

# Acomb Primary School

West Bank, Acomb, York, North Yorkshire, YO24 4ES

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 requires improvement, especially in mathematics. This is because, over recent years, it has been too slow and some pupils have fallen behind.
- Teaching requires improvement. The rate of learning in lessons is sometimes too slow and some weaknesses, such as giving pupils work which is too easy, hold pupils back.
- Marking and the targets that teachers set for pupils are not used consistently to help pupils make the best possible progress.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Priorities on plans for the school's future development lack rigorous deadlines to secure their rapid achievement.
- Leaders' regular checks of lessons and pupils' work do not focus sharply enough on how well pupils learn.
- Subject leaders and teachers are not yet fully accountable for the achievement of pupils.
- The range and variety of learning opportunities are not yet good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and like their school.
- There are good relationships at all levels.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well.
- Senior leaders are committed to improving the school and have introduced effective systems to improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Teamwork is strong.
- Some outstanding teaching accelerates pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by 11 teachers and a teaching assistant. Four of these lessons were joint observations carried out with the headteacher.
- They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and talked to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to three pupils in Year 6 and three pupils in Year 3 read.
- Inspectors also studied a range of documents including: the school's own evaluation documents; plans for the school's future development; a recent local authority evaluation and an independent review of the school; notes from leaders' observation of lessons; safeguarding policies and records; the school's analysis of data on pupils' progress; attendance information; and pupils' work in all classes, especially focusing on the Reception Year and Years 2, 4 and 6.
- The 82 responses on the online questionnaire, Parent View, were analysed. Inspectors also spoke with a small number of parents during the inspection, taking account of their views.

## Inspection team

Derek Pattinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Plumridge

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils moving into or out of the school other than at the normal times is well below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are well below what is typical nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at 'school action', 'school action plus' or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There have been changes in staff since the previous inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2014, ensure that all teaching is at least good with more that is outstanding in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment in English, and especially mathematics, further by:
  - checking that activities, especially for more-able pupils, are always challenging
  - injecting greater pace into some lessons and reducing the amount of 'teacher talk' so that pupils have as much time as possible to work independently
  - ensuring that pupils are always clear about what they must learn and how well they are doing in order to help them measure the progress they are making
  - ensuring that pupils always have opportunities to share what they have learnt, and what they are unsure about, to help teachers plan carefully what they need to learn next
  - checking that marking, especially in mathematics where it is weakest, always gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve and take the steps needed to reach their targets.
- Build on the good work already started to strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management in order to increase the pace of school improvement by:
  - making subject leaders and teachers fully accountable for pupils' standards and progress and the presentation of pupils' work
  - setting clear deadlines in planning for improvement and checking rigorously their impact on raising pupils' standards
  - focusing more closely on how well pupils learn when checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work.
- Improve the curriculum further by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to solve problems, develop literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects and undertake practical tasks
  - developing links with the wider world and between subjects to bring learning alive and deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The skills and abilities that children have when they start their education vary from year to year. They are usually at levels which are typical for their age but are sometimes lower. They make at least expected progress as they move through their Reception Year, with some making good progress.
- In the most recent national check on children's ability to link letters to the sounds they make (phonics), which is carried out at the end of Year 1, pupils' performed well above what is typical.
- Pupils' progress overall as they move through Years 1 to 6 is mostly as expected in English and mathematics, including for those receiving the pupil premium, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, until recently the progress of many has been less than expected in lower Key Stage 2 in English and, especially, mathematics, with progress slowing in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 too.
- Nevertheless, a detailed study of pupils' books shows progress to be accelerating in mathematics, and especially in English, in both key stages as a result of improved teaching, more rigorous data analysis, good support from the local authority and targeted help for pupils who need it most. As a result, and although at an early stage, an improving trend is evident this academic year.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average in 2012. Standards this year are likely to be higher, although the current Year 6 performed at above-average levels at the end of Key Stage 1, indicating that progress for this group, although accelerating, is average overall.
- In English pupils increasingly write for a range of purposes, such as book reviews, diaries and narratives, and some are starting to make good progress. They make expected progress in reading as they learn to read increasingly accurately and fluently for pleasure, information and enjoyment.
- The performance of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding was close to their national counterparts in English in 2012, although they did less well in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving. All teachers successfully establish good working relationships with their pupils. As a result, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, often with the skilled use of encouragement and praise.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support less able pupils and those with special educational needs, helping them make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and resources are often used well to motivate pupils and boost learning. For example, when Year 2 pupils wrote about what it might have been like to have been a servant in Victorian times, their written work benefitted from good resources and information.
- Teaching is best where the pace is brisk, pupils know what they have to learn, are given clear success criteria matched to their abilities to help them move forward and their understanding is regularly checked as the lesson proceeds. Some of these positive features were seen in an outstanding Year 3 mathematics lesson in which pupils plotted coordinates on a grid.
- Teachers' marking in English gives praise where it is due and provides pointers on how pupils can improve their work, such as through reference to their targets or the lesson's learning focus in order to help them make faster progress. However, this is much less evident in mathematics.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they have to learn, how to succeed or how well they are doing, which reduces their ability to take their own initiative in moving their learning forward.
- Some teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are not high enough.
- In mathematics pupils, often the more able, spend too much time on work they already

