

Kirkstall Valley Primary School

Argie Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2QZ

Inspection dates 30–31 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their well below starting points, almost all pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are slightly above average overall, except in English where they are significantly above average. As a result, pupils leave school well prepared to continue their education.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school and sometimes outstanding. This has resulted in a steady rise in standards since 2011.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their successful learning.
- Pupils enjoy a rich, diverse and inclusive curriculum including an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs.
- The school's work to keep pupils' safe and secure is outstanding.
- The systems in place to assess pupils' progress are rigorous and meticulous. Pupils who are underachieving can, therefore, be quickly identified and given extra help with their learning.
- This strong focus on tracking pupils' progress ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium make good progress throughout the school.
- The headteacher is a highly effective leader. She drives the school forward through clear and rigorous leadership, giving high priority to supporting and training staff in order to improve the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- The senior leadership team and knowledgeable governors strongly support the headteacher and are as passionate about improving the school's performance as she is. As a result, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The majority of teaching is not outstanding.
- Attendance is not consistently in line with the national average.
- Standards in writing are above average overall, and although pupils write well sometimes their handwriting and presentation needs further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and safety in school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a local authority representative. A group of parents talked to one of the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, development plan, the minutes of the governing body meetings, and records of lesson observations, safeguarding information and school policies.
- Inspectors examined school questionnaires completed by the school staff and 32 responses to the Parent View questionnaire. The inspectors also took account of two letters received from parents.

Inspection team

Barbara Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- A majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and are of Asian or Asian British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not, or believed not to be, English, is well above average.
- There are no disabled pupils in the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium , which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible to receive free school meals, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding to drive progress at an even faster pace by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school and in other schools
 - allowing pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their workbooks by building in time for pupils to correct their work
 - making sure that pupils understand teachers' written comments in workbooks so they know exactly what it is they have to do to improve their writing skills.
- Improve the quality of presentation in pupils' written work and enhance their handwriting by teaching pupils how to use a joined up script as soon as they are capable.
- Improve attendance by reducing the numbers of pupils taken on extended leave and the incidence of families taking holidays in term time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because in Key Stages 1 and 2 almost all pupils make good progress from their starting points on entry to Year 1. Progress between year groups is good. Some pupils make outstanding progress in English overall, and in reading especially. Overall, standards for all subjects in Key Stage 2 have been improving over the past three years and are now above the national average.
- When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills, knowledge and understanding is usually well below those that is typical for their age. Some children join the school with limited acquisition of English language. Children make good progress because of the good teaching and careful nurturing that they receive. Consequently, they enter Year 1 with standards almost at the levels of development expected.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards by the end of Year 2 are overall average. Standards in reading and mathematics are slightly better than in writing. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 check on their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) was higher than those compared to similar pupils nationally. The school links this success to good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, rigorous teaching of phonics and extra support for pupils who are struggling to read. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- Standards in reading have risen from below average in the past to above average at the end of Year 6 in 2013. More pupils make better than the expected progress in reading compared to pupils nationally. Pupils in Year 6 commented that they 'read a range of books independently because we can read fluently and no longer need support.' They also say that they enjoy reading daily at home and in school and always have a book from the school library.
- In English, standards are significantly higher than those achieved by similar pupils nationally. A large majority of pupils gained the higher Level 5 in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013. A large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language also gained higher standards than similar pupils nationally. This is because their acquisition of language develops at a good rate in the Early Years Foundation Stage and across the school.
- Standards in mathematics have risen from below average in 2011 to above average in 2013 at the end of Year 6. A higher than average proportion of pupils also gained the higher levels in mathematics in 2013. Good progress has been achieved because lessons have focused on linking mathematical skills to real-life situations and on recalling mathematical facts quickly. This approach has meant that pupils tackle number work quickly, efficiently and that problem solving skills have improved.
- The achievement of those pupils who have special educational needs is good because of the high quality of support that they receive both from teachers and teaching assistants. The school's data shows that this group, not including pupils with a statement of special educational needs, make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from various minority ethnic groups, are making the same progress and attain similar standards to their peers in the school. Their attainment is higher in mathematics and English than similar that of pupils nationally. A few Pakistani pupils do less well than other pupils nationally in writing and reading. Overall, the school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are effective.
- The most able pupils, who gain the higher levels at the end of Year 2, continue to make good progress across Key Stage 2 and make more than the expected progress in reading and mathematics. In 2013, one pupil gained Level 6 in mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 in mathematics and reading was higher than the national average. Pupils gaining Level 5 in English were significantly above the national average.
- Although pupils do well in writing, sometimes untidy handwriting and poor presentation does not

