

Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Lane, Wheldrake, York, North Yorkshire, YO19 6BB

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From generally average starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well.
- At the end of Year 6, overall standards are well above average. Standards are consistently high in reading and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress because they receive effective support.
- Teaching is good with occasional examples of outstanding practice across the school.
- Pupils enjoy learning and try hard in their work. Their attendance is outstanding and their behaviour is good. Pupils form trusting relationships with staff, and so feel safe and happy at school.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, ensure that improvements are strongly focused on raising pupils' standards and progress.
- Parents are very positive about the school and say that their children love being there

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While much of the teaching is good, not enough is outstanding to drive pupils' progress more rapidly. In some lessons, the most able pupils do not always have hard enough work to make sure they make as much progress as possible.
- Standards in mathematics, while above average, are not as high as those in reading and writing because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and apply their skills through more practical activities.
- When monitoring teaching and learning, senior leaders are not rigorous enough in checking that teachers' planning always makes sure that work is not too easy and is hard enough to extend the learning for all groups of pupils, especially the most able.
- Teachers' marking, while often very helpful in literacy, is not always as effective in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' work and listened to a number of children read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, senior and middle managers and subject leaders, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and spoke to a few parents on the school premises or by telephone. Inspectors also took account of eight questionnaires returned by staff and the views expressed by staff during discussions.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including: the school's evaluation of its own performance; the school's own data on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; and the records of how the school uses funding, especially how the pupil premium and Primary Schools Sport funding is spent. Records relating to behaviour, attendance, incident logs, individual pupil case studies and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Lomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. It is regularly over-subscribed.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. 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.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of staffing changes since the school's previous inspection, including a new headteacher who took up the post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding to speed up pupils' progress and raise their achievement in all subjects, especially mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use the assessment information they have about pupils' progress to check that work is neither too easy or too hard for pupils, particularly during whole-class discussions, and that expectations are high enough for all pupils, especially for the most able
 - pupils have more opportunities to write extensively in subjects other than literacy to develop their writing skills even more
 - pupils have more opportunities in mathematics to carry out practical investigations that encourage them to apply and extend their learning when solving problems
 - marking in all classes consistently provides pupils with the guidance that they need to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by monitoring more rigorously the quality of teachers' planning and marking, particularly in mathematics, and its effect on learning throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills typical for their age. In the safe and happy environment at the school, children settle quickly and enjoy learning because teaching is good. They make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, most reach at least average standards and a high proportion gain skills that are above average for their age.
- Through Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress, although it is often more rapid in upper Key Stage 2 where teaching is strongest. Occasionally a few pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve as well as they could because the work they are given is not hard enough to challenge them sufficiently.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at least average and a good proportion of pupils are working at above average levels. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- Throughout the school reading is taught well. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught very effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Reading skills are developed well as pupils move up through the school. The school promotes a real love of books and reading. As a result, many pupils exceed the levels expected for their age and a high proportion of them work at well above expected levels.
- Standards in writing are also well above average because pupils use their good reading skills and high-quality vocabulary to write skilful and creative pieces, whether they be fiction or non-fiction. Occasionally, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to extend their skills further when writing accounts in history and reports in science, for example, to help them achieve even more.
- While standards in mathematics are generally above average because teaching is effective in laying solid foundations, such as the daily practising of times tables, achievement in mathematics is not yet as high as it is in reading and writing. This is because occasionally the level of work set is not high enough, particularly for the most able, and sometimes pupils have too few opportunities to apply what they know to solving practical problems.
- Effective support, particularly the personalised planning for individual pupils, ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well from their individual starting points. These pupils make good gains, particularly when working in small groups, because they are engaged fully, supported well and enjoy succeeding.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. The standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics are not significantly lower than their classmates because they are supported well. While a few are a term or so behind their classmates, most are working at levels above those expected for their age by the end of Year 6. The gap between the achievements of these pupils and similar pupils nationally is not significant because the individual support, for example during whole-class sessions, has a significant impact on pupils' confidence to learn and achieve well.
- The school uses its primary schools sports funding effectively to increase opportunities for pupils to engage in competitive events and extend expertise among staff to develop the curriculum for physical education by working alongside professional sports coaches. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and have a very good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.
- Overall, the school promotes equality of opportunity well. Other than in the occasional lesson where a few of the most able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work, these pupils achieve well, and an increasing number are working towards being well above the levels expected in all subjects by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils' learning accelerates at a rapid pace in lessons that sustain their enthusiasm because they are interesting, lively, have a clear sense of purpose and also the teachers have high expectations and push pupils on to achieve as much as possible. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils were totally absorbed in their newspaper accounts of the fall of Humpty Dumpty and wrote with enthusiasm about how dramatic, even 'theatrical', the spectacle was. The teacher's planning was structured effectively to fire up pupils' imaginations and develop their sense of tragedy and calamity caused by the event. Similarly, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on mirror symmetry, despite the complexities of the exercise for some, pupils persevered because expectations were high for them to have a go without fear of being wrong.
- Most teachers include discussions that stop pupils losing concentration and help them to develop their thinking. Probing questions check successfully that pupils understand what they have learned. For example, pupils in a Year 5 literacy lesson discussed how the character in the story might have felt in the situation he was in. Pupils used exciting vocabulary, such as 'exhilarated', to make their character come alive and enjoyed listening to well-considered excerpts to extend their ideas. However, occasionally, in order to maintain the enthusiasm and amount of work completed, teachers cut discussions short and do not always check that pupils understand their work. Consequently, a few pupils become unsure about their learning and so make slower progress, particularly when working by themselves.
- Most teachers use information about pupils' ability and progress effectively in their planning. On the few occasions where teaching requires improvement, the information is not used effectively enough to set work at the right level. As a result, pupils of all abilities sometimes sit through over-generalised presentations that are too easy for some and too hard for others. Consequently, a few do not achieve as well as they could.
- The one-to-one and small-group support provided by teaching assistants and other staff is effective in helping pupils most at risk of falling behind to achieve well. Pupils particularly value the regular time they have to read and carry out research on topics they are studying, for example, in history and geography.
- While staff are generally very supportive and encourage pupils to work hard, teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance to help them improve their work, particularly in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. On many occasions, it is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy learning and try hard. Occasionally, a few become restless and less attentive when they are not sure about their learning.
- Pupils' attendance, at over 97%, is well-above average. As one pupil said, 'If you don't come to school and you don't like reading, you won't learn anything'.
- Parents and staff who contributed their views during the inspection were very positive about the school and about pupils' behaviour and interest in learning.
- Pupils are very friendly and polite; they work together well and are kind to others. They say that they feel safe and that they are looked after well. Pupils show high regard for staff and these trusting relationships give pupils the confidence to ask for help if they need it.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have regular opportunities in lessons to discuss matters of personal safety in school and in the outside world.
- From their lessons, visits and outside speakers, for example, the emergency services, pupils understand well how to stay safe outside school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and what to do if problems arise, for example, they know the dangers of using chat rooms on the internet and how to play safely outside.
- The school tackles any form of discriminatory behaviour promptly. Pupils have a very good

