

# Ackton Pastures Primary School

College Grove, Whitwood, Castleford, WF10 5NS

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups because the quality of teaching has been too variable.
- Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work, particularly in mathematics and writing because in some lessons teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve.
- Work is sometimes too easy for pupils, particularly the most able, because tasks are not always adjusted to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they can.
- Teaching is not yet leading to all pupils achieving well over time. Not all teaching is good or outstanding.
- Although rising, pupils' attainment is low in all subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Less attention is given to encouraging the most able pupils to use and apply their skills and to think for themselves, particularly in mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are leading the school very effectively and have been highly instrumental in ensuring the rapid improvement in the school since the previous inspection. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- There is a relentless focus by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise the quality of pupils' achievement further.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning and improved progress.
- The school takes good care of all pupils, whatever their circumstances. There are strong supportive relationships which help pupils to feel safe and secure.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. They are highly positive in support of school leaders.
- Parents agree the school is improving. 'I moved my child here from another school and it's the best thing I did. The staff are always polite and my child is happy. I cannot ask for more', was a typical comment.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons and parts of lessons and listened to pupils read. In addition, they observed small group sessions with teaching assistants and observed break and lunch times.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff and senior leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors met some parents informally during the school day and took account of the 34 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) alongside the school's own surveys of parental opinion.
- The information from 28 staff questionnaires was also taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Steve Isherwood, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has experienced significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. Six new teachers have joined the teaching team since September 2013.
- The Principal is a local leader of education (LLE).
- The school has been supported by the federated arrangements with Castleford Half Acres Primary school.
- When the school was previously inspected in March 2013, it was judged to require special measures, because it was falling to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement to good by:
  - ensuring that teaching is consistently good or better
  - increasing the numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels in their work, particularly in mathematics and writing
  - raising pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in all subjects
  - ensuring that all teachers assess pupils' achievements accurately and use information about what pupils know already to plan work for them that is at the right level, particularly the most able
  - ensuring that the most able pupils get sufficient opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and think for themselves, particularly in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement is accelerating but requires improvement to ensure all pupils make as much progress as possible. Attainment, while rising, is currently low in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, and pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups because the quality of teaching is variable in places.
- Despite some encouraging improvements in pupils' attainment and progress in 2013, where increasing numbers of pupils made expected and better than expected progress, current evidence from the school's own information, from lesson observations and pupils' work, confirms that not all pupils are achieving as well as they should.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement because in some lessons not enough is expected of them and teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve. Too few pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work, particularly in mathematics and writing. This is because of the variability in how teachers use information about what pupils already know to plan work that offers just the right level of challenge.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below those typically expected for their age. They settle quickly and now make good progress in all areas of learning from their starting points. This is because of significant improvements to teaching and learning and reflects the impact of senior leaders and staff in promoting equality of opportunity and in tackling discrimination.
- Pupils are now making better progress than previously in Years 1 to 6. Increasing numbers of pupils are catching up and making expected and better than expected progress in all areas. This reflects the higher expectations of senior leaders, improvements to provision and the school's drive to raise standards.
- In reading, pupils' attainment is currently low at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but is rising sharply. This is because the school has done great deal to raise the profile of reading. As a consequence, pupils are increasingly confident in their reading as they move through the school. They talk knowledgeably about the content of their books and are consolidating their skills in blending sounds together and building new words.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is accelerating, although not all are achieving as well as they should. Low attainment in basic literacy and weak provision in previous years has impeded the learning for some. Nevertheless, increasingly effective support from teachers and teaching assistants is helping more of these pupils to make progress in reaching their targets.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is improving rapidly and the gap between how well they and other pupils are achieving in English and mathematics is closing significantly in most classes. A notable success was in the 2013 national tests for Year 6, all these pupils made expected levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics, which was above those of their peers.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics has improved significantly over the last year but requires improvement because of its impact over time on pupils' low attainment and because the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is uneven. There is still more work to do to ensure that learning is good or better in every lesson to make up for the gaps in pupils' knowledge skills and understanding and to enable more pupils to reach the higher levels in their work.
- Nevertheless, senior leaders have done a great deal to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in reading, since the previous inspection and place pupils' learning at the heart of planning. Teachers are increasingly confident in their understanding of what constitutes effective practice and are far more aware of the impact of their work on pupils' progress and the groups

of pupils within each class.

