

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Lane, Elwick, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS27 3EG

Inspection dates 20–21 June 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

- Teaching is inconsistent across the school and work is not always hard enough for all pupils or engaging to meet their needs and interests.
- Too few pupils currently in school make good progress.
- Teachers do not offer pupils enough time to talk and plan together to help them to become independent learners.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to improve the presentation of their writing or to apply methods taught in mathematics to the solution of real-life problems. The application of the skills learnt across a range of subjects is underdeveloped.
- Middle leaders do not yet have the skills needed to plan, monitor or evaluate the impact of actions aimed at improving the quality of teaching.
- School data is not used well enough to plan work which is challenging for pupils of differing ability.
- Teachers do not consistently make it clear to pupils how to improve their work or give them time to act upon advice.
- Procedures for performance management are not yet fully effective in driving improvement in the quality of teaching or in ensuring pupils make the good progress of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher has taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching through the provision of detailed feedback to teachers on how to improve the impact of their practice.
- Behaviour is good because the school succeeds in encouraging pupils to behave consistently well. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is above average.
- The leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children get off to a good start.
- The executive headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses; together with the governing body and local authority, she is taking action to tackle underperformance and ensure that the school is beginning to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by four teachers and analysed the work in pupils' books.
- The executive headteacher conducted four joint lesson observations with the inspector. The inspector also observed the executive headteacher reporting back to teachers on her findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the school council, the executive headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and one representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 responses from staff, in planning and carrying out the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's checks on how well it is doing and improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress and the school's monitoring of teaching, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Kevin Dodd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportions of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is low. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after.)
- Last year the school met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The recently appointed executive headteacher has been in post for two months.
- The school is part of a federation of two schools with a shared governing body and executive headteacher.
- The school has achieved the Healthy Schools status, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investor in People awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better to further increase the attainment and progress of all pupils and in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that activities offer clear opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in all areas of learning, especially in writing and mathematics
 - using the school's information about how well pupils are working to set tasks which are hard enough for all pupils and which get harder as pupils grow older
 - embedding recent improvements to marking and target-setting so teachers help pupils understand how to do better next time and allow pupils time to act upon that advice
 - refining the curriculum so that it offers pupils more exciting and stimulating learning experiences and more time for pupils to explore their own interests, both independently and with their classmates
 - improving the way that teachers help pupils to develop the presentation of their writing
 - offering pupils more opportunities to improve their mathematics skills in real-life, problem-solving situations.
- Embed the initiatives and changes introduced by the executive headteacher in leadership and management by:
 - providing high-quality continuing professional development to develop the skills of middle leaders in planning, monitoring and evaluating those strategies that are designed to improve teaching, and raise attainment
 - ensuring that the recent introduction of performance management is managed rigorously enough to ensure that pupils make at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Fewer pupils in this school than nationally make good progress. At the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are typically average; this represents expected rather than good progress from pupils' individual starting points.
- The improvement in the standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 has not been sustained. Currently, pupils' attainment in Year 2 is below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most children start Nursery with skills that are similar to those typically expected for their age with the exception of writing, which is below that expected. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is good teaching of number and of how to link letters and the sounds they make to help pupils begin to develop their reading skills. Activities are well planned so that children are able to practise their skills in writing and counting while playing together.
- The work of pupils currently in Year 6 is average. This represents expected progress for these pupils, who reached standards that were average at the end of Year 2. Across school, pupils do not yet make better than expected progress as a result of teaching of writing and mathematics that requires improvement.
- Pupils write in a variety of styles and express their ideas confidently but presentation in writing is not as neat as it could be.
- In mathematics, pupils use their mental recall skills well to develop written methods of calculation but problem solving is not as well developed.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. This is a result of a strong focus on reading and good, consistent teaching in how to link letters and the sounds they make to help pupils read words. There is a strong focus in all classes on helping pupils to enjoy books and read more often in school and at home.
- In 2012, there were no pupils in Year 6 eligible for free school meals and a very small number of pupils had special educational needs. Therefore, comparisons with national averages are not secure. Currently, pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. As a result, there is no gap in English or mathematics between the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and varies from good to inadequate. Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they will learn or show them the skills they will need to use. There are limited opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves or to practise their skills in relevant situations.
- Teachers do not always make sure that work set is at the right level for pupils of different ability or with the right amount of interest to capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is not well enough planned to ensure that work becomes harder as pupils grow older.
- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve their work or provide sufficient time for pupils to act upon any advice given. The recent improvements to marking and target-setting are not yet fully in place in all classes. Older pupils know the level of their work but are less clear about how to achieve the next level.
- The curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to develop or to practise their mathematics skills in real-life problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers give pupils interesting topics to write about, for example about the Second World War, but they are less skilled in helping pupils to understand how to organise and develop their ideas,

and in encouraging pupils to present their work neatly. These weaknesses restrict pupils' ability to make consistently good progress.

