primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is well-below average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around average.
- The proportion of pupils known to qualify for free school meals and to attract the pupil premium (additional government funding) is well-below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions from minority ethnic communities or speak English as an additional language are well-below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which represent the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since October, the school has had an acting headteacher, formerly the deputy headteacher, during the continued absence of the substantive headteacher.
- At present, pupils in Years 3 to 5 are taught by newly qualified teachers and Year 6 by an experienced supply teacher. The school currently has two teachers absent from school on maternity leave.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all teachers mark and assess work in the same way
 - allowing time for pupils to undertake corrections or to improve their work after it has been marked
 - using the most effective and skilled staff to model their best practice for other staff to see
 - developing partnerships with other schools in order to strengthen confidence in understanding the levels at which pupils are working and giving opportunities for professional dialogue.
- Raise the achievement of pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, through:
 - making sure that work is set that meets the whole ability range of pupils in all lessons, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that all teachers use an agreed and effective method for setting demanding targets for their pupils and for measuring when they have achieved these targets
 - ensuring that all teachers are fully confident in using the information on the progress of their pupils to ensure that all are constantly challenged, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who attract the pupil premium
 - seeking to ensure that the percentage of boys reaching expected standards matches that of the girls.
- Support the acting headteacher in developing her role by:
 - ensuring she has professional advice and mentoring in developing her senior leadership skills
 - providing support to enable her to delegate some of the responsibilities, especially those previously undertaken in her role as the deputy headteacher, including providing more guidance for newly qualified staff
 - developing the roles of subject leaders
 - ensuring that all statutory responsibilities, such as those to have a website, are met and that all policies have been reviewed and updated where necessary.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make strong progress and enter Year 1 at levels above those found generally. They are very well prepared for the start of more formal education.
- Progress and achievement continues steadily through Years 1 and 2 with an above-average proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standards in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The reason why achievement requires improvement is that progress is not maintained in Years 3 to 6. Attainment has declined in English and mathematics over the last three years and the proportions reaching expected levels in these subjects are now close to those found nationally. The performance of boys, in particular, has been weak and progress in mathematics lags behind that in English. Few pupils by the end of Year 6 have sustained the progress that could be expected from their performance at the end of Year 2. This is also true for the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at school action and school action plus. That said, current data shows a stronger picture for the present Year 6 pupils, with secure predictions for an increase in standards to be at least in line with those expected nationally.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make better progress allowing this group to narrow the attainment gap with other pupils.
- There is no evidence that pupils from minority ethnic groups or those very few who speak English as an additional language are in anyway disadvantaged in the progress they make compared to other pupils.
- Progress and achievement is not always maximised because teachers do not always make full use of the information on individual pupil's ability to challenge every one of them to do their best.
- There is no commonly agreed way to set achievement targets and assess pupils' progress towards them, hence teachers lack guidance and some practice is better than others. Teachers, particularly those working with older pupils, lack the confidence and experience in using information they have on their pupils, including those pupils with a range of additional needs, in order to maximise their progress.
- Additional funding from the pupil premium has been invested in computer technology. Progress in the programs acquired will be measured over the longer term. However, early evidence from the school's now more rigorous monitoring systems suggests pupils who are eligible for free school meals are making improved progress particularly in writing and their broadly average attainment is starting to rise.
- Many pupils enjoy reading regularly at school and at home. This is supported by teaching of phonics (understanding letters and the sounds they make) from the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they start the national curriculum, many pupils are ready to become confident readers, which supports their learning across the whole curriculum.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Analysis of the effectiveness of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is complicated by the fact that currently the teachers of these classes are all newly qualified or a supply teacher. This also limits the numbers of teachers who are able to take on subject leadership roles across the school.
- However, teaching throughout the school is currently good, some is outstanding. The underlying reasons for the decline in the standards of the older pupils lie elsewhere.
- Most particularly, looking at pupils' books it is clear that over time there has been a lack of consistency in marking and assessment. Different teachers have had different expectations. It is also generally true that while teachers provide pupils with helpful ideas for improvement, no

time has been given for completing, correcting or improving work.

