

# Wheatcroft Community Primary School

Holbeck Hill, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 3BW

**Inspection dates** 24–25 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils achieve well from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards are broadly average in the current Year 6 and above expectations for age in Years 4 and 5. A few pupils in Year 6 are working at Level 6 in English.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Activities are productive and fun.
- The exceptionally rich and varied curriculum makes full use of sport and high-quality music provision to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite, work hard and bubble with enthusiasm.
- School leaders and governors make sure that pupils are extremely safe and secure. Parents agree that their children feel safe and happy at school.
- Strong leadership of teaching means that pupils' achievement is improving at a rapid rate and teaching is consistently good or better.
- Governors are very closely involved in helping the school to improve further. They ask pertinent questions and check pupils' progress frequently.
- The headteacher has created a happy, purposeful school. Pupils describe their days as 'packed full of experiences and life-long lessons.' The school continues to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 make a slow start with reading. They do not learn systematically or practise often enough how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics).
- These pupils do not gain a wide vocabulary quickly enough.
- Senior leaders have yet to check in depth how effective the teaching of phonics is.
- The marking of younger pupils' work does not always tell pupils what to do to improve. It is not always in child-friendly words and it is quite hard for pupils to read what some teachers write.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and staff, two meetings with governors and the Chair of the Governing Body and a meeting with a representative from the local authority. They also had two meetings with groups of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 to discuss their work and their views on school and informal meetings which pupils themselves requested and set up.
- The inspection took into account the 29 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents in letters and a telephone call.

## Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Firth

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are at an early stage of learning English when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception aged children.
- There have been several staffing changes since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher took up post in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate lower-attaining pupils' achievement in reading in Key Stage 1 and improve the teaching of phonics by making sure that:
  - there is a systematic and methodical approach
  - pupils have frequent opportunities to practise new letters and sounds
  - pupils have more opportunities to gain a wide vocabulary
  - senior leaders check closely how well phonics teaching is helping younger, lower-attaining pupils to read.
- Improve aspects of marking younger pupils' work by making sure that:
  - pupils know what to do to improve their work
  - comments are written clearly and in child-friendly language.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from individual starting points that vary considerably from year to year from below expected levels to broadly in line with the level expected of their age. Very few start at above age-related expectations.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They access freely a wide range of interesting activities both indoors and outside, learning effectively, for example, when they used magnifying glasses to examine insects and tadpoles.
- Pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 1. The most able and average-attaining pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lower-attaining pupils achieve well in writing and mathematics. They make slower progress in learning to read because they forget and confuse different sounds and letters. They learn to recognise some key words but this is inconsistent. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check is below average.
- Overall attainment from year to year does vary according to the proportions of pupils in each year group who have special educational needs. Current attainment is above average in most year groups but closer to average in Years 1 and 6.
- However, achievement in Year 6 is outstanding. Pupils make considerable gains in their knowledge and skills in this year because they are extremely well taught.
- Pupils supported through school action or who are learning English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils supported through school action plus make significant gains in their learning. The work is tailored closely to their needs.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium funding do better than similar groups nationally and compared to pupils in the school who are not known to be eligible for free school meals. A higher proportion than nationally work within the higher Levels 5 and 6 at Key Stage 2. The school clearly promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully.
- By Year 6, the large majority of pupils read and write well. Pupils read avidly for pleasure, devouring books by favourite authors. Their writing shows a good grasp of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Vivid vocabulary and adept phrasing distinguish the most able pupils' writing as in 'the monotone buzz of bees and wasps,...'. A few are working at Level 6.
- In mathematics, the most able pupils forge ahead because the work challenges them and they have a great deal of practice in applying their knowledge to solve mathematical problems.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils use and apply their literacy and mathematical skills every day in different subjects. This contributes well to pupils' good overall achievement.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice across the school, especially in Key Stage 2. Teaching assistants are used well in every class to help different groups of pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn new skills at a good rate. They become confident learners because activities and tasks are well thought out to interest and challenge them.
- The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 does not enable lower-attaining pupils to learn and practise early reading skills systematically. They have relatively few opportunities to gain a wide vocabulary.
- However, across the school, there are generally good systems to accommodate the very wide ability range in most classes to ensure that everyone achieves well.
- For example, during one activity, Year 6 average-attaining pupils worked out where to insert commas in complex sentences, while the most able pupils focused on using semicolons. Good humoured asides such as, 'I don't want to see an outbreak of semi-colonitis,' enlivened learning.
- Staff use questions and discussion very effectively to assess how well pupils have understood

and then use the information to shape pupils' learning.

