

Western Primary School

Cold Bath Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 0NA

Inspection dates

02–03 October 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

- Despite the concerted efforts of school leaders and other staff: pupils' achievement; the impact of teaching on pupils' learning; and the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's leadership; including governance, all require further improvement to be good.
- The impact of teaching over time has not been effective enough to ensure that pupils consistently make good or better progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding of key concepts in all of the subjects they study.
- Pupils' achievement is inconsistent across year groups, subjects and different groups of pupils. The majority of pupils make no better than expected progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and governors have not been influential enough in ensuring that key aspects of the school's work such as pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of teaching are consistently good or better across the school.
- An area for improvement highlighted by the previous inspection relating to pupils' writing has not been wholly tackled.

The school has the following strengths

- Children thrive in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision because of: effective teaching; the stimulating and diverse curriculum; and the high-quality support, care and guidance they receive.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are delightful, showing respect and consideration for each other and staff. There are sound procedures in place to keep them safe.
- Staff have created a welcoming, caring and happy school that parents value.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each of the school's 14 classes, including the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Several lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. In total 16 formal observations and eight shorter visits were made to classrooms.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and evaluated the quality of the work in a sample of pupils' books. Inspectors watched assemblies, and saw specialist staff delivering sessions to develop and improve the literacy skills of targeted pupils, particularly their reading and their writing.
- Meetings or discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher; two groups of pupils; a local authority representative; three members of the governing body; and teaching assistants. Inspectors also discussed the school's work with: the Early Years Foundation Stage leader; the Key Stage 1 leader; the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- Inspectors took account of the 87 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), along with an analysis of the school's own parental and pupil questionnaires. Inspectors evaluated questionnaire responses from 44 school staff. Inspectors talked to 18 parents and read letters written by other parents about the school. Inspectors also analysed the school's own pupil and parent questionnaires.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including: safeguarding and child protection arrangements; the school development and action plans; records of lesson observations and checks on pupils' learning and progress, and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the school's arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stefan Lord

