

Skelmanthorpe First and Nursery School

Elm Street, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD8 9DZ

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- At the start of Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has slowed in the past so that their achievement at the end of Year 5 is not as high as it could be.
- Over time, the quality of teaching has been too inconsistent with not enough that is good or better. This is why progress across Key Stage 2 has not been fast enough.
- Sometimes, pupils do not receive work pitched at their ability levels. As a result some pupils struggle to understand the work, while others find that they are not challenged in their learning.
- Pupils do not always fully understand how their learning targets relate to the work they have to do.
- Middle leaders do not yet have a fully coordinated approach to collecting and making sense of information about pupils' ability levels because this is a newly introduced system.
- Too few leaders are involved in checking the quality of teaching and this has limited the sharing of effective practice.

The school has the following strengths

- The highly motivated leadership team and governors have set out a very clear plan for improvement which is shared and agreed by all. There is high staff morale.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in and around school. Pupils say they feel safe at school.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are supported well by teaching support staff.
- Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at Key Stage 1 and in Year 5 because of good teaching and support.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for all pupils to develop their writing and other skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 17 lessons or part lessons during the inspection. All class teachers and three teaching support assistants were observed at least once and one lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and her management team, other teachers, pupils, the chair of governors and the school improvement partner (as a representative of the local authority). A telephone conversation was held with the vice chair of governors.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the staff questionnaire and 44 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). An inspector met with a group of nine parents, one of whom is a parent-governor.
- Inspectors listened to individual pupils read, both in and out of lessons. They observed pupils moving around school and at break and lunch times.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, its report on how the school is performing, governing body documents, curriculum policy documents and policies relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karen Bramwell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a below average-sized first and nursery school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium (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 who are looked after) is below average.
- Not all children in the Nursery transfer into the Reception class.
- There have been a number of staff changes over the past 12 months, including staff absence, teachers retiring and new staff being recruited. A new leadership team has now been established.
- The school is part of the Shelley Pyramid of schools system where pupils move from first to middle and then to Shelley College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils make good or better progress and improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - Planning learning, activities and resources that are accurately pitched to match pupils' ability levels
 - teachers taking care to refer to information about pupils' learning targets when marking their work
 - regularly involving pupils in discussions about how they have done and encouraging them to write their responses to teachers' marking.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring that all leaders become experienced in conducting lesson observations so that they can provide helpful feedback to colleagues, especially about pupils' learning and progress
 - regularly conducting meetings with staff to keep up-to-date with the progress different pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Because pupils' progress has slowed in Years 3 and 4 in previous years, pupils' achievement is not as high as it could be by the end of Year 5.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 1. By Year 5, pupils achieve broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, with the most-able pupils exceeding the national average in all these subjects. These pupils produce impressive poetry, for example.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills generally typical for their age. They settle quickly, listen attentively and follow taught routines. They concentrated and joined in well when counting and identifying the animals in the story of 'Ten in a Bed'.
- In the Reception class, children learn their letter sounds and names and develop their language when listening to and recognising sounds in the environment, like breaking glass. Children are encouraged to take a lead, for example, when asking to make simple kites when the weather became windy. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have made good progress from their starting points.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils become more skilled in recognising their letters and the sounds they make when blended together. They work enthusiastically to order letters of the alphabet, while the more-able pupils order full words alphabetically. Pupils at the end of Year 1 achieved just below the national average in the annual check on knowledge of letters and sounds that they make, although when some pupils were re-tested in Year 2, this figure exceeded the national average.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above national expectations overall and well above in reading.
- Pupils read with great enjoyment regardless of their ability levels. They say that their parents hear them read and write comments in their reading records. They make good use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make when reading new words. By the end of Year 5, pupils have made up for some of the lost time when their progress slowed, and reach standards that are in line with national expectations in reading.
- Older pupils enjoy estimating numbers when provided with rapid, visual images of objects on the white-board. They develop good mental-arithmetic strategies which they then use well to solve word problems. By the end of Year 5, pupils are in line with national expectations in mathematics.
- Where progress slows, the less-able pupils cannot keep pace with the more-able pupils because they are expected to complete the same task, for example, when Year 4 pupils are asked to complete similar number problems. Occasionally, older pupils complete work quickly because it is too easy.
- The achievement and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are improving, but slowly, in line with their peers, before picking up again in Year 5. Overall, these pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is about two terms behind that of their peers in school.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding remain about one and a half terms behind their peers in reading and writing, but have closed the gap in mathematics and now just exceed their peers' levels of progress. This is comparable to the gap between these groups of pupils nationally. Pupils respond very well to the additional support provided by skilled teaching assistants and access to new visual resources.
- All pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to partake in additional sport and physical education, for example, through specialist physical education lessons. They enjoy the activities provided by sports coaches who come in at lunchtime breaks.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has been too varied over time and therefore requires improvement. However, inspectors agree with recent school checks that teaching is improving, with a greater proportion of lessons judged as good. As a result pupils' progress is improving.
- Inspectors' views on teaching during the inspection matched those of the school. The majority of lessons seen were good with none that were inadequate. However, this has not yet resulted in pupils making consistently good progress over time.
- Teaching requires improvement because not enough account has been made of how information about pupils' learning and related targets can be used to plan more precisely for individual needs. Where this has not happened, pupils either fall behind in their learning or are not challenged sufficiently. For example, books or information provided to support tasks are sometimes too hard for pupils to use successfully.
- On occasions, pupils are asked to complete the same task or activity, for example, during a mathematics lesson about place value, all pupils were asked to work with the same numbers, despite the wide range of ability levels in the class.
- Marking and feedback do not always relate directly to pupils' agreed targets because the activity has been the same for the whole class. Pupils do not always have the chance to write down or talk about the checks on their work and the progress they are making.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff show clearly what their expectations are about routines, behaviour and social development. Their observations are used well to inform planning, especially when providing further opportunities to develop children's language.
- Over the past term, teaching in the rest of the school has improved so that there is more evidence of a consistent use of an agreed marking system. In good or better lessons, for example a Year 3 and 4 writing lesson and a Year 5 lesson on estimating numbers, pupils are set tasks that match their ability levels and they are able to describe what is happening or talk about their learning and progress. 'Post-it notes' are used well to provide individual feedback and advise pupils about the next steps of learning.
- Teaching was good in a Year 4/5 design and technology lesson. A topic about water, relating to life in Bangladesh, provided equal opportunities and good cultural development for boys and girls to work together in designing a floating garden. Pupils were encouraged to talk, write about and sketch their plans before setting about making their models.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support the less-able pupils in developing their reading, writing and number skills. Staff are increasingly using information about pupils' levels to agree programmes of support, including for those eligible for the pupil premium. The teaching assistants follow up this work so that progress is reinforced in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are consistently good. They take a pride in their school and say that they feel safe. The school has clear policies about internet safety. Pupils say that any problems about safety are quickly dealt with and followed up by relevant staff. Pupils say that there is no bullying.
- Pupils attend well and any difficulties, for example, lateness, are picked up by the school through positive links with parents and support agencies. Behaviour in lessons is routinely good, and engagement in learning is improving at a fast rate.
- Pupils respond well to staff instructions and take responsibility for their actions in and around school. Older pupils act as door monitors and report any problems to staff. Pupils play safely and respectfully, making good use of play equipment and apparatus, or joining in with activities run by the sports coaches at lunchtimes.
- Staff are in evidence on the corridors and at break times so that supervision levels are appropriate. The school has systems to record and report on incidents or accidents.