understanding of different types of bullying, including the threats posed by strangers and cyber-bullying. They say that there is no bullying at school and that staff deal with any problems straight away. Occasional incidents of name-calling are addressed effectively.

- Opportunities to take responsibility, such as older pupils looking after younger ones at playtimes, acting as school monitors and helping around the school, all provide pupils with purposeful experiences that develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively.
- Pupils enjoy many events, including visits that extend their experiences of the wider world. Through working with an extensive range of visitors, pupils show respect for the different communities and lifestyles in the world beyond school. The school is aware that opportunities to celebrate the increasing range of diverse cultures represented in modern Britain today need further development to prepare pupils thoroughly for life in a diverse society.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has high aspirations for the pupils and has already made a significant impact on the school's performance. She is driving improvements effectively and has engendered good teamwork among staff, governors and parents. Senior leaders have an accurate overview of the school's performance.
- Despite the numerous changes in staff since the previous inspection and a slight downturn in pupils' performance in mathematics in 2013, the school has set ambitious targets for this year and senior leaders are diligent in checking that all pupils are now making good progress and achieving more as a result.
- The level of care the school provides is very good and is a key reason why the school is regularly over-subscribed. The progress of pupils most at risk of falling behind is reviewed each half term and effective personalised support ensures that these pupils make good progress. Leaders check that pupils have the help they need to achieve well and involve outside agencies promptly when the need arises.
- The school improvement plan shows that leaders focus effectively on ensuring that the basic skills of reading and mathematics are taught effectively. Challenging the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics, is a high priority and the action subject leaders have taken to increase the focus on the teaching of mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2, has already had significant impact on raising achievement.
- Senior leaders monitor teachers' performance very effectively and identify where improvements need to be made. Teachers have good opportunities to improve their practice and there are effective systems in place to monitor the school's work rigorously. However, leaders do not always check closely enough that teachers' planning includes activities set at the right level for pupils and that marking is of consistently high quality at all times.
- Robust procedures that are linked to salary progression are implemented to improve teachers' performance. Where teaching requires improvement, leaders provide appropriate individual support. Partnerships with other schools are proving beneficial in ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are totally reliable and that teachers use this information to help pupils achieve as much as they can.
- The curriculum links subjects through topics that engage pupils' interests effectively. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects other than in literacy or to engage in investigations in mathematics so that they can improve their skills. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy many opportunities to explore the world around them and develop their skills and knowledge effectively.
- Many enrichment activities extend pupils' learning beyond school and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils talked enthusiastically about sports activities and using computers to find information for topics and homework. From art and other cultural activities and visits, and the opportunity to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments, pupils gain a good awareness of the world beyond school.

- The school involves parents well by encouraging them to support their children’s learning by, for example, listening to them read at home, completing homework and ensuring that their children attend regularly.
- The local authority’s involvement with this good and improving school is light touch. It provides the school with valuable staff training, support in evaluating the school’s performance and identifying areas for development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school’s current performance, and the impact of actions staff are taking to raise achievement quickly. They know that pupils are capable of achieving more, for example in mathematics, and are monitoring developments closely to ensure the actions taken are effective. They ensure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements and support effectively the children that are most in need. They check that policies are up to date and that finances are managed efficiently. For example, they understand and review the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding and sports funding on pupils’ achievement and physical well-being.
 - Governors have the skills to challenge senior leaders because they are very ambitious for the school and its pupils but they are also very supportive of the headteacher and staff. The governing body has undergone effective training, for example, to better understand pupils’ performance data, and where teaching needs to improve in order to raise standards. Governors are now well informed about the management of teachers’ performance, including that of the headteacher, and they review teachers’ pay accordingly, making it clear to staff that pay awards will only be granted where it is evident that pupils have made good progress. Governors understand well that not enough of the teaching is outstanding to secure outstanding achievement.

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	121644
Local authority	York
Inspection number	431385

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Williams
Headteacher	Alison Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
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