

Amotherby Community Primary School

Meadowfield, Amotherby, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 6TG

Inspection dates 16–17 April 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

- By the end of Year 6, many pupils have not reached the high standard they should achieve in writing. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress fell to below average in 2012.
- While pupils' performance in mathematics has improved from its low point in 2011, given pupils' starting points, the proportion making expected progress in 2012 was not high enough. The proportion making more than expected progress is also not high enough.
- There is not enough consistently good teaching to tackle pupils' underperformance in writing and mathematics. In some lessons, expectations are too low, slowing learning and progress. There is some lack of expertise in teaching mathematics.
- While leaders are getting to grips with tackling writing and mathematics, initiatives are at an early stage. Progress has been made on improving teaching, but there is not enough urgency in dealing with the remaining weaknesses in some teaching.
- Governors are not holding the school robustly to account for pupils' performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvements in provision for reading since 2010 have led to outstanding achievement in 2012.
- Children in the Reception Year and pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good start to learning literacy and numeracy skills and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effectively supported in lessons and make good progress as a result.
- Pupils feel safe and they behave well. Attendance is above average.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. There are many activities to challenge pupils and help them enjoy learning. Music and art are particular strengths.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons which involved seven of the school’s eight teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff and pupils. Meetings took place with representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe, the record of the school’s checks on how well it is doing, external reviews of the school’s work and data on pupils’ attainment and progress. Inspectors also examined a sample of pupils’ writing and mathematics in their workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 19 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school’s own survey of parents’ views and the 15 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased over the last two years.
- The very large majority of pupils is White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from armed services families, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action or school action plus is well below average. Currently, there are no pupils at the school with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2010 and this was followed by the appointment of a deputy headteacher and three teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be consistently good or better and hence raise pupils' achievement rapidly in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers in Key Stage 2 set high expectations of pupils to take care in presenting their writing neatly, legibly, using the correct spelling and punctuation
 - ensuring from the outset at Key Stage 2 that pupils are taught the appropriate breadth of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding
 - making sure teachers use thorough assessments in planning the teaching of mathematics and during the course of lessons, set challenging work for each pupil
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics
 - improving the opportunities for pupils to take greater charge of their own learning and to develop initiative as individuals and groups in solving problems.
- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, and the pace of school improvement by:
 - providing the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and others with leadership roles, the time to check, assess and develop the work in their areas of responsibility
 - applying greater rigour to checking the quality of teaching so that there is consistency between it, pupils' performance and the standard of work in their exercise books.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils are not achieving as highly as they ought to by the end of Year 6 given their above average starting points. In 2012, the proportion of pupils attaining the average standard in writing was in line with that seen nationally. However, the proportion reaching the higher level in writing was below the national average, and this was not a good reflection of the capabilities of a significant number of pupils. While a higher than average proportion of pupils made the expected progress in writing, those making more than expected progress was well below average. Results in writing in 2011 were stronger but still not representative of what pupils should achieve.
- Children in the Reception Year and pupils in Key Stage 1 make a good start to writing and firmly secure the skills to form recognisable letters, link letters and sounds and to legibly writing down their observations, thoughts and ideas. The good progress seen at this stage is not consistently maintained in Key Stage 2. Despite the fact that Key Stage 2 pupils have many opportunities to write in English and in other subjects, mistakes in spelling and punctuation are common and not tackled robustly at an early stage and pupils' writing is often untidy.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been broadly average in the past two years. However, in 2012 more pupils reached a higher level than did in 2011. This was the result of intensive teaching in Years 5 and 6, which helped overcome the disappointing results in 2011. While the proportions of pupils making expected progress and more than expected progress were above that seen nationally, higher proportions are capable of this in mathematics. The limited opportunities in other subjects for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and skills restrict the rate at which pupils make progress.
- The pace of progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. At the start of Key Stage 2, the narrow focus on number, mostly on addition and subtraction, means pupils are not acquiring the range of mathematical knowledge and skills they need until they reach Years 5 and 6. Extra classes to enable pupils to learn and revise key knowledge, skills and understanding are a vital addition. Until then, pupils have too few opportunities to learn and make progress in multiplication and division, shape, space and measurement, data-handling and problem solving. This is despite the fact pupils start to make good progress in these areas in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is outstanding. Their progress in reading throughout the school is consistently very strong. This is the result of leaders' success in improving the teaching of reading, in particular, pupils very effectively learning to link letters and sounds from the Reception Year onwards. Investment in reading schemes and books has boosted pupils' interest and enjoyment. The very large majority of pupils read fluently and confidently by the end of Year 6, becoming skilled in analysing, evaluating texts and finding information. In 2012, all Year 6 pupils had made the progress expected in reading and a well-above average proportion made more than expected progress.
- The school's positive commitment to ensuring every pupil has equality of opportunity to achieve means there is no significant variation in the attainment of different groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap in the performance of the very few pupils supported through the pupil premium, those known to be eligible for free school meals in particular, and the rest of the pupils in the school, is negligible. Currently, these pupils make expected progress and attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics. The close checks kept on the very few pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, and the consistent support provided in every lesson, ensure they make good progress from their starting points. Most achieve broadly average standards in reading and mathematics, although fewer do so in writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not good because it is too varied in quality, ranging between outstanding and some

requiring improvement. Changes in staffing have brought strengths to teaching but, as a whole, teachers are not yet completely settled as a team to teaching all subjects effectively. This means that over time, pupils' progress is inconsistent in writing and mathematics.