- Where pupils make good progress, teachers have good subject knowledge and question pupils effectively; teaching assistants provide an effective layer of support, particularly for those that find learning difficult; links with other subjects are made clear; new skills build well on pupils' prior knowledge, work is just at the right level for pupils' different needs and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were challenged in their understanding of how to create a piece of abstract art by designing their own steps to success. This type of task confirmed how well pupils can achieve when expectations are high and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to think for themselves.
- Where pupils do not make good progress, tasks are sometimes too easy for the most able and teachers underestimate what some of these pupils can achieve. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they should because in some lessons, mainly in mathematics, pupils are not always encouraged to use and apply their skills and to think for themselves. Often, tasks for these pupils are restricted to writing a longer story or tackling a harder sum with less attention given to how some of these pupils might deduce, predict, estimate or to think about different ways of solving a mathematical problem by forming a hypothesis, for example.
- Senior leaders have strengthened procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by focusing more clearly on the progress and achievement of pupils in lessons and in looking at evidence from a variety of sources, including checking in pupils' books, reviewing data and talking with pupils. This has facilitated a culture of improvement and the advances in teaching since the previous inspection. Senior leaders are correct in recognising that the next challenge is to improve the quality of teaching further to raise pupils' achievement to good.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes have improved significantly over the last year as a result of increased expectations by staff, strong relationships with adults and tighter procedures for how staff manage pupils' behaviour. The impact of the school's work to develop pupils' social and emotional skills has also been huge in changing pupils' attitudes for the better.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen and eager to learn. This is reflected in their improving attendance, which is now above the national average, in the reduction of pupils arriving late for lessons and those who are persistently absent.
- Pupils themselves acknowledge the improvements in behaviour around the school and in lessons. They know and understand the school's new 3 As behaviour code and are fully aware of the consequences should they falter. Typically, pupils are polite and courteous to each other and work well together in class. They respond quickly to instructions and are eager to learn, which means that lessons run smoothly. Incidents where challenging behaviour has disrupted learning in the past have reduced significantly and are now very rare. Even where activities in class are less demanding, pupils remain on task and try their best to succeed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Instances of bullying have reduced dramatically. When problems arise, pupils are very sure that staff will deal swiftly with any concerns. Pupils know about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and the importance of adopting safe practices, for example, when using the internet and social media.
- The vast majority of parents who completed Parent View, as well as the school's own surveys, are of the opinion that their children are safe and well cared for at all times.
- The work of the 'Family Mentor' to safeguard all pupils, including those most vulnerable, has been highly effective and is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are very keen to take on extra responsibilities around the school, such as becoming a member of the active school council or looking after younger pupils. They develop a strong social conscience and are proud of their school. They were particularly friendly and welcoming to

the inspectors by engaging in conversation, opening doors and helping inspectors to find their way around the school. One group of pupils who talked with one of the inspectors were very pleased to demonstrate their information and communication technology (ICT) skills with the use of an iPad. As one of the younger pupils proudly commented, 'I can download an app you know.'

## The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management, spearheaded by senior leaders, have been central to the school getting back on track and out of special measures. The challenges faced were formidable. Some of the inadequacies identified in the previous inspection were deep rooted. However, with strong support from staff including governors, much has been accomplished to create a culture of improvement to turn things around and get the school to this point.
- Staff at all levels share the senior leaders' ambitions for the school and speak favourably on being part of the team. As one member of staff commented, 'The school is going from strength to strength. The changes made have been positive. I love working at the school because of the team spirit and morale. I would not hesitate to send my own children to the school now'.
- Senior leaders have rightly focused the work of the school on raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Decisive action has been taken; difficult staffing decisions have been made. Teachers are rigorously held to account through the management of their performance and by holding regular meetings to check on the progress pupils are making.
- The school has used its allocation of pupil premium funding to good effect by investing in the 'Family Mentor' role, in additional funding for teaching assistants and in targeted support for vulnerable pupils. All these initiatives are having a positive effect on narrowing the gap between the performance of these pupils and their peers and in raising their confidence and self-esteem.
- The additional government primary school sport funding has been used well to promote pupils' better physical well-being. This includes work with a specialist teacher from a local school, greater access to sports events across the area and regular sports tuition from Castleford Tigers Rugby League club.
- Rigorous checks are made on all staff and visitors so that pupils are kept safe and free from harm. Statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect pupils meet requirements.
- Senior leaders have benefitted from the effective support and challenge from the local authority. The impact of this work can be seen in the school's recovery from special measures, most noticeably in the improvements to teaching and learning and in the achievement of pupils.
- The curriculum has strengths in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide range of visits to places of interest and studies of different faiths and religions. These include visits to a local gallery and sculpture park, alongside different places to worship, such as a church and a synagogue. The curriculum is less strong in the areas where some pupils are not challenged enough in their work or encouraged sufficiently to think more for themselves in some activities.
- Middle leaders have strengthened their skills considerably. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's most pressing priorities. As a group, they know what is being done to improve provision and where further improvements can be made.
- Considering the school's recovery from causing concern, senior leaders and governors are well placed to sustain this improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have played a key role in getting the school back on track. They have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and where further improvements can be made. They effectively review data on pupils' progress and hold senior leaders to account. They know how leaders set targets for teachers, check on how well teachers are performing and understand teachers' pay and the link with performance. They are aware of how leaders tackle underperformance in teaching. They have improved their skills considerably since the previous inspection, in asking senior leaders probing questions about the school's

performance, and in monitoring the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108241
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	443227

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Hesketh
<b>Principal</b>	Mandy Pickles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 723030
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