

Gisburn Road Community Primary School

Gisburn Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, BB18 5JX

Inspection dates 25–26 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

- Across the school progress varies. Few pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points. Attainment is below average in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching fluctuates between years. The pace of lessons and variety of activities do not always enthuse pupils. Work is not always set at the correct level.
- The outdoor space for children in the Reception class is not easy to reach and activities are not as exciting as indoors.
- Teaching is not improving fast enough because teachers do not respond effectively to weaker aspects identified during monitoring of their lessons.
- Leaders, governors and staff do not make full use of information about pupils' progress to identify and take action when pupils are not making as much progress as possible.
- Governors do not ask sufficiently challenging questions about the school's performance and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Teachers plan exciting lessons that make learning fun.
- Attainment is rising and is now closer to average especially in reading and writing as pupils leave school. Many read confidently and enjoy books. Progress in mathematics is improving.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils respect the changes made to rules about behaviour and strive hard to gain rewards.
- Staff care for pupils very well and pupils say they feel safe and happy in school.
- Adjustments to the curriculum have made it more exciting especially for boys. The gap between the progress of boys and girls is narrowing.
- The new headteacher has worked tirelessly over the last year. Progress is accelerating. Staff morale is high as improvements to the building lead to a vibrant working environment.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are pleased with the changes and their increased role in supporting their children. The school has a clear path to further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes except Year 6 where the vast majority of pupils were on visits to their future secondary schools for the duration of the inspection. Inspectors visited 16 lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and others who work closely with the school.
- Pupils read to inspectors.
- Pupils' work was analysed with a focus on writing and mathematics in Years 2 and 6.
- The views of 14 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents shared their opinions with an inspector by telephone and at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jean O'Neill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size. The school's Nursery is on a separate site very close to the school.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average and few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is just completing her first year at the school.
- The school is part of the SWAP (Schools Working Alongside Parents) network which provides a family support worker offering advice to parents and the whole community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring all lessons capture pupils' interests and move along at a brisk pace that sustains their enthusiasm for learning
 - making sure that tasks are set at the correct level and that throughout the lesson the more-able pupils are challenged to make as much progress as possible
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their improving number skills to solving problems
 - having higher expectations of pupils' handwriting, extending their knowledge of imaginative language and making it clear when pupils' work has spelling and punctuation errors so that they know how to improve these skills.
- Improve access to the outdoors for children in Reception and ensure provision is as good as that in the Nursery and as exciting as when children learn indoors.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that teachers respond promptly to weaker aspects of their teaching identified during monitoring of their performance
 - keeping a close eye on the progress of pupils and ensuring that pupils do not stay at the same level for too long without a good reason
 - improving governors' first-hand knowledge of what is happening in school so that they can ask more challenging questions and check that changes are having a positive impact on raising achievement and improving teaching.

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

- Results of national tests, school's assessment information and a review of pupils' work by inspectors show that achievement is improving steadily but that good progress is not yet secure. In some years pupils' progress at a good pace but in others pupils stay at the same level for too long and overall achievement requires improvement.
- More pupils now make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points which are lower than expected for their age. Improvement is most notable in mathematics which was the weakest subject in 2012, although more needs to be done. However, teachers do not always set hard enough work for the more-able pupils and not enough pupils make more than expected progress. Few pupils reach above the level expected especially in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. This means that the promotion of equal opportunities is not yet fully effective.
- Test results show attainment has been steadily rising although remaining below average. Currently, the increase in progress has raised attainment to being closer to average by the time pupils leave school, especially in reading and writing. However, it remains below average in mathematics.
- Attainment in writing is below average in Year 2. Nevertheless, most make the expected progress as they left Reception with lower skills in writing. Attainment in writing is closer to average in Year 6 and pupils write in different styles. However, writing often lacks the imaginative vocabulary needed to reach higher levels. Handwriting is not always neat and some pupils lack accuracy in spelling and punctuation.
- The school has successfully accelerated progress in mathematics with a scheme that focuses on basic number skills. Daily numeracy sessions and parental support has raised pupils' calculation skills. Attainment in mathematics is now broadly average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6 where, despite improved progress, gaps from previous underachievement remain. Pupils lack confidence to apply skills to solve problems.
- Reading is improving with effective teaching of letters and sounds. Results of the national assessment in reading in Year 1 in 2012 were above average. Year 6 pupils leave at the level expected for their age and enjoy reading.
- Children start school with skills that are lower than that usually seen for their age, especially in social and language development. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and children's skills have improved this year to become closer to the expected level.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the progress expected of them. There are pockets of good progress where adult support is most effective especially for those with more-defined difficulties. Parents expressed their appreciation of this support.
- The few newcomers who have limited language make good progress in learning English as they are supported well by peers and adults.
- There is no difference between the progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Their attainment is slightly lower than that of other pupils, being below average in English and mathematics. This gap is narrowing with more attention being given to their social and behaviour needs so that they are more prepared for learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In a few of the lessons seen teaching was good but the quality is variable and overall requires improvement. This fluctuation leads to inconsistent progress because skills developed by pupils in one year are not built on later.
- Where lessons require improvement, teachers fail to use effectively information about pupils' progress. This especially restricts the progress of the more-able pupils as work is not always

hard enough or they complete easy work before getting to work that extends their learning.

