

Sitlington Middlestown Junior and Infant School

Cross Road, Middlestown, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF4 4QE

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

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

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is not consistently good, as the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Teachers do not always set work which is suitably challenging and exciting for all pupils from the start of the lesson.
- Teachers do not make regular use of examples of high quality work for pupils to follow, for example, in handwriting.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent learning or to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in rigorously checking and analysing the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.
- The governing body is not well enough informed to hold leaders fully to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is a positive improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils' reading skills are well established by Year 2.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are friendly, polite and considerate.
- Activities which involve pupils in the local and wider community make a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons including seven joint observations with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff including senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to several parents and analysed the school's own consultations with them.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' current and previous progress, the school development plan, performance management documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Hicks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is of average size compared to other primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding allocated to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority, and the children of forces families.
- The proportion of pupils identified at school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils identified at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Over one third of teachers are new to the school since the previous inspection, including members of the senior leadership team. The school currently has an acting deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least consistently good in order to accelerate rates of pupils' progress by:
 - making certain that pupils undertake exciting work which challenges all groups of pupils from the start of the lessons
 - consistently setting good examples for pupils to follow, particularly in handwriting, and regularly using pupils' work of a high standard to show others what can be achieved
 - improving pupils' independent learning, literacy and numeracy skills through making links between different subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that subject leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility and promptly act upon any issues raised.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and the standards they reach by Year 6, reflected in national tests and assessments, declined in 2011 after an initial rise following the last inspection. This was largely due to significant staffing difficulties over a sustained period of time, which particularly affected pupils in Years 5 and 6. Despite appropriate action by the headteacher and local authority and some improvement to pupils' progress, standards at the end of Year 6 were still below average in 2012.
- Pupils' current work and progress show much better achievement as a result of stable staffing and increasingly robust procedures to improve the quality of teaching and learning. All groups of pupils currently make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and increasing proportions are achieving better than this. Standards are average in Year 6. However, not enough pupils are making good progress to ensure they all fulfil their potential.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent. They generally make a sound start because of the attention given to basic skills, such as spelling and grammatical structure, in literacy lessons. However, pupils do not independently write at length regularly enough to extend these skills fully, especially in subjects other than English. Nor are they always encouraged to pay close enough attention to the accuracy of their spelling and handwriting and follow high quality examples. Consequently, their overall progress is not as good as it could be.
- A strong focus on developing pupils' ability to memorise mathematical facts and use them in calculations is improving pupils' progress in mathematics. However, their ability to use the skills independently through challenging investigations and links with other subjects, is not strong. This particularly, although not exclusively, inhibits the progress of the most-able.
- Pupils' progress in reading is stronger than in other subjects and more consistently good. Young readers have a clear understanding of how letters blend together to make new sounds and they recognise a good range of key words. Older pupils largely read with expression and with enjoyment.
- The results of the national assessments and tests for the very small number of pupils receiving pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2012 were about one year below average in English and mathematics. This contrasts sharply with such pupils' current standards seen in school, which are close to levels typically expected for their age, with the gap narrowing between their achievement and that of others.
- This is because their progress is very closely tracked and additional support is provided which boosts their learning of basic skills. Sometimes they make better progress overall than their peers. This also applies to pupils who have special educational needs, who respond well to the caring and supportive ethos through the school.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding which are generally typical for their age. They make a good start in their early reading, writing and number skills. They learn to persist with tasks for long periods and take a pride in their work. There is a trend of rising standards, which are now above average when pupils start Year 1.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers are too often cautious and give too much explanation before pupils start their own work. Sometimes, pupils have to do work which is too easy for their ability before going on to something which really challenges them. As a result, the more-able pupils do not find the work exciting enough. Occasionally, the less-able are confused or grow restless through having to listen for too long.
- Teachers do not make enough use of links between subjects to help pupils deepen their learning and practise their skills. As a result, some English and mathematical tasks are not relevant and exciting enough to fire pupils' passion for learning. The best progress occurs when, for example,

pupils are writing letters based on their studies of Tudor times or using data from science experiments to produce graphs and charts which extend their mathematical investigation skills.

- Teachers do not always model the highest standards of handwriting and other aspects of presentation for their pupils. They do not make enough use of pupils' own work to set examples for others to follow and show what is achievable.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are well planned to build children's enthusiasm and interest in learning through attractively resourced activities that they select for themselves. Early reading, writing and number skills are introduced systematically through exciting games such as 'The dinner plate' game to develop children's understanding of division.
- Throughout the school, teachers teach reading, writing and number skills systematically. There are well-planned extra learning programmes which are closely matched to pupils' needs. This particularly supports the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the school receives pupil-premium funding.
- The best teaching, throughout the school, engages pupils from the start in contributing to and participating in lively and motivating activities. In these lessons, teachers set a brisk pace and involve pupils in both giving their views on how well they understand their work and using this as a springboard to help them move on to increasingly challenging work.
- An increasingly strong feature of teaching is the good quality of marking and feedback to pupils. In particular, the use of 'polish pens' that pupils use to highlight their own errors and show they have followed the teachers' guidance.
- In the best lessons, teachers question pupils well to deepen their understanding and help them retain facts and information.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well, especially for specific pupils such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well in classrooms and around school. They are friendly and outgoing because they feel safe and well cared for. Older pupils work and play well with younger ones and take good care of them, especially in the playground.
- The pupils are punctual and attendance is at least average.
- Pupils take on responsibilities and make a contribution to a safe environment through their roles on the school council and as house captains. They are often involved in charitable work and fundraising activities, and are proud of this.
- The school works effectively with other professionals to support pupils with emotional and social difficulties and to help them manage their own behaviour. Consequently, poor behaviour is rare.
- Pupils' understanding of different types of bullying is good and they feel that there is very little of this. They have a particularly good understanding of the potential dangers of the internet through their work on safe use of computers. They are proud that pupils all work well together without fear of harassment or prejudice.
- Pupils are involved in several activities which promote their sense of well-being and awareness of others. For example, they took a significant part in a project to improve local road safety. Their global awareness is developed well through work on Fair Trade and their roles as Eco-Warriors.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has provided calm and steady leadership since her appointment just before the last inspection but significant staffing difficulties, particularly at senior level, have limited the impact of initial improvements to teaching and learning, and slowed the pace of development.
- These issues have now been resolved and the school has received good support from the local authority, especially over the last year, which has helped put it back on track. Rigorous action to

address weaknesses in the quality of teaching are increasingly having a positive impact and the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are well placed to continue this trend. There is a robust plan in place to improve the school further, based on accurate measures of pupils' success.

- Currently, however, subject leaders are not involved enough in checking the quality of teaching and all aspects of pupils' learning in their subjects to ensure the best rates of progress are made.
- Overall, staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make. The headteacher ensures that they fulfil appropriately stringent criteria before they can achieve the next salary level.
- The school takes good care of its pupils. The school tackles any issues of discrimination well and this contributes to the harmony in the community. It works well with parents who have largely positive views of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - While the governing body is enthusiastic and eager to improve the school, its members are not well enough informed to hold leaders fully to account. They rely too heavily on information and data on pupils' progress and teachers' performance given by the headteacher. They have not sufficiently rigorous procedures to gather first-hand information and check its accuracy. They are increasingly involved in training towards this through support from the local authority. They ensure safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and that budgeting procedures comply with best practice.

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	108157
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	400967

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Warren Beaumont
Headteacher	Julie Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2009
Telephone number	01924 302820
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Email address	headteacher@middlestown.wakefield.sch.uk

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