

Highcliffe Primary School

Hutton Lane, Guisborough, North Yorkshire, TS14 8AA

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Standards in mathematics are not yet as high as they should be because the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- The work set is sometimes too hard for the least able pupils, who, as a result, do not always make enough progress.
- Not all teachers make sure that all pupils have mastered the skills being taught before moving on to more advanced skills.
- Pupils' attention wanders and they do not behave as well as they should when the work is too hard for them, this is especially true of the least able pupils.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough or arrive late and as a result, their learning suffers.
- Middle leaders are relatively new to their roles and do not have the skills to drive improvement forward and, in particular, to judge if the actions they have planned to improve achievement have been successful.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governors know the school well. They have introduced a range of initiatives which are beginning to result in improvements in the progress of pupils, the quality of teaching and the attendance of some pupils.
- Progress in reading and writing is now good because of good teaching in English.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are well mannered and willingly take on responsibilities. Most pupils behave well and feel safe.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their physical education and are rightly proud of their sporting successes.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- They took account of 55 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 26 responses to questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the school council and pupils from Years 5 and 6, and talked informally with pupils at break and lunch times. They also had discussions with 11 members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They held meetings with leaders with other responsibilities, including the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including internal and external information relating to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered reports written by the local authority, documents relating to the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Zoe Westley

Additional Inspector

Alan Sergison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the 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 by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be good or better across the school and so increase the rate of progress, especially for the least able and in mathematics by:
 - making sure that in all year groups, pupils master the skills taught before moving on to more advanced skills
 - using the information about pupils' progress to set work that whilst challenging does allow pupils to be successful, especially for the least able.
- Develop the role of middle leaders in evaluating the success of actions to raise pupils' achievement so that they can identify what is working well and share it across the school.
- Work closely with parents to improve the punctuality and attendance of pupils who arrive late or miss school too often.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because standards in mathematics, although improving, are not high enough. Because the quality of teaching is uneven across the school, pupils, especially the least able, do not make at least good progress in all subjects from their starting points at the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improvements in the progress of pupils in mathematics have not been as rapid as in reading and writing because a good proportion of pupils do not master basic mathematical skills before moving on to more advanced skills.
- Most children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typical for their age and this trend of lower starting points is increasing year on year. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 which was average, was lower than normally seen in the school in the recent past because of the growing number of pupils starting school at increasingly lower starting points. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that this trend of lower attainment has been reversed in both English and mathematics, and pupils currently in Year 2 are set to attain standards that will return to above average by the end of the year as a result of the improvement in the quality of teaching.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are above average, in writing broadly average and below average in mathematics. Too few of the least able pupils make more than the expected rate of progress, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of the most able pupils and provide them with a good level of challenge in both mathematics and English and as a result, their achievement is good.
- Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, are beginning to make faster progress. Because their starting points are usually lower, their attainment is lower but is improving and the gap between them and others in the school, currently being approximately one year behind their peers, are closing because of the measures, such as the small group and one-to-one support sessions, that senior leaders have put in place.
- Leaders now use data to track pupils' achievement. They use effective systems to check on pupils' progress throughout the school, and, as a result, leaders can quickly identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Individual pupil's learning is now being boosted by timely support.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They are well supported by staff who have a detailed knowledge of their learning difficulties and can put in place effective support to meet their needs. Teaching assistants provide effective support when it is needed, both in class and out of class, in small groups and in one-to-one sessions.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is still judged to require improvement because some teachers set work at the wrong level for pupils. As a result, pupils do not fully consolidate their skills before moving on to new learning and so do not make good progress.
- In some lessons, the work is too hard for the least able pupils and their attention wanders. They talk about other things than the subject in hand and the pace of learning for these pupils slows.
- There are examples of good and outstanding teaching and this is reflected in the improved progress pupils are making, especially in reading and writing, and for the most able in mathematics. The school's own data and work in books suggests that this is now the norm in school. In a higher mathematics group in Year 6, pupils were completely absorbed in solving open-ended problems requiring a detailed knowledge of Mean, Mode and Median, appropriately selecting from the 'Tricky, Trickier or Trickiest' sets of problems. In a Year 2 class, pupils