- Some staff have embraced the more exciting curriculum and add interest to learning. For example, using popular characters from children’s films like Buzz Lightyear that pupils are keen to write about. This is not always the case leading to pupils being uninspired by their lessons.
- In several lessons the pace of learning slows, often when instructions or texts are repeated. Pupils have too little time to complete work and their attention wanes.
- In the good lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and provide checklists so that pupils know how to achieve success. When writing about advertisements in Year 4, the pupils were keen to learn. The teacher made it very clear what was expected saying, ‘What will make someone want to buy the item.’
- Many teachers use the interactive white board well to demonstrate new skills. Teaching assistants support learning well and ensure pupils behave well.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage shows a clear understanding of how young children learn. Singing rhymes, discussions and first-hand experiences are the norm in these classes. Although children in Reception used their imagination well to describe a holiday, the outdoor space does not lend itself easily to making these experiences as exciting as indoor activities.
- Reading is taught well. Letters and sounds are taught in small groups matched to pupils’ ability. Practical activities lead to good recall of sounds. Teachers use books as a focus for a topic to encourage a love of reading.
- Daily numeracy sessions are taught well and often contain a challenge and assessment to ensure effective learning. However, teachers do not always promote opportunities to solve problems.
- Talking to a partner enables pupils to clarify their ideas and this improves the structure of their sentences. Teachers’ expectations of handwriting are not always high enough.
- A new marking system is in place. Examples include comments that tell pupils how to improve. This is not yet consistent and errors remain, especially in spelling and punctuation, preventing pupils learning from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils recognise the importance of good behaviour even when teaching does not excite them. Occasionally, older pupils become too boisterous at play and staff do not intervene quickly to calm the situation. Pupils look forward to some of the amazing rewards allocated for good behaviour.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. They identify some name-calling but say they usually sort this out themselves. Pupils feel safe. They are aware of dangers they might meet out of school and feel well prepared to avoid them.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. In lessons, they enjoy discussions with partners and collaborate well.
- The more interesting activities have raised pupils’ enthusiasm for school. Attendance is broadly average although has been affected this year by some bouts of sickness.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors identified several recent changes that have improved their school. They enjoy being part of the changes such as the trim trail and the book club now on the Internet.
- Pupils say they have many friends and to sum up their school they suggested the following: ‘This is a friendly school because pupils who are new have a buddy to help them to settle.’

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The new headteacher provides strong leadership that is starting to raise performance in the school. A very thorough audit identified the most important priorities and help was obtained promptly to instigate change. Although leadership requires improvement because more needs to

be done to further raise achievement and improve teaching, well thought out plans for future actions place the school in a stronger position to move forward.

- The monitoring of teaching identifies accurately aspects that need to improve. These are shared with teachers and support is put in place. Staff visit other schools to see good practice. Teaching is improving but not all staff respond promptly to the weaknesses found during monitoring. Some staff do not apply school changes consistently, as for example in marking work, and so some weaker aspects remain.
- The headteacher's audit identified insecurity in teachers' assessments of pupils' work. Training has improved teachers' recognition of the levels their pupils are working at. External moderation has verified accuracy in assessment which now provides a clear picture of pupils' progress. As yet, this information is not always used effectively to plan lessons and to prevent pupils staying at the same level for too long. On the other hand, when data showed a weakness in mathematics in 2012 action was prompt and successful.
- Staff have targets linked to their performance and pupils' progress. The headteacher has robust meetings to hold staff to account for any lack of achievement. Salary awards link to the achievement of targets.
- The school has set accurate priorities. Precise actions in the school's improvement plan show success, especially in mathematics and the curriculum. The adjustments to the curriculum have made it more relevant and exciting. This has narrowed the gap between the progress of boys and girls.
- More visitors and visits enrich pupils' knowledge and enjoyment. They celebrate festivals including Chinese New Year which included a very talented dancer. The recent visit to London included attending a famous show. Photographs reveal an amazing experience. These activities contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- The local authority has provided very effective help during the headteacher's first year. Advice and training have helped the school on its journey to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are keen to support the school and several share their expertise and help with activities. However, too much reliance has been given to information from the headteacher to tell them about the quality of teaching and what is happening in school. This means they are not always in a position to ask questions based on their first-hand knowledge. As for example, in checking that staff are set challenging targets and the links between teachers' performance in the classroom and increases in their pay. To tackle this, they have established a standards and effectiveness committee to meet regularly and check on the impact of changes. Governors now review data on pupils' progress but have not been prompt enough to query the lack of progress of some groups of pupils. They know that pupil premium money is used to benefit these pupils by providing more support and supplementing the cost of visits when needed. Governors ensure statutory requirements are met and safeguarding meets requirements.

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	119265
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	412264

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Mitchell
Headteacher	Nicola Walker
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
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