

Applegarth Primary School

Upwell Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8QF

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. There is some outstanding progress especially for the most able pupils in writing and for pupils with special educational needs. Attainment is rising across the school.
- Teaching is good. It has improved and continues to do so.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to enjoy exciting activities and to see the links between subjects.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. It offers exceptionally sensitive care and support and makes sure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They care extremely well for one another and say they feel very safe. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. They have clear systems to check how well the school is doing.
- They have put plans in place which have resulted in improved teaching and ensured pupils make good progress. There has been a particularly successful focus on improving pupils' skills in writing.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is exceptionally well managed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In mathematics, work is not always hard enough for all groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils who are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their skills in number in problem-solving activities.
- Work in mathematics is not presented neatly enough or in a way that helps pupils work out their answers accurately.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work or given enough time to act upon any advice given.
- The targets for pupils' progress, identified in the school's plans for the future and in the targets set for teachers in the management of their performance, are not specific enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. The inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons taught by nine teachers. They listened to groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors conducted two lesson observations jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They also observed the headteacher and deputy headteacher reporting back to the teachers on their findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- The inspectors took into account the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents individually and as a group.
- Twenty two staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janice Stephenson	Additional Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below 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 proportion of pupils supported at school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There are lunchtime and after-school clubs which are run by school staff, external coaches and by the pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that work is always hard enough for all groups of pupils, especially through providing more opportunities for the most able pupils to apply their number skills in solving problems
 - ensuring that pupils are given clear information about how they can improve their mathematics work and time to act upon that advice
 - ensuring that pupils present their work in mathematics to a high standard and in a way that helps them calculate accurately.
- Increase the impact of leaders at all levels on pupils' attainment and progress, by including specific expectations for pupils' progress in the school improvement plan and in the targets set for teachers in the management of their performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are in line with those typically expected for their age. Good teaching helps pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, more pupils than in the past are in line with or above the expectations for their age and have a good level of development when they enter Year 1.
- Further good teaching in Key Stage 1 helps pupils to make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen in the past three years. In 2013, standards were slightly above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Pupils had made good progress in reading. In writing, too few pupils had made more than the progress expected of them. In 2013, pupils in Year 6 had made excellent progress in mathematics by the time they left reflecting their particularly swift progress in Years 5 and 6. However, currently, progress in mathematics is not yet consistently outstanding in all year groups because the work set is not always hard enough for all groups of pupils, especially the most able.
- Overall, pupils presently in Year 6 are on track to attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They have made good progress in Year 6, which has helped to make up ground on some learning lost in earlier years.
- The school has introduced plans which have been highly successful in ensuring that pupils across school are now making good progress in their writing. Indeed, the most able pupils across school now make excellent progress in their writing.
- The most able pupils are making good progress. Those that are in Year 6 are on track to attain well-above average standards in writing and above average standards in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are very highly skilled at teaching and supporting pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs in their learning. Additionally, there is excellent leadership of the way the school teaches these pupils. This is reflected in their excellent progress.
- In 2013, most of the pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals, made the progress expected of them. However, too few of them did better than this. At the end of Year 6 eligible pupils were one year behind in reading and five terms behind in mathematics. In writing they had the same attainment as other pupils.
- The school has recognised this issue and now has clear plans to improve the learning and check the progress of this group of pupils. The additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium has been spent to put in place programmes to develop reading, writing and mathematics and extra time for one-to-one and small group teaching, where this is necessary. As a result, these pupils now make the same good progress as other pupils in the school. This demonstrates that the school spends the pupil-premium funding effectively and clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Phonics teaching (the sounds that letters make) is good. As a result, almost all pupils have a clear awareness of letters and the sounds they make and understand how this helps them to read words which are new to them.
- The development of pupils' skills in reading is good over time and the most able pupils have highly developed skills. All pupils enjoy interesting activities that challenge them to read harder books and develop their understanding of characters and how writers develop stories.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good over time in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes and for all groups of pupils. There is evidence in pupils' books that the most able pupils are helped to make

outstanding progress in their writing. This is because they are offered many opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. They are very clear about the skills they need as writers and how to organise their writing and develop their ideas.

