

Whitby, Airy Hill Community Primary School

Waterstead Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 1PXZ

Inspection dates	29–30 January 2014
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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		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

- Achievement fell in 2012 and 2013. Standards in 2013 were below average and pupils made slow progress from their different starting points. Overall, therefore, achievement is not good.
- The quality of teaching is not good because too much requires improvement and some is inadequate. Pupils are not taught to write or develop their mathematical skills well enough.
- Behaviour is not good because some pupils display silly behaviour, are boisterous or rough with each other.
- Leaders have been slow to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement since 2012. The skills of some senior and middle leaders need improvement and the curriculum does not meet all pupils' interests and needs.
- The governing body has not challenged the school's leaders well enough so that teaching improves at a faster rate or that the pupil premium funding is used wisely.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils currently in the school are on track to make better progress than they did previously. This is because the headteacher has now begun to deal with underachievement and teachers are now more accountable for the progress their pupils make. The school is beginning to show improvement.
- Most pupils behave well, play sensibly, are polite and considerate to each other and have good manners.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in sports and arts activities both in and out of school.
- The quality of feedback that pupils receive on their work is improving. In some classes in Key Stage 2, it is all of good quality.
- The arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure in the school are high quality.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 parts of lessons, taught by ten staff of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, several pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils both formally and in lessons and in the playground.
- The inspector analysed the 47 responses that had been submitted to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and talked to parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils in local authority care and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was seconded to support another school during the Autumn term 2012. A new deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2013. Several teaching staff have either joined or left the school over the past 18 months.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is good or better and raise achievement further by:
 - improving the teaching of phonics (how pupils link sounds to letters) in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1
 - making sure that pupils improve their writing skills at a faster rate in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring all pupils receive specific advice which enables them to improve their work during 'target time' in the morning
 - carefully reviewing the targets that are set for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so that they are all challenging and ensure they do their very best.
- Ensuring that behaviour is at least good in all classes and that it is better when pupils are outside the classroom by:
 - improving the skills of teaching assistants who run whole classes, so they are better able to promote good behaviour
 - supervising pupils more closely in the cloakroom and outside so that they think twice before becoming rough or boisterous.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance so it becomes at least good by:
 - improving the skills of senior and subject leaders so that they take a full part in improving teaching, ensuring assessments are accurate and so raising achievement at a faster rate without being too reliant on the headteacher
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils in all classes have an equal chance to explore a range topics in history, geography, religious education and science
 - ensuring that the governing body challenges the school's leaders rigorously on matters relating to the pupil premium, the performance of teachers, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

External reviews of both governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Between 2011 and 2013, achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 fell significantly to the point where it was below the government's minimum standards for primary schools. In 2013, pupils who left in Year 6 had made inadequate progress from their different starting points in mathematics and writing. In reading, their progress was better, but not good. Overall, the standards that pupils reached in 2013 were below the national average.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are below those expected of their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They do not make good progress during this year or as they progress into Key Stage 1 because these skills of literacy are not well addressed. In particular, pupils do not form their letters well, use punctuation correctly or spell common words accurately. This means that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have reached standards that are below average and have been declining for three years.
- These literacy problems have continued into Key Stage 2, which has resulted in pupils' writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling being weak by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics are also weak by the end of Key Stage 1 and during Key Stage 2. Some pupils struggle with mental calculations of numbers or do not think to use standard techniques to work out mathematical problems, such as using number lines.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to others. However, the targets that are set for these pupils are not customised to each pupil's individual needs so are not always challenging enough.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to other ability groups.
- In 2013, the gap in progress between those who were eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and others was wide. The gap in attainment between these two groups of pupils was equivalent to one year of progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the progress of pupils currently in the school. This shows that the rate of progress is now accelerating. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to make better progress and reach standards that are close to national averages in all subjects. Those in Year 5 are on track to make even better progress. Moreover, the gap in achievement is narrowing sharply between those eligible for the pupil premium and others. The most able pupils are now on course to make good progress. The school is now better promoting equal opportunities.
- On the plus side, pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Pupils talked enthusiastically to an inspector about how much they enjoyed the David Walliams books and how they preferred the detail in the Harry Potter books over the film adaptations.
- Although gaps in pupils' learning remain, on the whole, pupils are spelling more accurately and their skills in mathematics are better than they were.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Changes in staff, along with the absence of the headteacher, meant that the quality of teaching across the school slipped in 2012 and 2013. During this time, the quality of teaching was not checked rigorously enough and the governing body did not spot the sharp decline until it was too late.
- Inspectors found that the quality of teaching varies too much, so overall it is not good.
- The teaching of phonics (how sounds are linked to letters) is not good in the Reception Year or in Key Stage 1. While pupils learn sounds and learn to recognise them when they are written, they do not then make the essential step of practising writing words and simple sentences which use these sounds. This is the key reason why pupils' writing has lagged well behind their reading and why so few pupils succeed in the Year 1 national phonics tests.
- Some pupils find the work too easy. Sometimes, they finish the work quickly and are left waiting

around for others to catch up. The most able pupils have similar spellings to learn as middle ability pupils so are not always stretched as well as they could be. Some of the most able pupils, as a result, are not able to spell more complex, common words, such as 'necessary'.