reflect their otherwise good attitudes and achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall teaching is good; some is outstanding. It is rarely less than good.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress because of effective teaching and the well-planned activities provided inside and outdoors. Children progress well when they explore and learn on their own. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's language skills, extending their vocabulary and reinforcing their understanding of letters and the sounds they make.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' expectations are high and lessons are exciting. For example, in an outstanding lesson, good use of a video clip of dinosaurs was made to help pupils understand which adjectives might be used to describe these animals. Pupils were intrigued by the images, and made excellent progress in their use of adjectives when describing the dinosaurs in their writing.
- Teachers use information about pupils' ability and progress effectively in their planning. Pupils have clear targets for improving their learning, and receive regular homework. They plan lessons that motivate and engage pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Pupils say that, 'Teachers make lessons fun and easy to remember.'
- Teachers successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and create a positive learning atmosphere. In lessons, teachers successfully promote qualities such as, cooperation, respect for others and reflection. This is supported in a comment by a pupil, 'Everyone just works together and everyone gets along'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to help pupils who need extra support either in lessons, individually, or in small groups. This includes pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Such extra well-targeted support ensures they make the same progress as other pupils in school. A comment from a parent epitomises how parents feel, 'This is a school where every child really does matter.'
- In mathematics lessons, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves in order to develop their problem-solving skills based on a secure understanding of basic mathematical facts. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were using 20 beads threaded on cord to work out number bonds to 20. By partitioning the beads in various combinations pupils understood the different ways of making twenty with two numbers.
- Essential reading skills are effectively taught through a well-structured programme. Pupils enjoy reading and read widely at home and in school. Guided reading sessions, where a group of pupils study the same book together with their teacher, has helped pupils improve their reading skills, especially their understanding of the text.
- Teachers have introduced new initiatives to improve the quality of pupils' writing. For example, the 'story maker' sessions are helping pupils generate ideas for writing. They encourage the use of new vocabulary and help demonstrate how to create interesting sentences which can form part of a longer story. They are not always as vigilant as they might be in demanding high quality presentation from pupils work nor is the teaching of joined up script as strong as it might be.
- Work in pupils' books displays clear progress showing that teaching has been good over time. Work is marked regularly and teachers' comments indicate the next steps to be taken in pupils' learning. However, sometimes these comments are not easy to understand and this results in pupils not being clear on how to improve their work. In addition, time is not always provided for pupils to reflect on the teachers' comments or to correct their work once it has been marked.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are proud of their school and greatly enjoy learning within the exceptionally caring environment created by the headteacher and her staff. There is a very calm, orderly and inclusive atmosphere.
- Pupils behaviour in and outside lessons is excellent. They are polite and treat each other in a caring way. This was seen in the dining room where older pupils were helping younger pupils collect their lunches and cut their food into manageable pieces. They also scraped their unwanted food in the bin before helping these younger children walk down the ramp onto the playground.
- Pupils show excellent respect for each other and adults in school. They form excellent relationships so feel happy and enjoy being in school. A comment from a Year 6 pupil reflects how pupils feel, 'Everyone is welcome here, no matter what the colour of your skin is, or your religion.' This is a positive example of how well the school promotes the elimination of discrimination.
- When pupils are on school trips, members of the public praise their behaviour. Typical comments are, 'I am impressed by their behaviour,' 'Excellent behaviour,' and 'Super behaviour'
- They take their roles as school councillors and buddies seriously. Outside, some playground buddies, clearly visible in their bright yellow caps, were keeping an eye on the 'buddy bench' should any pupils feel lonely and in need of a friend. Opportunities to take on such responsibilities provide purposeful ways to extend pupils' moral and social development.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school due to the excellent care and attention they receive from all the adults in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including using the internet. Pupils say that they are confident to seek help, should they need it, from any adult in school. Parents and staff strongly support the fact that pupils are safe in school.
- Pupils, in discussions with inspectors, demonstrated a secure understanding of what is meant by bullying and this included name-calling and physical threats. They said there was no bullying or racist comments in school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is built into every lesson As a consequence, pupils know the difference between right and wrong and have a good understanding of cultures other than their own. A comment from a parent supports this view, 'This is a culturally rich school which provides many opportunities for pupils to increase their awareness of many cultures and beliefs.'
- Recently attendance has improved to average. Punctuality has also improved. Everyone arrived on time during the inspection. Some families take holidays and extended leave in school time and as a result of this, attendance figures are lowered. Through no fault of their own, some families are delayed abroad, and this also affects attendance figures negatively.
- The breakfast club has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides a healthy breakfast and opportunities for pupils to socialise with their friends and take part in interesting activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management at all levels, including the governance, is good throughout the school and is largely evidenced by the improved achievement and progress that pupils have made over the past three years.
- The headteacher's very effective management and leadership of the school has established high staff morale and a widely shared commitment to continuous improvement. Her strong leadership has been the driving force in the improvements since the last inspection. She has an accurate view of the school's performance.
- The headteacher has been working under challenging circumstances. Despite this, in the words of a local authority advisor, 'the headteacher has been absolutely passionate about getting everything right for the children.' One hundred per cent of parents (Parent View) would