- Most learning is based on what pupils need to learn next and relates to pupils' individual targets. This means that pupils move on quickly. This is highly effective when staff have the confidence to let the most able pupils start on tasks as soon as they are ready to do so, thus leaving time to concentrate on those who need further explanation or support.
- The most able pupils say they find it helps them to learn best when, 'The teacher explains the main method and then we get on with it ourselves and work things out.' For example, some Year 5 pupils were battling to find the area of complex shapes and just a little judicious help enabled them to see suddenly how to work it out.
- In Key Stage 1, marking is very encouraging but sometimes does not make clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning. Some of the comments are hard to read and understand because they are not written clearly or in child-friendly language.
- Marking is highly effective in Key Stage 2. It both encourages pupils but shows them clearly what to do next to improve their work further. As a result, pupils become clearer about how well they are doing.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Typically, pupils arrive punctually for lessons, ready and eager to learn. Their above average attendance indicates their enthusiasm for learning. They listen with keen attention and ask questions when they do not understand. This helps them to move on quickly to the next challenge. They clearly want to do well. This is why pupils' achievement is rising so quickly.
- The excellent relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils are demonstrated in their shared approach to learning. As pupils rightly pointed out, 'Teachers are committed; they listen to you and have conversations with you.'
- Pupils' days are full. The large majority of pupils attend before and after-school clubs, as well as lunchtime clubs. The primary school sport funding has given them access to additional sports, such as golf and table tennis. The school orchestra meets regularly and clubs, such as the quilting group, enables pupils to develop skills in different crafts.
- In addition, throughout the day pupils access an extremely rich curriculum, including singing, French and zumbatomic'. This develops pupils' sense of community and counters gender stereotyping. Thus, boys and girls dance and sing equally well and with enthusiasm. Older pupils explained that the biannual residential visit to France 'helped a lot, we're all friends and we all got closer.'
- Older pupils look after younger ones and enjoy playing with them. Play leaders and sports leaders make sure that everyone has something to do.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel extremely safe and their parents agree. They also agree that bullying is rare and that if there is any it is sorted out very quickly.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying and the maturity to realise, 'You don't have to let things get to you. When we had problems the teacher helped and now we're the best of mates.'
- The school council has real responsibility for compiling, editing and publishing information about curriculum events in school.
- Minutes of school council meetings show that pupils have in-depth discussions about matters that concern them. They update the governing body regularly in well-written letters or presentations. This helps to bring about changes such as buttered toast for Key Stage 2, including staff, at morning break.
- The key factor that lifts their behaviour out of the ordinary is pupils' willingness to do things for themselves. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils researched, wrote and produced a high-quality DVD on coastal features on their own initiative. It has been shared with the local

authority advisers.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The new senior leadership team has had considerable impact in the short time since the last inspection.
- Key to this has been the strong focus on leading teaching through observing lessons, coaching and mentoring staff, checking pupils' work in books and sharing features of outstanding practice. This has resulted in consistently good and often better teaching across the school, as well as a shared approach to raising standards.
- In conjunction with this, the wide-ranging curriculum, with excellent provision for music, and the community and the locality at its core, enriches pupils' learning because staff link subjects together so that pupils practise and apply their literacy and mathematical skills throughout the day.
- These factors have led to a sharp rise in achievement, higher standards and an increasing proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age each year.
- Senior leaders have carried out an initial check on the effectiveness of phonics teaching but have yet to look at it sufficiently closely to check whether it is helping lower-attaining pupils to learn to read at a fast enough rate.
- The systems to check teachers' performance and effectiveness are used well to set school-wide and personal performance targets and to reward very effective teaching.
- Middle leaders explain to the governing body how their subjects promote pupils' literacy and mathematical skills, raise their aspirations and to be well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- School improvement planning is effective because it is detailed, timed and costed but also projects ahead.
- The primary school sport funding is used very well to enhance extra-curricular clubs, introduce pupils to a diverse range of sports and to improve fitness levels. In addition, staff have received specialist training in sports such as boxing-to-be-fit and pupils have been trained as sports and Paralympics sports leaders so they can lead events.
- The local authority, after an initial period of support following the last inspection, now gives basic support to the school. The school now supports other schools especially with regard to promoting excellent behaviour.
- Safeguarding meets fully current government requirements.
- The headteacher has successfully created a school that exemplifies its motto: 'Learn and care.' Parents choose to send their children here. The school is currently over-subscribed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know exactly what their role is. They carry out their responsibilities rigorously. They have an excellent understanding of data which they use to check pupils' progress, including those supported through the pupil premium, regularly. They ask perceptive questions such as, 'How quickly would it be picked up if the tracking and monitoring systems were not working?' They check for themselves how well things are going, working in partnership with staff who have specific responsibilities, such as special educational needs or safeguarding. The governing body has tackled staffing issues comprehensively in order to make sure that the school has an effective leadership and teaching team. They are closely involved in the management of staff.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121349
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442273

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Baxter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Hartley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01723 375704
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