

Parson Cross Church of England Primary School

Halifax Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S6 1LB

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- At the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at least above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good and, often, very good progress because they are supported very effectively.
- Teaching overall is good with examples of outstanding practice throughout the school.
- Behaviour is good. Their good attendance reflects that pupils enjoy school. Pupils form trusting relationships with staff and so feel safe and happy at school.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, ensure that improvements are strongly focused on raising pupils' attainment and progress.
- Parents are very positive about the school and all that it does to help their children to achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While much of the teaching is good, not enough is outstanding to drive progress more rapidly and make achievement outstanding.
- Senior leaders do not check closely that all teachers use the assessment information they have about pupils' achievements to challenge pupils fully.
- Expectations are not always high enough, particular of the higher attaining pupils who, in some lessons could achieve more.
- Governors do not question senior leaders sufficiently as to the effectiveness of the actions they undertake to improve the school's performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' work and listened to a number of children read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, senior and middle managers and subject leaders, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the school's most recent parent survey. They took account of the views of a few parents spoken to during the inspection and 21 responses from staff that completed Ofsted's staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from pupil premium is spent. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Salt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Of those that are not, most speak English well.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is low.
- There have been a high number of staff changes since the last inspection, including at senior leadership level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Tackle the teaching that requires improvement and increase the amount of outstanding teaching so that the rate of pupils' progress and achievement increases, by ensuring that:
 - the best practice that exists in the school is used to promote high quality teaching throughout
 - teachers have higher expectations of all pupils but particularly the more-able
 - teachers use the assessment information the school gathers to match work to the needs of all pupils more effectively
 - teaching assistants are used to maximum effect during teachers' introductions in all lessons.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - taking effective action to deal with any teaching that requires improvement
 - implementing rigorous systems to check that teaching is always good or better in every class
 - making sure that the governing body checks more closely the effectiveness of the improvements senior leaders undertake to raise pupils' achievement even further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally typical for their age. With relatively small year groups, starting points can vary from year to year. Good teaching in a stimulating and well-organised environment helps children to make good progress. By the time children enter Year 1, they all attain at least average levels and a significant number have above average skills.
- Pupils' progress is good through Years 1 to 6, although sometimes more rapid at the end of the key stages where teaching is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Occasionally, the more-able pupils do not achieve as much as they could because they are not challenged sufficiently.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at least average and a significant proportion of pupils is working at above average levels. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and an increasing number of pupils exceed these levels.
- Throughout the school, reading is taught well. Letters and the sounds they make are taught very effectively in Reception and Key Stage 1, and reading skills are developed well as pupils progress through the school. Many pupils exceed the levels expected for their age and a significant proportion is working at well-above expected levels.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are also above average. Recent improvements in teaching, and an increased focus to extend pupils' writing, number and problem-solving skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, are enabling more pupils to achieve more. Pupils particularly enjoy topics such as 'Pirates' and 'Sheffield – Steel City' for example, where they apply a range of skills, including independent research so that they can learn more about what interests them.
- Effective support, particularly on a one-to-one level, ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well against their starting points. The few pupils who are new to learning English as an additional language make very good gains through this personalised support and so achieve well.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium (all of whom in this school are known to be eligible for free school meals), make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment is generally similar to that of pupils who are not eligible for free school meals in the school and of pupils in similar circumstances nationally. Their attainment in English and mathematics is no lower than it should be, because they and their families are supported very effectively. The gap between the achievements of these pupils compared with non-free school meals pupils in this school and similar pupils nationally has closed and most of these pupils are working at above the levels expected for their age.
- Overall, the school promotes equality of opportunity well. Other than in the occasional lesson, where a few of the higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, most pupils achieve well, and an increasing number are working towards well-above the levels expected by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall teaching is good; some is outstanding and occasional lessons require improvement.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' expectations of pupils are very high and lessons are interesting and lively. For example, in a Year 2 class, the teacher used excellent strategies to motivate pupils to read and write about pirates, ransom notes and treasure. Pupils were spellbound as they discussed the gruesome punishments the pirates might inflict if their demands were not met. While pupils recognised that pirates are not 'real', they enjoyed acting out the roles using 'pirate' voices and so made outstanding progress.
- Teachers engage pupils well through discussions that help pupils develop their thinking, and ask

probing questions to check that pupils understand their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 could not believe the 'howling clangers' their classmates had made when solving two- and three-step problems and enjoyed correcting these basic mistakes.

