

Saltergate Community Junior School

Newby Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 2TT

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 achieve well from widely varying starting points to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is consistently good with examples of outstanding practice in upper Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils work hard and are keen to learn. They listen attentively and clearly enjoy learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and articulate. The way they present themselves is a credit to the school.
- School leaders make sure that pupils are safe and secure. Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Good leadership of teaching has secured good teaching across the school. Pupils' achievement continues to improve as a result.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They make a strong contribution to improving teaching quality and raising achievement.
- The headteacher has created a happy, hard-working school. Pupils say, 'It's a very happy place and you get a good education.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' writing, particularly by less-able pupils, is marred by spelling mistakes because they do not have a sound grasp of how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics).
- Poor handwriting and untidy presentation spoil some pupils' writing. Less-able pupils find it hard to act on all the suggestions to improve their writing.
- Staff sometimes ask too little of less-able pupils.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in different contexts.
- The role of middle leaders is still developing in terms of improving rates of progress further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, staff, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils from Key Stage 2 to discuss their work and their views on school. They talked with pupils in lessons and looked at their work.
- The inspection team took into account the 37 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took into account questionnaire returns from parents who were unable to access Parent View.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This junior school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A sizeable proportion of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the usual, including a few from travelling families. The large majority of newcomers are from service families who stay for two out of the possible four years in this school, joining at different points during the year.
- Two-thirds of staff have changed since the last inspection.
- The school employs a pastoral worker to support pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement in writing, particularly for less-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring pupils have a good understanding of phonics so they spell more accurately
 - improving handwriting and presentation across the school
 - moving less-able pupils on as soon as they are ready
 - making sure that marking gives less-able pupils suitably manageable and precise aspects of writing to improve further.
- Exploit cross-curricular opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in different contexts.
- Continue to develop the role of middle leaders so that they can help to improve pupils' progress further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from individual starting points that vary considerably from year to year compared to typical levels.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6, although broadly average, varies from year to year depending on the mix of pupils. Newcomers make good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or statements of special educational needs make consistently good or better progress compared to similar groups nationally.
- Achievement is good in reading, with noticeable improvements this year in pupils' comprehension skills. This is owing to the school's successful drive to make reading central to pupils' learning and education. The most able pupils read several books a week and have favourite authors. Currently, half the pupils in Year 6 read at the higher Level 5.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. The most able pupils are challenged, with an increasing proportion each year working within the higher Levels 5 and 6. They have a good grasp of algebra and geometry for their age.
- The most able pupils write well. They paragraph accurately and use a wide range of punctuation. Some of their writing is vividly expressed as in alliterative sentences such as 'The spine-shivering scorpion lashed out...'
- Across the school, however, poor spelling, handwriting and untidy presentation in a mix of ink and pencil mar the overall quality of pupils' writing and lead to mistakes. In addition, pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. This affects the work of less-able pupils in particular because they do not have the building blocks to help them to link sounds to letters when they write.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium funding make good progress and outperform similar groups nationally in English and mathematics. They do as well as, and sometimes better than, others in school who are not known to be eligible for free school meals. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding in upper Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Questioning by all staff is a notable strength. This pushes on the learning of the most able pupils, especially because questions prompt pupils to extend their answers and to explain their reasoning. For example, the most able pupils in Year 6 quickly understood how to measure and bisect angles accurately because questioning revealed that they found it easier to understand in three rather than two dimensions.
- Teaching assistants are used very well in all classes. A strength is the way that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given some pointers by teaching assistants prior to the lesson as to what is going to be taught. This helps these pupils to be confident learners.
- Computer technology is used well by staff to enliven demonstrations and to make learning relevant. It is also used well by pupils to check they are following a mathematical method correctly, for instance, or to practise specific language skills.
- The teaching of reading is very well organised so that pupils read for an extended period each day with suitable support. Pupils' understanding of what they read is sharpened by good guidance on how to elicit meaning, such as 'It might not tell you directly so look for actions to help you to explain the character.'
- There are strengths in the teaching of writing, especially in terms of developing pupils' use and understanding of punctuation, vibrant vocabulary and comparisons to enliven their writing. However, basic spelling errors are not tackled systematically and staff accept, rather than improve, poor presentation and handwriting.