- High expectations are not a common feature of all lessons and in a few, this means a good standard of work is not demanded of pupils. This is exemplified by a lack of a robust response in some Key Stage 2 classes to pupils' untidy writing, misspelling and poor punctuation.
- Limited expertise in the teaching of mathematics means that occasionally pupils are not challenged sufficiently, nor learning a breadth of mathematical knowledge and skills. In a few lessons, assessment data are not being used effectively so that pupils, when they are ready, move quickly onto more difficult work. For example, there was no plan for one pupil who could securely pick out hundreds, tens and units in a three-digit number to move onto larger numbers. Consequently, this pupil's progress stalled. While there is good practice in using marking to guide pupils how to improve their work, this is not consistent across the school and some marking is not helpful in this respect.
- There are too few good opportunities for pupils to take charge of their own learning and assess their progress. The fact that lessons are too often led by the teacher where pupils follow their instructions and answer their questions, means pupils' initiative and their skills to manage alone or to work together on solving problems are not always used effectively.
- There is good and outstanding teaching of English and mathematics. Where this occurs in Key Stage 2, it helps to close the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills where teaching has been less effective. This has ensured pupils' results in writing and mathematics are at least comparable with the national averages. These lessons are planned meticulously and assessment is used effectively to promote learning.
- In reading, the teacher's sharply focused questions helped Year 5 pupils understand how an author's use of language conveyed layers of meaning. Other pupils in the class worked independently and productively on extracting information from reference books or news reports. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, misconceptions about multiplication were tackled effectively enabling pupils to solve problems confidently and correctly. The pace of learning was brisk and pupils relished the challenge.
- Teaching assistants make a consistently good contribution to learning across the school. They know pupils well and their expertise in supporting learning is developed effectively. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive close attention and well-focused support. Consequently, they make good progress from their starting points.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and value all the learning opportunities and experiences it provides. Attendance is above average and attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate strong personal qualities which equip them with a positive outlook on the world, respect and regard for others whatever differences there may be. Pupils possess a strong sense of fairness and understanding of right and wrong.
- The school does not take best advantage of pupils' attitudes to school in order to increase further their independence, initiative and capacity for managing responsibility. Pupils do demonstrate these characteristics well, but not to an outstanding extent because they are not promoted vigorously. Pupils act responsibly and willingly take on roles in school where they can be helpful, such as supporting other pupils on the playground and serving on the school council.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They understand and adhere to the school's high expectations regarding their conduct. Pupils get on well with each other and incidents of bullying are rare. Any incidents are dealt with effectively by staff, particularly in constantly raising pupils' awareness of all forms of bullying. As a result, pupils feel safe in school.
- The very large majority of parents think behaviour in school is good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The checks made on the school's work by senior leaders and the local authority, the key areas for improvement, mainly the raising pupils' standards in writing and mathematics, are recognised. While sufficient steps have been taken to halt any further decline in outcomes in writing and mathematics, actions to raise standards are at an early stage. However, results in mathematics improved in 2012, although in writing improvement was less evident.
- Teachers' performance is managed systematically and the opportunities for professional development are increasing. Leaders are mindful of the need to develop some teachers' expertise in mathematics and this is planned.
- Regular checks made on the quality of teaching have enabled leaders to improve the quality of teaching and eliminate that which was inadequate. However, there is not a sufficiently sharp focus on tackling the few remaining weaknesses and making all teaching consistently good or better. Leaders are not relating with sufficient rigour their judgements about teaching, pupils' performance and the quality of work in their books, in order to assure there is consistency between the effectiveness of provision and pupils' outcomes. The lack of robust challenge to the school's assessment of the quality of teaching, the local authority's checks have not helped drive up the pace of improvement.
- Leadership and management responsibilities have been reorganised. Senior leaders and others with leadership responsibilities are developing their roles. Their impact is increasing but they are not fully fledged as an effective leadership and management team. Most subject leaders are just getting to grips with their roles, while the deputy headteacher, being committed to teaching Year 5, has limited time for leadership tasks.
- A culture of accountability is taking shape, staff are fully behind this and they have achieved some significant improvements, particularly in the provision and outcomes for pupils' reading. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Parents like the school because they see that their children benefit from the school's many positive qualities, in particular, its strong values, ethos and community spirit.
- While improvement is needed to make the provision for mathematics and writing as strong as in reading, the curriculum offers a breadth of good opportunities for pupils to enjoy learning through, for example, interesting geography topic work and visits to London. Music and art are strong features that are popular with pupils. These subjects in particular contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the school and work diligently to this end in meeting their statutory obligations and taking a lead in the further development of the school building to accommodate the increasing school roll. Various committees function efficiently enabling governors to exercise oversight of the school's work. However, governors have not developed an independent, critical view of the school's work and this reduces their capacity to challenge leaders. The governing body has not been trained to do this effectively or instructed in how to interpret data relating to pupils' performance. As a result, governors are unable to make rigorous checks on pupils' attainment and progress, to judge the impact of the use of pupil premium funding on accelerating pupils' progress, nor to challenge robustly where improvement is required.

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	121370
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	403458

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Dales
Headteacher	Sue Knowles
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2008
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