understand rather than increasing their knowledge and understanding. Sometimes teachers spend too long on explanations. This restricts the time for independent work and, as a result, progress slows.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour is good. This is confirmed by the school's records, by observations and by discussions with pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and occasionally outstanding, such as in the Reception class when children are learning to link letters with the sounds they make. However, occasional restlessness occurs when lesson introductions are too long.
- Behaviour is, nevertheless, almost always managed well. Pupils say they like the reward system involving, for example, the regular use of merits, and understand why sanctions are applied. Examples of inappropriate behaviour occasionally occur but are not allowed to impinge on pupils' learning.
- Most parents and pupils are unreservedly positive about behaviour. Pupils describe the school as a place where 'everybody gets along well' and pupils work and play happily together. They know about different forms of bullying, say that it is very rare and always 'dealt with', and that there is no racism.
- Pupils move around the building sensibly even when not under direct supervision and where corridors narrow, restricting movement. Their conduct around the school is good. For example, pupils enter the hall for assemblies quietly, listen respectfully and answer politely.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and all adults in school help them learn. This helps to explain why almost all pupils are punctual. Attendance is broadly average, although leaders could do more to promote it.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and understand the importance of safe practices. For example, they comment that visitors must wear a badge when in school.
- Assemblies and class discussions reinforce the importance of working together and contribute well to spiritual, moral and social development, which is given strong emphasis. For example, pupils know about the six key words which underpin the school's aims. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- The headteacher provides an effective steer for the school's work. He has the support of all colleagues and the regular and effective support and guidance of the local authority. The pace of school improvement has quickened. All are committed to continued improvement and professional development is given much emphasis. For example, it has helped improve the quality of teaching. However, teachers are not yet fully accountable for attainment and progress because they do not routinely check pupils' work. As a result, performance management arrangements, while developing, are not yet having a strong enough impact on increasing pupils' performance.
- Priorities for development focus on issues to raise standards and accelerate progress. However, timescales to secure their rapid achievement are not always clear and their impact on pupils' academic development is not always checked, which slows the drive for further school improvement. Nevertheless, leaders know their school and have an accurate view of its performance.
- Subject leaders increasingly know what works well and what needs doing but are at different stages in developing their subjects. They are not yet fully accountable to the senior leaders for pupils' attainment and progress because they are not yet routinely involved in observing lessons and checking pupils' books.

- Checking on test results and the school's own assessment information help leaders identify how well pupils are doing and enable them to give support for those who are falling behind. The school's challenging targets for improvement are based on an increasing range of appropriate evidence. Nevertheless, their impact to accelerate progress and drive up standards is in its early stages.
  - Senior leaders regularly check on teaching. Indeed, these checks are helping to improve its quality. However, checks do not focus enough on how well pupils of different abilities learn.
  - Leaders are working hard to improve the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, in which pupils were required to design a game where one person had more chance of winning than their opponent, they were inspired by the task and made excellent progress. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems, develop literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects and undertake practical tasks. Links with the wider world and between subjects to bring learning alive and deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity are not yet given enough emphasis.
  - Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. For example, arrangements for site safety are secure.
  - Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. However, a very small number do not believe the school is well led and managed or that the school responds well to concerns raised.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is steadily increasing its involvement in the work of the school, such as by challenging leaders on pupils' performance and progress. As a result, it is improving its ability to hold the school to account and lead its direction. Governors have increasing involvement in the consideration of the quality of teachers' work but are not yet as involved as they could be in monitoring their performance. However, they ensure that pupil premium funding is used to good effect.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121271
<b>Local authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	406012

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Heppell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lee Haynes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01904 798453
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