

Castlefields Infant School

Field Top Road, Rastrick, Brighouse, HD6 3XB

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| 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

- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not consistently good over time.
- In writing and mathematics, more-able pupils do not make as much progress as their classmates.
- Boys' attainment in writing and reading is not as high as it is in mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement overall because it does not lead to all groups of pupils making good or better progress in their studies.
- Teachers do not always use the information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons that meet the needs of the more able.
- Although teachers mark work regularly, they do not always make sure that pupils correct their mistakes or follow the guidance they are given.
- The progress across the Reception classes is inconsistent. The outdoor learning opportunities for both classes are less stimulating than those in the classrooms.
- Middle leaders do not always analyse their information well enough to identify shortcomings in pupils' attainment.
- Leaders' records of lesson observations do not look closely enough at the quality and speed of learning by different groups of pupils and how to improve the quality of teaching.
- The plans to move the school forward do not provide milestones to enable leaders to check on progress towards them.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress is speeding up because senior leaders keep a close eye on how well they are doing and give good support to those who are falling behind.
- Pupils really enjoy school. They work hard in lessons and behave well.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and there are excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils feel very safe.
- The good curriculum and wide range of clubs provide memorable experiences and make learning fun.
- Leaders have identified the right areas for improvement to speed up pupils' progress further.
- Governors have undertaken significant training to increase their skills. They rigorously hold the school to account and provide good support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons taught by six teachers. Two joint observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspectors considered a sample of pupils' written work, mathematics and topic work. They also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, two groups of pupils, and representatives of the governing body. An inspector also talked with a local authority representative, a consultant employed by the school, and with parents.
- The inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: information on pupils' progress and attainment, the school development plan and the school's views of how well it is doing. School records relating to attendance, safety, behaviour and the monitoring of teaching and learning were evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of 44 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View.)