excitedly used their developing writing skills to rewrite the tale of the Three Billy Goats Gruff, inventing their own characters.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as a result of the good arrangements when children start school which allow all the adults to rapidly gain an accurate picture of the needs of individuals. Good planning, which involves all staff, means that children quickly begin to develop their understanding of the sounds letters make and their knowledge of numbers.
- Teachers want their pupils to succeed. Good relationships are typical between pupils and the adults who work with them. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers really help you to do well'.
- Pupils develop good skills in writing and have regular opportunities to practise these in other subjects. This is having a good impact on their achievement in writing. However, until recently, opportunities to use their developing mathematical skills in other subjects have not been wide enough. This has been recognised and regular opportunities are now planned in all subjects.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and have good knowledge of the needs of different groups and individuals they support, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils' work is very thoroughly and carefully marked, and pupils are given a lot of feedback and suggestions about how to improve the work. However, because pupils are not told their next target for improvement, they do not always know precisely what they need to do to progress to the next level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because a relatively small number of pupils do not attend school often enough or are late to school and this has a significant effect on their learning.
- In those lessons where the work for some pupils is too hard, pupils lose interest and talk about subjects other than the one in hand, disturbing the concentration of others.
- In many lessons, pupils behave well and show an interest in their work and the school's records confirm that this is normally the case.
- The school has well-understood systems for managing behaviour and most lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils have a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities which they appreciate. A large and growing number of pupils have been trained as 'Play and Sports Leaders' and these pupils make sure that there are lots of physical activities for others to do out of lessons. These, together with their physical education lessons, make a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being. The school takes part in as many sports competitions as possible and are rightly proud of their sporting successes.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and adults in the school. They are eager to talk about their school and are proud to be members of the school community.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and parents agree that their children feel safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying of any kind and are confident that if it occurs it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, such as being house captains, and they take their responsibilities very seriously.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because middle leaders need to develop their skills in order to accelerate the rate of improvement. In particular, they need to be able to judge the success of actions to improve achievement and the quality of teaching in the subjects they

are responsible for and to share the successful actions more widely across the school.

- The effective headteacher and senior leaders know the school well and have recognised where improvements need to be made. They have put in place plans to make these happen and while these have shown good results in reading and writing, the rate of improvement has not been fast enough in mathematics.
- Leaders check on pupils' progress regularly and through the regular pupils' progress meetings identify those pupils who need to catch up. They take prompt action to help those pupils.
- The leadership and management of teaching has strengthened and as a result, teaching has improved. Although some variability remains, the school is determined to drive improvement forward. There are regular checks on the quality of teaching by senior leaders and training is provided to improve the skills of teachers.
- The school knows and cares for its pupils as individuals and works diligently to remove any difficulties which might stop pupils from learning. Although the school's data shows that the least able pupils are not achieving as well as they should, the school is now focusing strongly on removing differences in the achievement of significant groups. For example, the gap in the level of achievement of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the achievement of their peers is closing.
- The curriculum has been developed to promote learning and the development of pupils' English and mathematical skills across all subjects, although this is further advanced in English than in mathematics.
- Links between professional development opportunities and performance management systems are effective and arrangements for pay and promotion of staff are now closely linked to staff's performance and pupils' progress.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is important to the school and, as a result, pupils' personal development is of a good quality.
- The new primary school sports funding is motivating pupils to keep fit and active. Pupils not only have a wide range of equipment to use at break and lunch times ably led by the Play and Sports leaders but they also have opportunities to take part in a good number of after-school sports activities. In addition, the funding is being used to improve the teaching of physical education across the school through staff training.
- Some of the sports funding has been imaginatively used to allow parents to join in with activities, such as the family camp-out, which proved to be very popular.
- The local authority has provided a range of support appreciated by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective and knows the school well. They use the information available to them to evaluate the performance of the school in key areas, including the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They challenge leaders to do the best for pupils. Governors are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance. They oversee the spending of the pupil premium funding and are aware that, although monies spent are having an effect, more needs to be done to close the gap between those eligible pupils' progress and that of their peers. They understand the need to improve the attendance and punctuality of some pupils. Governors are involved in decisions about the spending of the primary school sports funding and in planning ways in which its impact can be assessed. They have evaluated their own effectiveness and are active in seeking training to become more skilled, building on the wide range of skills which they bring to their roles as governors. The governing body takes care to ensure all safeguarding child protection procedures meet current requirements. Governors support the school in all it does and are ambitious for it to improve further.

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	131457
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	430919

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	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Bean
Headteacher	Jackie Woodhead
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2012
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