- Most teachers use information about pupils' ability and progress effectively in their planning. Occasionally, where teaching requires improvement, the information is not used well to provide suitable levels of challenge for all pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough. In such lessons, pupils of all abilities sit through quite lengthy, generalised presentations that are too easy for some. Consequently, a few pupils, particularly the more-able, do not achieve as much as they could.
- The one-to-one and small-group support provided by teaching assistants is effective in helping pupils most at risk of falling behind to achieve well. However, while teaching assistants are generally deployed well in most lessons to support teaching and learning, occasionally they have little to do during teachers' introductions, which are sometimes too difficult for lower-attaining pupils to understand fully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is mostly good and, sometimes, exemplary. Pupils enjoy learning and try hard. A few reported that, occasionally, the poor behaviour of one or two pupils spoils their learning.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and kind; they willingly help each other in lessons and around school. They show high regard for all staff and these positive relationships give pupils the confidence to ask for help if they need it. Pupils report that the school is a safe and happy place to be in.
- Pupils feel valued and well looked after at school. From their lessons and from visits, such as to the sports' stadium, pupils understand well how to stay fit and healthy and how to stay safe outside school. For example, they have a good understanding of the dangers that social network sites might pose, how to keep themselves safe and what to do if problems arise.
- The school is prompt in tackling any form of discriminatory behaviour. Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying, including name-calling and physical threats. They say that bullying at school is rare because staff sort any problems straight away.
- Opportunities to take responsibilities as school councillors, engaging in church and community events, and residential visits provide pupils with purposeful experiences that extend effectively, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Through working with an extensive range of visitors, pupils show respect for the different communities and lifestyles in the world beyond school. The school is aware that opportunities are missed to celebrate the increasing range of diverse cultures represented in the school.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. One pupil said that she likes being at school because 'teachers tempt me to learn'. Staff monitor the poor attendance of one or two pupils closely.
- Parents who contributed their views during the inspection were very positive about the school and pupils' behaviour.
- Staff are mostly very positive about pupils' behaviour and their eagerness to learn. Pupils enjoy many events, including visits that extend their experiences of the wider world.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is ambitious for its pupils and provides a safe, happy environment where learning is interesting and fun.
- The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and promotes strong teamwork. The school has improved teaching significantly since the previous inspection and, consequently, pupils' achievement is rising. Current pupil progress data show that pupils are making good progress and a number are working at well-above the levels expected for their age.
- The school improvement plan is appropriately focussed on raising standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, and ensures that these are taught effectively. Teachers have good opportunities to improve their skills but not enough of the teaching is yet of sufficiently high quality to raise achievement to outstanding.
- While much of the teaching is good, some requires improvement. Senior leaders monitor

teachers' performance regularly and effectively identify where improvements need to be made. However, they do not always check closely enough that all pupils are challenged appropriately and that all teachers make full use of the assessments of pupils' achievement to plan their teaching accurately.

- Robust procedures that are linked to salary progression are in place to improve teachers' performance. Where teaching requires improvement leaders organise appropriate individual support. While teamwork is generally good, the school is not using the outstanding teaching in the school to influence improvement even more rapidly.
- Pupils' progress is reviewed termly and leaders organise promptly the support pupils need to achieve well. The progress of pupils most at risk of falling behind is reviewed each half term and support, including the guidance from the learning mentor, ensures that these pupils make good, and often very good, progress.
- The curriculum links subjects together well through topics that incorporate the interests of boys and girls effectively so that learning is generally lively and engaging. For example, in a lesson in the Reception class, children counted to 90 excitedly and accurately because this was a new challenge that made them think about their previous learning. The competitive element urged them to want to go on to 100 but they ran out of time.
- Many enrichment activities extend pupils' learning beyond school and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked enthusiastically about meeting Olympic champions and how these athletes inspired them. Lively displays about Sheffield's history and geography, and pupils' work on endangered species following a visit to a local zoo, bring learning alive and enrich pupils' understanding of the world.
- The school involves parents well by encouraging them to support their children's learning through, for example, projects that pupils want to explore in their own time.
- While the local authority provides the school with valuable staff training, its involvement in the school otherwise is light touch.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and its community. They undertake the relevant training, for example, to ensure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements. They check that policies are reviewed regularly and that finances are managed well. They ensure that the pupil-premium funding is used to support the pupils for whom it is intended and they know its impact. The governing body has effective arrangements to ensure that pay awards are linked to teachers' performance and that the procedures to measure teachers' performance are thorough. Governors understand well the data regarding the school's performance and pupils' progress but they are not checking sufficiently closely the effectiveness of the actions the school undertakes to secure higher achievement for all pupils.

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	107107
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	400885

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trish Atkins
Headteacher	Helen Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2009
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