recommend this school to other parents. Parents who spoke to the inspectors were all positive about the school. Typical comments were, 'We are happy with the education our children receive' and 'This is an inclusive and welcoming school we cannot speak highly enough about it.'

- The monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is exemplary. Pupils who are likely to underachieve, including those with complex learning needs or behavioural difficulties are carefully monitored. The headteacher holds regular assessment meetings with teachers so that support can be put in place quickly for any pupils who are underachieving. As a result of this extra adult support, pupils make good progress.
- There are no middle leaders in the school, only senior leaders, who are an effective team. Although several of the senior leaders are newly appointed their work is already impacting positively on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. They are enthusiastically checking the quality of teaching, offering advice to teachers and generally promoting the school's ambition for excellence.
- English and mathematics are clear priorities in the curriculum and are enhanced through exciting topics across other subjects. An example of exciting topic was seen when some pupils visited the Bear hospital in the school hall. This was a health project run by medical students and was an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn in a fun way about staying healthy and the anatomy of the human body. In a role play session pupils were able to open up a life-sized teddy bear with imaginary surgical tools and take out the soft internal organs. The curriculum is also greatly enhanced with various after-school clubs, such as, gardening, basketball, Zumba and gymnastics.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons and in assemblies. Another strength in the curriculum is the provision of a wide range of sporting activities and physical education lessons that professional coaches, as well as teachers, teach. As a result, pupils are well aware of how important exercise and healthy food is to keep them healthy.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors regularly visit the classes they are assigned to and have lunch with the pupils on many occasions. Consequently, and through their analysis of pupils' progress data, they have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how the school's performance can be improved.
- They make a strong contribution to school improvement and appropriately support and challenge school leaders where necessary.
- They are well informed about the progress all pupils are making and understand clearly how the school tracks the progress made across the school.
- They have a good understanding of the performance management procedures and will only allow pay progression for staff if their challenging personal targets are met. They also hold the headteacher rigorously to account and are knowledgeable of the school's view of its own performance.
- The budget is well managed. They ensure the pupil premium and primary school sports funding is used for whom it is intended and that it is having a positive impact on pupils' standards and development of healthier life styles. The funding has been used effectively to increase the amount of support for pupils through additional teaching support and the purchase of resources to improve pupils' learning.
- Statutory duties are met effectively, including ensuring that the school's safeguarding arrangements 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	107887
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	431344

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sam Clarke
Headteacher	Beverley Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
Telephone number	0113 3368030
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