Inspection team

Brenda Clarke, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathy Thompson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage; the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below that seen across the country.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is just below that seen nationally. (Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- In the last two years there have been several changes of staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good by:
 - ensuring that teachers always use their checks on pupils' progress to provide work that closely matches pupils' needs and helps more-able pupils to make progress at a faster rate
 - ensuring that teachers' marking tells pupils in simple terms what they need to do to improve and that pupils have opportunities to respond to this
 - providing more opportunities for children in the Reception classes to practise and extend their skills when working without adult support, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - finding ways to capture boys' imagination so that they read and write more fully
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical skills in mathematics lessons and also in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for children to practise their writing skills in the Reception classes.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms pays attention to the learning and progress of different groups of pupils and leaves teachers with clear, specific targets for improvement
 - ensuring that plans for future developments have clear milestones for success that can be easily checked by leaders
 - ensuring that subject leaders consistently evaluate pupils' standards, progress and areas for development.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge which are below age-related expectations. Inspection information suggests that children, over time, have made good progress overall in Reception and entered Year 1 with broadly average levels of attainment.
- For the current generation of Reception class children there is a more inconsistent picture. In class 1, children have done well across most areas of learning to attain skills in line with, and sometimes above those expected for their age. In class 2 there has been staff turnover and inconsistencies in teaching have not been addressed quickly enough so that children's progress has not been good. In both classes, children are taught to listen carefully and care for others so that they develop good social skills. Children's achievement in writing lags behind other areas of learning because children have too few opportunities to write independently, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Achievement overall requires improvement. The current generation of Year 2 pupils entered Year 1 with broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection findings indicate that the standards they reach remain broadly average. Due to earlier inconsistencies in teaching in Year 1, pupils have had a lot of catching up to do. A determined drive for improvement is rapidly speeding up pupils' learning so that most are now making expected progress and a significant minority is exceeding this. However, their progress from their starting points at the beginning of Year 1 requires improvement over time.
- Achievement in mathematics is held back because pupils sometimes have difficulty in solving problems. Scrutiny of work in books indicates that pupils often learn how to do new calculations but do not have enough opportunities to apply this learning in mathematics lessons.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent. Boys achieve significantly less well than girls in their classes because activities do not always capture their interest and make them want to write.
- Over time, pupils' progress in reading is better and is often good, because they have many opportunities to read at home and in school. Those who are falling behind are given effective support. However, boys' progress in reading still lags significantly behind that of girls.
- More-able pupils achieve highly in reading to attain levels above those seen across the country. Their progress in writing and mathematics is not as fast as that of their classmates, with fewer exceeding their individual targets. Scrutiny of pupils' work, especially in their topic books, indicates that more-able pupils often receive the same work as others in the class and opportunities are missed for them to apply their writing and mathematical skills at a higher level.
- In 2013, results of the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) were below those seen nationally. Leaders have acted quickly to ensure a better outcome. Pupils across Years 1 and 2 are now taught phonics in small ability groups, according to need. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils are now making good progress and achieving well and that most are confidently applying their knowledge of letters and sounds when reading and writing new words.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. Their progress is better than that of their classmates because they are given effective additional activities in small groups. They receive very good support from well trained teaching assistants and the learning mentor.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well. Again, good support in lessons from effective teaching assistants and carefully-planned additional activities address their differing needs.
- Pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their classmates. Adults spend time explaining new words so that pupils understand their learning and develop their speaking skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not fully effective in accelerating pupils' learning. Not enough teaching over time is consistently good.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' progress well enough to ensure that more-able pupils receive work that stretches them, particularly in mathematics and topic work.
- Teaching ensures that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise number operations but this sometimes leaves too little time for pupils to apply this new knowledge in practical ways.
- Marking is regular but comments are often in grown-up handwriting that is not easily understood by children. There are pointers for improvement such as, 'Remember to use full stops' but teachers do not make sure that pupils carry out these instructions in future pieces of work.
- Planning in the Reception classes does not provide enough opportunities for children to practise their writing skills in other areas of the classroom. The activities planned for outdoor learning do not match the quality of learning indoors, limiting the experiences of those children who choose to work outdoors. In class 2, a number of activities lack a clear learning purpose and opportunities are missed for children to practise their early reading and number skills.
- Throughout the school, pupils take pride in their work and present it well.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding. Pupils work hard in lessons and feel well supported in their learning.
- Teachers' behaviour management skills are good so that most lessons run smoothly with no interruptions.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They give pupils the right words to help them explain their work; for example, using the words 'equals' in a Year 2 mathematics lesson.
- Pupils make good progress and also develop their social skills well when they are given opportunities to work in pairs and in small groups, in order to share their learning with each other.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support those who find learning difficult. They spend time explaining new words to those who have English as an additional language so that pupils can play a full part in activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- They respect each other and cooperate well.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, at playtimes and when moving around the school.
- Pupils take pride in their school, their work and appearance. They enjoy school and many take part in the exciting additional lunchtime and after-school activities.
- Pupils show real enthusiasm for their learning. They settle quickly to their work in lessons.
- All adults are excellent role models for pupils. This results in pupils being unfailingly polite. They say 'please' and 'thank you' and voluntarily open doors for adults and others to pass through.
- When activities in lessons do not engage pupils in their learning, they sometimes become restless and uninterested.
- Children in the Reception classes are taught to listen carefully, to take turns and share equipment. Children behave well here. They are happy, enthusiastic and enjoy their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for. All parents who completed the on-line questionnaire agree that their children are safe and happy in school.
- Pupils say that there is some bullying but that this is quickly sorted out by adults.
- Pupils know how to keep safe. They talk about 'Stranger Danger' and road safety. Year 2 pupils are beginning to show an awareness of cyber-bullying and the school website gives good guidance to parents on this subject.
- The headteacher and learning mentor play a key role in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Attendance has improved and is now similar to that seen across the country.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because the progress and attainment of some groups of pupils are not as good as they should be. However, there is evidence of accelerated progress for most pupils, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the sounds that letters make. Pupils in Year 1 do well because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The checks made on the quality of teaching and on pupils' learning in lessons require improvement. There is too little attention paid to the speed of learning by different groups of pupils. The written feedback that teachers receive does not tell them clearly enough what they need to do to improve their classroom practice.
- The school's plans for future development are appropriate but do not include the milestones by which improvement will be measured. This means that plans cannot be used as a management tool to check that targets have been met.
- Middle managers are currently developing their roles but not all have an accurate picture of pupils' attainment and areas for development in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are giving a strong steer to the school. They have created a united staff team, firmly focused on improving provision further. They have taken quick action to develop pupils' knowledge and use of letter sounds and this is accelerating pupils' progress in writing and reading. The school has also trained staff in new ways to teach mental arithmetic but this is still at an early stage and it is too soon to measure the full impact of this initiative.
- The headteacher has established very effective systems to check pupils' progress regularly. This has made teachers accountable for the progress of the pupils in their classes. Well-thought-out interventions address the needs of those who are falling behind. These initiatives are key reasons why most pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is speeding up at a faster rate.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the school's provision. This is a school where every child does matter. Pupils' individual targets are ambitious and based on a secure knowledge of each pupil. Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. Leadership is aware that boys and the more able are making less progress than their classmates and are planning ways to address these issues.
- The school takes excellent care of its pupils. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- Strong links with other schools are giving teachers good opportunities to observe good classroom practice. The school works hard to include parents in their children's learning, both in school and at home. All parents who completed the on-line questionnaire would recommend the school to others.
- The curriculum is exciting and makes learning fun. The recently-created garden is enjoyed by all and is helping pupils learn about food sources and healthy eating. The new primary sport funding is used well and has enabled pupils to take part in more sporting activities, such as dance and football, contributing significantly to their well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good. Their social development is outstanding and is promoted very well both in lessons and in exciting activities, such as the residential trips to Malham and Haworth.
- The local authority checks termly on how well the school is developing and, together with an external consultant, gives good support and guidance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection governors have sought additional support and training and now have a much improved understanding of their roles and statutory responsibilities. They have actively sought new governors who bring skills and experience to complement the considerable skills they already have. Governors check on pupils' progress at each governing body meeting and now hold the school to account with more rigour. They check that pupils supported by the pupil premium funding receive the additional support they need and they monitor the progress they are making. The governing body has effective arrangements to ensure that pay awards are linked to leaders' and teachers' performance. They seek the views of parents and staff in a variety of ways.

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

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| Unique reference number | 107531 |
| Local authority | Calderdale |
| Inspection number | 442252 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 158 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephen Emsley |
| Headteacher | Gemma Elliott |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 September 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01484 716894 |
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