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- At this larger than average-sized primary school most pupils are White British. The remaining small numbers of pupils originate from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils who are believed to speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational need are low. Their needs range from physical disability to speech, language and communication needs and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- All of the pupils are educated at the school and none receives alternative provision.
- The school premises are used for some family learning opportunities and by a private company.
- The governing body provides a breakfast club and an after-school club for children aged between three and five years old. Older pupils attend the privately run 'Kids' Club'. Inspection reports for this provision can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on all pupils' learning so that their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in particular, is consistently good or better throughout the school by:
 - increasing the effectiveness with which all groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, those disabled, and those with special educational needs acquire, develop and apply key learning skills and concepts in all of their subjects so that they all make at least good progress when set against their respective starting points
 - removing the inconsistencies which remain in the quality of teaching which on occasion can reduce the pace and amount of pupils' learning and progress
 - sharing more effectively the best practice that exists
 - improving the quality and consistency of mathematics and English teaching across the school, especially with regard to developing pupils' calculation skills, and improving pupils' spelling.
- Improve the efficiency, impact and strategic influence of leadership and management in the school so that the quality of education improves to at least good by the time of the next section 5 inspection by:
 - making certain that teaching, the curriculum, and the support and guidance given to pupils is of a sufficiently high quality to ensure that they all reach their potential and make at least good progress during their time in the school
 - ensuring that governors are more discerning in their scrutiny and challenge of the effectiveness of the school's work and acquire a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching and the extent of pupils' learning and progress
 - leaders and managers ensuring that their collection, analysis and evaluation of pupil performance data is coherent and fit for purpose, and that it shows clearly and accurately exactly how well pupils are progressing as they move through the school
 - leaders and managers exerting a greater strategic influence on the school in order that the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils are demonstrably and consistently good or better
 - ensuring that the pupil premium is deployed more effectively so that its impact is more evident.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Despite some pupils making fast progress, the majority of pupils' achievement is broadly average when set against their starting points on entry to the school. This is generally the case for all groups, including minority ethnic pupils, those who attract pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- School data and inspectors' observations indicate that the majority of children start school in the Reception class with skills, dispositions and attitudes that are a little better than those typically expected for their age. They continue to flourish and are well-prepared for Year 1, with the large majority of them reaching a good level of development. Similarly, their performance in the end of Year 1 phonics screening test compares favourably with national averages. Their performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 is better, but not significantly better than national age-related expectations. This represents broadly average rather than good progress because they started and left school with attainment that was a little better but not significantly better than average overall.
- The school's latest academic tracking data show an inconsistent picture in terms of the progress rates of pupils currently on roll with evidence of very fast, mediocre and small amounts of slower progress apparent. This is the case across subjects, classes and groups of pupils. The school's leaders recognise that they must tackle these variations.
- Beneath these headlines, the school's leaders know that they must tackle the inconsistencies in pupils' attainment and achievement in mathematics, particularly in relation to calculation skills. Leaders also know that the progress of less-able pupils, and pupils' attainment and achievement in writing, particularly spelling, require improvement.
- Pupils read a range of books regularly, and with confidence and accuracy. Most pupils enjoy reading and are developing this skill quickly as a result of some effective strategies employed by the school, including those intended to enthuse and engage more reluctant readers.
- Pupil premium funding has helped to fund a number of specialist staff such as a family support worker, speech and language therapist and staff to work one to one with targeted pupils to boost their phonic and writing skills. Their work is showing some positive signs of impact.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning requires improvement to be good. This is because most pupils, including the most-able pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make broadly average, rather than good progress over time, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- During the inspection teaching was mostly good. However, this more effective practice has not consistently been in place over time, which is reflected in the variable pace and extent of pupils' learning and progress. It is also clear that some staff have had to plug gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding that should have been tackled in the previous academic year.
- Staff are capable, have good subject knowledge and work hard. The school's leaders appreciate that they must harness this talent and use it more effectively to share and embed the most successful learning practices in every classroom.
- Teaching was effective when pupils were motivated by thought-provoking and increasingly challenging activities, which allowed them to: take responsibility for their own learning; work collaboratively; and be creative. Staff supported their learning well through skilful questioning.
- Inspectors noted that the teaching of mathematics was not always as confident or effective as the delivery of English. There were also some missed opportunities to reinforce good spelling and correct pupils' misconceptions. In addition, learning slowed when work was too easy or staff were imprecise about the learning objectives so pupils were unclear about what was expected of them.
- The deployment and use of teaching assistants to support groups and individual pupils' learning is

generally sound. They have clear roles and responsibilities which they undertake judiciously.

- Marking is consistently sound. Pupils have a good sense of how well they are doing and their targets. They have opportunities to self- and peer-assess, and they respond confidently and thoughtfully to the evaluative feedback they receive from staff.
- Teaching in the Reception class is effective and children blossom as a result. They settle in quickly and are confident due to the good support and care staff provide. A successful combination of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, together with 'wow' activities, visits and visitors helps children to learn and prosper so that they become more confident, independent and skilled.
- School leaders know that the gap between the most and least effective practice in the school must close as a matter of urgency if pupils' progress in mathematics and writing are to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has established a caring and inclusive environment which helps to ensure that pupils, including those deemed more vulnerable, are happy and feel safe in school. This sense of security was echoed by the parents with whom inspectors spoke. There is a tangible sense of community within the school and relationships between pupils and staff are positive and warm.
- Pupils are conscious of the potential risks they face and know how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils say that staff are very supportive and kind, and believe that staff would help them if they went to them with a problem or concern.
- A good standard of behaviour is expected by staff and the very large majority of pupils responds very positively to the rules and procedures that exist. Staff are consistent in their approach to managing behaviour and as a result pupils are very clear about the parameters that exist and do not receive mixed messages that might confuse them.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and at social times, which is reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and the respect and courtesy that they show each other, staff and visitors. There are few detentions and there have been no exclusions for a number of years.
- There are few recorded incidents of homophobic-, racist-, or cyber- bullying and pupils told inspectors that bullying in any form was uncommon. Where it did occur, pupils said that it was usually verbal, rather than physical. Nevertheless, the school accepts that its procedures for recording, analysing and tracking the resolution of incidents require some tightening up.
- The parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's survey, agree that the school ensures that pupils are well-behaved and that their children feel safe and are happy.
- The importance of good attendance is effectively promoted. Pupils enjoy coming to school which is reflected in their high attendance and the low rate of persistent absence. Punctuality is also good with pupils arriving promptly at the start of the day and after breaks and lunchtime.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has not sustained its good overall effectiveness since the previous inspection. Leaders' overly positive self-evaluation underplays the extent to which teaching and the curriculum have led pupils to make average rather than good progress during their time in the school. There has been turbulence in staffing but this does not excuse the decline in the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders show a passion for the school and its ethos and philosophy, but they must recognise that high academic achievement and providing a memorable curriculum with a focus on developing pupils' social and emotional maturity are not mutually exclusive. They know what and where the weaker aspects are and know that they must eradicate them if the school is to ensure that all pupils achieve well, alongside their obvious enjoyment of school and strong personal development.
- The management of teaching would benefit from a sharper focus on closing the gap between the most and least effective teaching in the school and increasing its impact on pupils' learning.