- Some pupils find the work too difficult, so either do not finish the work or need to have it explained again by an adult.
- Teaching assistants do not always help as much as they could. Sometimes their explanations are unclear which confuse pupils, and occasionally they help pupils too much by giving them the answers to questions.
- The school has not yet managed to ensure that all teachers give pupils advice that helps them to improve their work. Some advice is vague and marking sometimes contains unhelpful comments such as 'well done' or 'try again'. This means that the morning 'target time' which is designed for pupils to read and respond to teachers' comments is not always well used.
- Although no teaching is outstanding in the school, there are examples of good teaching, where the feedback to pupils is very precise and, as a result, pupils are very clear how they must improve their work. In one lesson, a group of pupils who did not understand fully how to use speech marks had this explained to them and, in a short space of time, they were able to write a variety of interesting sentences which were correctly punctuated.
- Some teaching assistants give good support to pupils, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs. They quickly detect when pupils are having difficulty understanding and skilfully adapt their teaching as necessary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because it is too variable when they are in class, during lunchtimes, playtimes and after school.
- Some teaching assistants who teach full classes on some afternoons do not insist on pupils listening to them when they are giving instructions. Pupils sometimes ignore them and continue with their work.
- Pupils occasionally use bad language. An inspector heard two boys shouting abuse at each other across the classroom when they were getting changed for football practice at the end of the day. The adults supervising did not challenge this behaviour decisively enough.
- At the end of the day, pupils in one class rushed to the small cloakroom area all at once. Some boys practised their rough karate moves on each other with little regard for others around them. Other pupils shouted across the cloakroom. One boy deliberately soaked another in the bathroom as he cleaned up after an art lesson.
- In the playground, some pupils play roughly, throwing balls hard at each other as they run. Others play sensibly or talk in small groups.
- In most classes, however, teachers and teaching assistants make sure behaviour is good and sometimes it is exemplary. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Teachers and teaching assistants make class rules clear and pupils are happy to follow them.
- In class, pupils usually behave well, even when the work does not fully interest them or when they have to wait when they have finished their work and are waiting for the teacher to set them the next task.
- Inspectors observed pupils behaving very well in an assembly, where they sang enthusiastically and were keen to celebrate the successes of their peers. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good across the school, with good links with schools overseas.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying and say that while it does occasionally happen, that staff deal with it quickly.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from the potential dangers of the internet and when using their mobile phones.
- Pupils' attendance is rising steadily and is just above average compared to other primary schools

around the country.

- Most parents who responded to Parent View are happy with the standard of behaviour and how the school deals with bullying.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because achievement and teaching across the school have not improved quickly enough since the decline in standards that became apparent in 2012. School leaders and the governing body were slow to put urgent, effective measures in place and this resulted in further decline in 2013.
- The skills of senior and middle leaders are still developing. Some do not yet have good enough skills to check the quality of teaching and analyse data to improve teaching and achievement. This means that the checks on achievement and teaching are largely carried out by the headteacher who also observes all the lessons.
- The curriculum varies too much between classes and has not been checked well enough by school leaders. For example, in some classes, pupils have a chance to explore a range of history, geography and science topics, but in other classes these opportunities are limited. However, many pupils take part and enjoy the many arts, music and sports activities the school offers, often taking part in community events, such as the Eskdale Festival.
- School leaders are now making sure staff take more responsibility for pupils' achievement. This, for example, is resulting in teachers being more aware of the needs of those who are eligible for the pupil premium and as a result, they are now making far better progress.
- Subject leaders are beginning to analyse the reasons behind the sharp decline in standards. For example, the literacy leader has insisted on all teachers making sure pupils use capital letters and punctuation correctly. This is now beginning to have a positive effect on achievement in Key Stage 2 in particular.
- The school uses the government funding for primary school sports education wisely. So far, three teachers have been trained to be swimming coaches, which will enable them to continue the work when the funding ceases. Inspectors observed many pupils being involved in sports throughout the day and in cricket and rugby clubs which take place after school, led by visiting sports coaches.
- The local authority has been giving the school light-touch support since the previous inspection when the school was judged as good. It was slow to help the school address the decline in 2012, which contributed to deeper problems in 2013. However, when asked to intervene, such as helping the literacy leader to devise action plans to improve writing, the quality of support provided by local authority staff has been good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has recently changed and has a new Chair. The governors are well aware that they did not challenge the school rigorously enough on matters relating to the pupil premium, the arrangements to check the performance of staff, and in challenging the school on falling standards. Governors receive training on how to analyse achievement data, but their understanding remains hazy. This does not put them in a good position to challenge the school thoroughly enough so that it improves at a faster rate. Moreover, the minutes of governing body meetings show that much time is spent on routine matters, rather than what is really important, namely pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors oversee the management of the headteacher's and other staff's performance, but have sometimes been too quick to accept recommendations from the local authority rather than make decisions on pay progression themselves.

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	121345
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	427333

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Cooper
Headteacher	Jim Lidgley
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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