- Within the school there is a range of teaching expertise. While currently limited, opportunities are growing to observe colleague's best practice and benefit from their expertise with a view to making all teaching as good as the best.
- Classrooms are positive learning environments, and around the school colourful displays reflect pupils' achievements. The strong visual impact reflects the fact that the school has the Artsmark Gold award. Sometimes the quality of mathematics display is not as effective, reflecting the fact that progress and achievement in mathematics lags behind that in English.
- In the best lessons, teachers use questioning very effectively to check understanding and to get pupils to express thoughts and ideas. When it is clear that something has not been understood, teachers were observed going back to explain again until pupils were confident.
- Throughout the school there are good working relationships between teachers and their assistants. This includes providing effective support to pupils who are receiving additional help in the form of booster programmes or other individual and small-group help. This helps disabled pupils, those with special educational needs or those benefiting from the pupil premium to make progress in line with their classmates, or in the case of pupils with statements of special educational needs to show improvement at a faster rate from their starting points, so narrowing the gap in their attainment.
- One of the school's successful partnerships has been started by Early Years Foundation Stage staff, promoting professional dialogue and a forum for support and development. The school looks to further develop and strengthen partnerships with other schools to increase chances for less experienced staff to link with more experienced colleagues, improving their confidence in assessing pupils work for example.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, staff and parents all agree that behaviour is a strength of the school and that pupils are very happy. This supports effective learning and little time is lost to low-level disruption in lessons.
- Pupils become confident and mature in their relationships for their ages and they are enthusiastic learners, creating a positive atmosphere throughout the school. They get on very well together so there is an absence of discrimination of any kind.
- While pupils are aware that bullying can take many forms, and are aware of the dangers of cyber-bullying, they insist that it is not a problem in school because everyone gets on so well together. They say that if an incident does occur it is dealt with quickly and firmly by teachers.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and the arrangements for safeguarding at school, including staff training in child protection issues, are fully up to date.
- Over the last year or so, attendance has improved significantly as a result of hard work by the school. It is now just above the national average. However, a small number of persistent absentees remain. The acting headteacher is working with the education welfare officer to seek solutions to this issue. This prevents behaviour and safety being outstanding overall.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher is providing effective leadership. She communicates high expectations and has the full support of staff and governors. Morale is high, as is the belief that the recent decline in standards at the top of the school is being addressed with vigour. An indicator that things are going in the right direction is shown by the latest data on pupils' progress, which puts them firmly on track for improved outcomes for Year 6 pupils at the end of this year. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs doing, and the priorities for improvement which the school are already working on are the correct ones.

- However, the acting headteacher is under professional pressure and, has so far, not been able to benefit from having an experienced headteacher as a mentor, an acting deputy to help in managing the school, or having enough experienced teachers to cover all subject leadership roles across the curriculum. Consequently, it has been difficult to take the school forward while sustaining support for the high proportion of newly qualified teachers.
 - The local authority remains very supportive. It has, for example, organised a detailed review of the school's position, undertaken joint lesson observations with the acting headteacher and completed a review of the financial situation.
 - The school does not yet meet all its legal responsibilities, such as the publication of information about the school on a website, or undertaking regular reviews of key policies and procedures. The completion of these tasks is a current school priority, with imminent deadlines for completion.
 - The acting headteacher has revised and improved the process for measuring teachers' effectiveness. It is fully in line with the new Teachers' Standards and supports their professional development while addressing identified priorities for school development. There are higher expectations of more experienced teachers, while all teachers appreciate they are accountable for pupils' progress and that there is a link between this and salary progression.
 - The topic-based curriculum is carefully mapped to ensure a good balance between subjects. A particular strength is the promotion of understanding of different cultures and beliefs, demonstrated in effective links with a school in China. This helps promote positive relationships and tackle discrimination. The school has recently been awarded International School status.
 - Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The arts are widely fostered and pupils respond positively towards opportunities to sing or perform, the school choir having won regional competitions.
 - Links with parents are good, although the percentage expressing concerns, particularly in the area of the effectiveness of leadership and management, are greater than that generally found when a school is inspected. This report addresses some of those concerns by confirming that the school has turned a corner and that standards are now rising.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The recent election of a new Chair of the Governing Body, who has given effective support to the acting headteacher, and the filling of vacant governor posts, reflect the current positive nature of governance. Governors are aware of the situation regarding the declining attainment among the older pupils and are wholeheartedly supporting the acting headteacher in addressing it. A range of expertise enables the governing body to challenge and support appropriately, as seen in the relationship between governors and individual year groups. Governors fully appreciate their responsibilities for ensuring standards rise and they have not been afraid of taking difficult decisions in the past. Specialist governors, such as those for safeguarding, have received appropriate training. All legal responsibilities, including those to keep an effective check on the quality of teaching, are met. This includes the performance management of the acting headteacher. They monitor and are aware of the financial situation of the school, which is sound. Governors participate fully in training opportunities, especially those pertinent to their specific responsibilities.
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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	108158
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	403056

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Woodhouse
Headteacher	Georgina Haley
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
Telephone number	01924 302885
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