- Where teaching is good, teachers make lessons interesting. They use exciting topics, drama techniques and questioning skills that allow pupils time to think and explain their ideas. They give pupils the chance to talk together to plan ways to approach problems, and the time to tackle them.
- In the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher set work in science that challenged pupils to find a variety of small creatures. Pupils used their observational and thinking skills to discover differences between how they moved and where they lived. Behaviour was good because pupils fully enjoyed what they were learning. However, this approach is not used widely enough across school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and pupils are positive about behaviour within school, which has remained a strength since the last inspection. They report that instances of misbehaviour are rare and dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. This is a result of a calm, caring approach by staff, which creates a supportive atmosphere for learning.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. There are now firm expectations and a system of rewards and sanctions which have helped pupils have a clear understanding of how to behave well. Younger pupils particularly like the system of red and yellow cards which help them behave well.
- Pupils speak positively about their learning and are happy in school. Pupils are punctual to lessons and are keen to do their best because of the good relationships in class and high expectations of behaviour from staff. They work and play well together, respect one another and are very polite to adults.
- The needs of a very small number of pupils who have significant behavioural problems are very well managed by the school without the need to use exclusion.
- School records show that bullying is rare and effectively managed. Pupils have a good understanding of what is and is not bullying and of the different types of bullying, including racism, harassment and cyber bullying.
- Pupils develop social skills well in school clubs, as well as through the increased responsibilities they have in school, including the school council which has been actively involved in improving the school and community. This is a source of pride to pupils.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school; they understand what constitutes unsafe situations and the basic principles of how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are undertaken and the school is rigorous in its procedures for ensuring pupils' safety.
- Break times and lunchtimes are supervised well and a well-resourced play area ensures pupils enjoy playing with one another.
- As a result of robust procedures, attendance is above average and the school is proactively reviewing its procedures for authorising holidays for pupils during term time to secure further improvement.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Middle leaders do not have a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making in different classes. As a result, they do not hold teachers sufficiently to account for the progress of their pupils or ensure that teachers use information regarding pupils' different levels of ability when planning future work.
- Procedures to monitor teachers' performance have not been rigorous enough. The executive headteacher has begun to bring about improvements and has set targets to ensure that pupils

make more rapid progress. She has begun to improve the consistency of teaching and carries out rigorous, regular observations of teaching and analyses of pupils' work, giving firm judgements and offering detailed and precise advice about how teachers can improve. Half-termly pupil progress meetings have been introduced to enable meaningful feedback to take place in order to improve pupils' learning. Although these improvements have not yet impacted sufficiently on pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching, both of which continue to require improvement, this desire to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

- There is a mismatch between the targets set for pupils and those set for teachers. The latter are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. Staff are aware that they will only be financially rewarded when their pupils have done as well as they should have done, although this has not been the case in the past.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its strengths and areas to develop are now effective in identifying the main priorities for improvement. Plans to tackle priorities are correctly centred on teachers sharing good practice. Adequate progress has been made in tackling all areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection report.
- The expertise of some existing leaders in the school that have helped pupils to make good progress in the past has been skilfully used. For example, the Early Years Foundation Stage leaders have attended training to help them review and update their methods to ensure that work is well matched to the learning needs of children. However, the executive headteacher is aware of the need to provide training and support to help subject leaders and the special educational needs leader become equally effective in planning, monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility.
- Although the curriculum is sufficiently focused on helping pupils acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, it does not yet help pupils to see how subjects link together or take into account their needs and interests to fully involve them in their learning.
- Most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well. For example, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' awareness of their local village; however, links with the wider locality and schools in other countries are underdeveloped, which does not help broaden pupils' awareness of the wider world.
- Links between home and school are improving with the recent introduction of more regular parent meetings, although the school recognises the need to take a more consistent approach to homework. Other partnerships, such as with the 'Friends of Elwick', outward bound centres, the local authority music service and the local secondary school are strong and effective in extending the curriculum.
- It is only with the appointment of the new executive headteacher that the local authority's advisory role is becoming truly effective. It has recognised the ability of the executive headteacher to improve the school and has supported her strongly. Such support and advice are beginning to improve the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the past, the governing body has relied too heavily on an overly generous evaluation of the school carried out by senior leaders and external partners. Governance is improving, and with the executive headteacher, the governing body is beginning to take action to improve teaching, including establishing systems to ensure that teachers' performance is assessed and their training needs are met. Increasingly, governors carry out routine assessments of the overall provision, including data regarding pupils' achievement. They have established a clear system to review governors' input to the school. They know how the pupil premium funding is allocated, and are clear about its impact. They ensure that the school budget is well managed and that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.

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	111670
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	412967

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sacha Bedding
Headteacher	Jo Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2010
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