- Pupils say they enjoy reading and have regular opportunities to practise their skills in class and at home. They feel supported in their learning.
- Parents praise the school because it is 'nurturing' and staff are very approachable. They report no concerns about bullying and that the school manages behaviour well. Good links early on enable children to settle very well to the routines of the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the headteacher and her new leadership team are securing improvements in the quality of teaching, leadership and management require improvement. This is because this new team and the systems they have put in place have only been effective for a short period of time so that the full impact of these changes has not yet had time to improve the standards achieved by pupils.
- Also, leadership and management require improvement because, over time, the quality of teaching has been too variable, especially in terms of how lessons have been planned to meet individual needs. There has not been a culture of sharing good practice, for example, through modelling the effective use of information on pupils' progress to inform target-setting, marking systems and working closely with pupils so they know what they need to do to improve. There are now much-improved systems for checking pupils' progress and for sharing good practice with colleagues.
- Improvements are needed in developing the role of middle leaders so that they take a shared responsibility for observing lessons and providing effective feedback to colleagues.
- The headteacher, with the support of a caring and well informed governing body, has worked effectively to bring about a number of changes so that the school now has a clear and shared ambition and sense of direction. The school's improvement partner has provided effective support to reach this stage.
- The school's review of its work is rigorous and clear about where improvements need to be made. The resulting school-development plan is thorough, focusing upon securing agreed improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and the consistent progress of all pupil groups throughout the school. However, class teachers have not had regularly time-tabled meetings with leaders to check the progress of pupils in their class.
- The school's curriculum is a strength because it encourages pupils to explore their own ideas and to develop their reading and writing skills in different contexts. The provision for physical education and sport has benefited from additional funding so that all pupils have opportunities to engage in after school clubs, lunchtime activities and specialist teaching. This has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being and enjoyment of sport. Topics about other cultures provide pupils with good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Partnerships with parents and local schools are positive. Parents agree that communications are good and they like the school's homework policy. The school is now benefiting from sharing good practice with neighbouring schools.
- Safeguarding policies and practice at the school meet with requirements, and there is regular update training for staff and governors in areas such as child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the school's work and are regular visitors through their classroom link roles. Committees are in place where governors meet about school improvement priority areas. Governors hold the headteacher and staff to account well through the appraisal system that links performance to pay. Governors have overseen the effective use of pupil premium money, for example, to fund new resources and additional teaching support for pupils with additional reading and mathematics needs. They are informed about the progress of different groups of pupils, including those who have benefited from pupil premium funding.

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	107652
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	425761

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	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joshua Beckett
Headteacher	Helen Boothroyd
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2011
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