- Occasionally, opportunities are missed to speed up learning when staff are slow to recognise that less-able pupils are ready to move on to the next step in their learning.
- Marking is good and involves pupils in checking and amending their work. Pupils' work improves as a result. Sometimes, however, marking does not give less-able pupils suitably manageable and precise aspects of writing to improve further, such as capital letters and full stops.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons, carry out instructions sensibly and work quietly, striving to do their best. They are ready and willing to learn, though occasionally their attention slips during extended explanations.
- Pupils are proud of how much they are learning. They explained, 'It's better to learn things now like maths because you have to use it in life, it's useful.'
- Pupils are polite, articulate and inquisitive. They respect other people, moving sensibly and calmly down corridors, for example, saying 'Excuse me' when they want to get past. They conduct themselves well. Their courtesy and neat and tidy appearance do them credit.
- Boys and girls have similar views of school. They welcome, for instance, girls-only football which takes place twice a week. Boys as well as girls pointed out proudly how the girls won the recent North Yorkshire football trophy.
- At lunchtimes, sports leaders encourage active play such as basketball while others read quietly or do different craft activities. The result is happy, cooperative and energetic break times with only the occasional bit of rough play.
- Staff manage pupils with behavioural difficulties very well indeed and, as a result, some are beginning to manage their behaviour better. Pupils explained, 'Some people need more understanding than others. We have a pastoral worker who helps us and is very understanding.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils agree that bullying is not an issue, saying, 'There's not much but it's always sorted out.' They know about different types of bullying and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They also know about e-safety. Parents agree their children are safe.
- A regular, confidential pupil questionnaire makes sure that there is no undercurrent of intimidation.
- Since the last inspection, attendance has risen, persistent absence has reduced, exclusions are low and racist and bullying incidents are rare. Attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher gives a very clear lead to the school, fully supported by the assistant headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. His thoughtful and reflective approach has led to some innovative practice successfully strengthening achievement.
- This includes a system of 'pull-out' groups whereby each half term a different group of pupils, mostly supported through the pupil premium funding, is taught reading, writing and mathematics in a separate small class. This has a positive impact on improving pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Similarly innovative practice is evident in the leadership of teaching which is effective at ensuring teaching is consistently good, despite staffing changes. As well as regular observations and informal 'drop-in' visits, when he, as he explained, 'feels the pulse of the school', the headteacher spends time working with individual teachers across a week. This method successfully checks whether staff have addressed, by the end of the week, the weaknesses they identified in pupils' learning at the start.
- The systems to check teachers' performance and effectiveness are well considered. They are

used effectively to set suitable targets, to give continuing professional development and to support weaker teaching when needed. Promotion is not automatic and has to be earned. Staff are held to account for their pupils' performance through twice-termly pupils' progress meetings.

- Staff work and plan closely together so that pupils in the same year group have consistent learning experiences. The school is in the process of developing the role of middle leaders so that they can make a stronger contribution to improving achievement.
- The primary school sport funding is used well. More pupils participate in sport with greater success thanks to increased sporting opportunities at lunchtimes and better staff skills, because they have received training and coaching.
- The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's values underpin pupils' learning and set a firm moral tone to ensure that pupils conduct themselves responsibly. It makes limited provision for pupils to use their literacy and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Safeguarding meets current government requirements.
- The local authority provides good value for money in terms of the support it gives the school when the school requests it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors give extremely good support to the school. They have a very clear understanding of how performance management is used to strengthen teaching. Governors gain an in-depth knowledge of the school through asking searching questions. These challenge the school to account for pupils' achievement and to provide action plans to show what the school is doing to improve it. Governors have a first-rate understanding of staff and pupil performance through firsthand experience. For instance, on governors' day they observe lessons, talk to pupils, look at their books, have lunch with them, judge competitions and meet the school council. Governors have a very good grasp of data and the relative performance of pupils supported through the pupil premium compared to those who are not known to be eligible for free school meals. Governors take an active lead in future planning to ensure the school builds on its strengths.

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	121463
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	443833

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David McKenzie-Brown
Headteacher	Chris Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2011
Telephone number	01423 506866
Fax number	01423 506897
Email address	admin@saltergate-jun.n-yorks.sch.uk

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