- Senior leaders regularly monitor all aspects of the school's work, including the curriculum, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, they must ensure that their collection, analysis and evaluation of pupil performance data is coherent and fit for purpose, and that they show clearly and accurately exactly how well pupils are progressing as they move through the school.
- All of the school's leaders and managers need to exert a greater strategic influence and make certain that they offer at least good value for money relative to their roles and responsibilities.
- Senior leaders need to review the curriculum to check it delivers all the benefits they attribute to it.
- The school is profiting from its link with the Red Kite Teaching Alliance. Three staff have completed the outstanding teacher programme and a further two can now act as facilitators for their colleagues.
- The school liaises well with parents via regular newsletters, its website, and the Parent-Teacher Association, as well as inviting them into school regularly. Ninety-five percent of those who completed the Parent View survey would recommend the school.
- Curriculum provision is diverse. A focus on developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics, reading and writing is punctuated by visits, visitors and events designed to bring learning to life and give pupils key learning skills.
- The curriculum, assemblies, visits and visitors all help to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well. Pupils raise funds for charity; display a strong moral code; and act as ambassadors for the school in the local community. Pupils represent the school in sport, sing for residents from the local home for the elderly and have designed a sculpture for the local park.
- The improvement area from the previous inspection regarding pupils' cultural development has been tackled and pupils now have an increased awareness of the beliefs and traditions of the world's major faiths.
- The new primary school sport funding has been used to provide expert coaching to improve pupils' performance and encourage them to have healthy lifestyles.
- Pupil premium funding has been focused on raising the achievement of the targeted pupils, improving their attendance and enriching the quality of their educational experience. This has had mixed success and leaders know that they need to demonstrate better value for money as the gaps between a number of these pupils' academic standards and those of other pupils in the school remain wide.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and procedures for child protection, staff recruitment, risk assessment and site security are sound. Designated staff receive suitable training.
- Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has ensured that children have good teaching, a rich curriculum and quality support making certain they are well-prepared for Year 1.
- The local authority maintains a light touch relationship with the school that is centred on target-setting and the review of the school's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors undertake their duties seriously and statutory requirements are met. They are supportive of the school and its philosophy. However, they have not exerted sufficient strategic influence to ensure that the quality of education pupils receive is good or better.
 - Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent but were unclear about the impact it has.
 - While governors ask appropriate questions of school leaders about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the curriculum, it is apparent that they need to adopt a more discerning approach to interrogating the information they receive. This is so that they do not form an overly rosy picture of the school's effectiveness. In particular, a better understanding of 'official' performance data might help them to build a more accurate view. They are aware of some of the school's deficiencies and the steps being taken to tackle them.
- Governors recognise the links between performance management and staff salary progression or promotion, with examples given of some robust action taken to tackle underperformance.

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	121399
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	427355

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	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Brooke
Headteacher	Cheryl Smith
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2011
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