- For example, pupils in Reception and Year 1 were totally engaged by the night-time visit of 'Professor Slime' who had left threats to capture the headteacher. They followed clues and wrote letters of warning to the headteacher, developing skills of sentence writing and punctuation. All pupils made good progress. While these approaches have not yet had time to ensure that progress in writing is outstanding overall, they have had a rapid impact on ensuring that progress is good and improving rapidly.
- In mathematics, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were helped to extend their understanding of a range of mathematical skills by applying them to information about the solar system. They were able to develop their understanding of the steps to take to succeed in their work and they made good progress.
- However, pupils' progress in mathematics is good rather than outstanding because work is not always hard enough for all groups of pupils. The presentation of their mathematics work is not neat enough and does not encourage them to set out their calculations in a helpful way.
- Marking of writing is done well: it praises pupils for the successes they have achieved, shows them how to improve their work and gives them time to act upon advice given. In mathematics, marking does not give pupils such clear advice about how they can make their work better. As a result, progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in writing and reading, especially for the most able pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good around school, in the dining hall and in their lessons. Where pupils are fully interested in their learning, their behaviour is outstanding. On occasions, though, their attention wanders when activities are less interesting.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. The school council has offered ideas to improve the playground and the school environment and pupils organise their own clubs, such as dancing and the writing club.
- They develop social skills through the many opportunities to learn together in the classroom, on residential visits, in school clubs and in sports activities together and with pupils from other schools. They are very polite to adults, show great respect for one another and are very proud of their school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Parents and pupils are absolutely certain that pupils are safe and happy in this school. There are rigorous procedures to ensure that this is indeed the case. The single central record is maintained in an excellent manner and all adults offer highly sensitive care to pupils, including specifically designed help for individual pupils who have a range of emotional, social and physical needs.
- Pupils feel very safe. They are very aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic name-calling. They say that there is no bullying; they make friends easily and older pupils look after the younger ones. They are able to solve problems between themselves or by asking their friends or adults to help them. They say that they used to have 'playground buddies' but do not need them any more as everyone plays well together.
- The school's records show that instances of poor behaviour are extremely rare. While there have been no permanent exclusions, there have been a very few unavoidable fixed-term exclusions. The very few pupils who find it difficult to behave well are extremely well managed by staff and their behaviour has improved rapidly.
- Attendance is above average. This is because pupils feel extremely safe and enjoy their lessons, extra activities and visits.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an extremely clear view of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve further. She has acted decisively to improve the quality of teaching by appointing skilful new teachers and improving the skills of existing staff through highly effective ongoing training. Accordingly, teaching and pupils' achievement are now good.
- There is strong teamwork and high morale and all teachers welcome taking on responsibilities and the accountability for their own classes and subject areas. The school is an extremely caring, safe and lively environment which allows good learning to take place and this enables teachers and pupils to flourish and give of their best.
- Salary progression has been used well to improve teaching and raise standards because teachers are very clear that they will only be rewarded when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they should have done.
- The school's plans for the future have appropriate areas for development. The headteacher has a clear understanding of how to use data to measure pupils' progress. However, targets for pupils' attainment and progress set in these plans and in the management of teachers' performance are not specific enough. While targets have helped pupils to make good progress, there is not yet a strong enough focus on promoting outstanding progress.
- The headteacher and other leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. They understand what constitutes good teaching and judge it accurately. They are extremely clear in their feedback to teachers, who respect and act upon their advice. The deputy headteacher has had a strong impact on improving the quality of teaching this year through her role as a coach to other teachers.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to develop competitive sports, to use coaches to develop teachers' expertise in teaching physical education and to introduce new sports such as fencing. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, including the football, catching, and ball-striking lesson seen during the inspection, as well the Key Stage 2 sports day which was also observed. Teachers welcome the focus on developing their skills alongside the coaches. These developments are contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- While the school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also provides many interesting opportunities for pupils to broaden their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through, for example, the study of history, art and science and a range of educational visits. However, some aspects of the work set in mathematics does not yet fully engage or challenge the most able pupils because there are insufficient opportunities to apply what they know to problem solving.
- The school welcomes the support and advice it receives from the local authority and especially from its education partner. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have rigorously reviewed their impact so that there is now robust challenge to match the strong support the governing body has always offered the school. The Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable and is well supported by other governors. They understand the school because they have clear areas of responsibility which they regularly check, through a programme of school visits. They have clear systems to check closely plans for the future, the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils and the curriculum.
 - In addition, they understand the arrangements to check on teachers' performance and any rewards for good teaching. Governors receive clear information about how the pupil premium funding and the new primary school sports funding are allocated and are very knowledgeable about their impact. The budget is extremely well managed to ensure the school achieves the best value for its spending. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

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	121308
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	442306

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Fyfe
Headteacher	Alison Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2012
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