

Cobblers Lane Primary School

Cobblers Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 2HN

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, not enough pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching has not been good enough over time.
- In some classes, teaching does not always provide pupils with the challenge needed in order for them to learn well and make the best possible progress.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and nationally, are still too wide.
- In 2013 and 2014, checks showed that not enough pupils gained the phonics skills (letters and the sounds they make) expected for their age by the end of Year 1.
- The school's policy for marking work is not used consistently by all staff and this means some pupils get better guidance than others.
- Staff do not always provide timely guidance or ensure that pupils respond to helpful comments in marking. This leads to pupils missing opportunities to correct their mistakes or learn more.
- The recently appointed middle leaders in English and mathematics have not yet had sufficient time to fully secure the necessary improvements in teaching and achievement in these subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- In the early years, provision has improved and teaching is good. Children now make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Across the school, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well because teachers give them work that helps them to learn successfully.
- Pupils are well behaved and want to do well. They get on well with each other in the classrooms and on the playground.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good and most pupils and parents agree.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses because they scrutinise the wide range of information they gather and tenaciously pursue improvement.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are tackling weaknesses with increasing success, for example in teaching. As a result, the school is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons, one observed jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed lunch and break times and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and school leaders. A meeting was held with two members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was held with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the results of the school's own surveys of parents' views and responses from 21 staff questionnaires. Inspectors also considered 16 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, and records of activity undertaken by the governors. The work in pupils' books and records relating to the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jonathan Woodyatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Lomas	Additional Inspector
Fiona McNally	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger in size than most other primary schools.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is higher than in most other schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that found in most other schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional 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.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school on the site.
- The school is part of the Pontefract Education Trust, a voluntary partnership of local schools.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection.
- Membership of the governing body, including the Chair, has changed since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good, in order to boost progress in reading (especially phonics), writing, and mathematics so that all pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils, achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are always given work and learning activities that are hard enough
 - ensuring that all staff regularly monitor how well pupils are doing in lessons and respond quickly to fully challenge them to make faster progress if learning slows
 - ensuring that pupils' work is always marked by all staff, and that the school's agreed policy for marking is followed as it should be
 - always expecting pupils to respond to the comments and advice given from staff in marking.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that the recently appointed middle leaders for English and mathematics are fully supported to settle quickly into their roles so that they contribute fully to school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The dedicated headteacher recognises that the quality of teaching and learning has been too variable over the last few years, and that consistent improvement has been thwarted by significant changes of staff, with a number of these being beyond the school's control. During this period of change, she has been tenacious in seeking to recruit new staff with the best skills. She has supported staff to improve and has used the established system for performance management to drive up the standard of teaching. As a result the school's recent records of teaching and learning, and inspection evidence, demonstrate that the quality of teaching is improving, although this has not yet lifted pupils' achievement to where it should be.
- The good achievement of children in the early years and those who are disabled and have special educational needs clearly demonstrates that the headteacher and governors have ensured these aspects are being well led by the middle leaders they have appointed. However, the middle leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics have not yet had enough time to contribute to school improvement in their subject areas as they have only been appointed recently.
- Leaders have developed effective systems to check how well pupils are doing. They use this information well to identify where performance is dipping and to provide the necessary support to help pupils catch up, such as placing pupils in small groups or providing one-to-one sessions in order to boost their key skills.
- Staff benefit from the increasingly effective whole-school training and individual training to increase their skills, for example in mathematics, which has been a recent school improvement priority. Teachers have opportunities to learn from other teachers, such as those in partnership schools, in order to increase and improve their skills.
- The curriculum is increasingly helping pupils to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, there is more support available outside the classroom for pupils who need a boost in their skills, such as in mathematics, though there has not yet been enough time for this to fully impact on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is developed well. Pupils explore different faiths in their assemblies and consider how to live alongside others in their communities. During this inspection, for example, pupils talked excitedly about their recent work on the Second World War and its consequences.
- The school makes an extra effort to support pupils' and parents' different needs. For instance, the breakfast club encourages good attendance by offering parents the opportunity to bring their children at times that suit them.
- The primary sport funding is used well to increase the amount of time provided for pupils to take part in sport during and after school, and its use has increased opportunities for pupils to compete against others. As a result the funding is supporting improvements in pupils' overall health, well-being and sports skills development.
- The local authority recognises that the school's leaders are taking the necessary steps to improve the school's performance. It provides helpful support to the governors. For example, the local authority school adviser recently increased the number of visits the school to help support the headteacher with staff training and recruitment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body displays a dogged determination to improve the school further. He ensures that governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance and the quality of teaching. They are provided with a wide range of detailed information collected by the school's leaders, which they discuss and consider well at their meetings. They visit the school often to monitor improvements. This gives them the clear understanding required to drive further improvements forward.
 - Governors embody high expectations for the school to improve and have a clear vision of the next steps. They work closely with the headteacher and provide effective support for leaders, especially with staffing arrangements. They link the headteacher's pay to appropriate targets and are helped by the local authority representative to do this. They ensure that this also happens for teachers. Recent evidence of improvements in teaching confirms their effectiveness in tackling underperformance.
 - The governors manage the school's finances well. They work closely to their budget so that they can maintain the levels of staffing and provision of activities, such as extra staff for small group and one-to-one support. They make sure that the school uses the primary school sport funding well. However, they recognise that there is more for the school to do to close the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.

- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They need little supervision from staff when moving around the school or playing outside. They have positive attitudes to their learning and are interested in their work. They respond quickly to requests from staff. They are polite to other adults and cooperate well with each other during lessons. This ensures that the school is calm and purposeful.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years. A few fixed-term exclusions have been used as a last resort in response to a small number of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour well enough.
- A small minority of parents say that sometimes bullying happens in the school. The school's records show that there have been a very small number of bullying incidents, including racist or homophobic name-calling. However, staff and pupils agree that the school deals effectively with such incidents and staff are quick to challenge pupils about poor behaviour and help them to improve it.
- Pupils explained clearly to inspectors how the school helps them to understand how to behave and to recognise whether anyone is bullying someone. They know that teachers will always provide help if they need it.
- Attendance has remained broadly average over a number of years. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and the vast majority attend regularly and on time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Most parents and staff agree with this.
- Inspectors observed staff keeping a close watch on pupils at all times of the day, including during break and lunch times. Staff were available to talk to parents at the start and end of the day, which many parents said helped them to keep up-to-date with how well their children were doing and to ask questions if needs be.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They told inspectors about the different ways that they have learned to keep themselves safe, such as recognising and knowing what to do to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The many changes to teaching staff have been a factor in slowing the rate of improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has not improved quickly enough.
- Nevertheless, the school's records show that, since the previous inspection, senior leaders have provided more training for teachers and some teaching has improved. Close scrutiny of the quality of teaching by the headteacher and local authority representative has also helped teachers to improve their practice. Recent evidence from the school's records shows pupils' progress is improving in Key Stage 2, for example in mathematics but, overall, progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 is not yet good.
- At times, pupils' progress slows when they are not challenged enough in the activities provided for them to do. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were working in a small group. Staff provided them with tasks and waited for them all to finish before moving onto the next task. Some pupils had to wait too long because they finished their work quickly; this slowed their learning. While this is not always the case, it happens more often than it should.
- A whole-school system has been agreed by staff for marking pupils' work in order to ensure that pupils are provided with consistent advice on how they can improve their work. However, the system is not yet applied by all staff, or in all subjects. In addition, scrutiny of pupils' books reveals that when good quality advice is given, pupils are not always expected to act on it and do not have opportunities to refine their work or correct their mistakes.
- In recent years, the quality of phonics teaching in Key Stage 1 has been too variable. However, leaders have recently enabled staff to improve their skills through training and so now the teaching of phonics helps those who are struggling to fully catch up by the end of Year 2. In addition, pupils' reading homework records show that the school successfully encourages reading at home; pupils were able to talk about the benefits of this when reading their books to inspectors.
- The challenge provided by staff for the most able pupils ensures that they do at least as well as others in their national tests in reading and writing; teachers provide tasks and activities that are well suited to their level of skill and ability. Teachers' plans, for example in a literacy lesson, clearly recognise pupils' levels of

skill and identify the next most appropriate tasks to continue their progress. Recent results show staff are increasingly challenging pupils and standards are improving quickly in mathematics, although there is still more to do to raise standards further.

- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who fall behind in their work are provided with good opportunities to learn well in small groups or on a one-to-one basis with staff.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been too variable due to inconsistent teaching. This has contributed to standards not rising quickly enough. However, the school's current data and scrutiny of work in books shows that the rate of progress is getting faster because of the improvement in teachers' skills, such as in the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Although achievement in the early years has recently risen, it has not yet had time to impact on the standards reached by the end of Key Stage 1, which have been below average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last three years. However, these are improving and pupils are now doing better than they used to.
- Standards in reading and writing improved to broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 but, since then, have remained at this level. Standards in mathematics in 2012 and 2013 remained stubbornly lower than those seen in English. However, recent data for 2014, provided by the school, show that standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 have risen and are now broadly average.
- The proportion of most able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in reading and writing in 2013 was similar to other schools nationally, and more exceeded the highest Level 6 than nationally in writing. This is indicative of the challenge being provided for these pupils. However, not enough reached the higher levels in mathematics in 2013, due to weaker teaching in this particular subject. More recent results, however, show an improvement although there is still more to do to raise standards further in mathematics for the brightest pupils.
- In 2013 the national check of pupils' phonics skills carried out in Year 1 showed a dip in the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age, when previously the school had done as well as other schools nationally. Recent results show some improvement for those taking the check for the first time, while a large proportion have exceeded expected levels on their second time due to better teaching.
- By the end Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was about three terms behind other pupils in the school, and between a year and two years behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Results from inspection evidence indicate that these attainment gaps are reducing, but there is still more to be done to push standards higher for these pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs overall make good progress from their different starting points owing to their needs being identified accurately and effective strategies being put in place to aid their learning, for example in the one-to-ones with staff or small groups. This demonstrates the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and providing equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed.

The early years provision is good

- Children who start in the early years have skills that are typically below those expected for their age, especially in their communication, reading, writing and number. At the end of the Nursery Year, nearly a third of children who then join the Reception class are new to the school, many with skills below those typical for their age.
- Children now make good progress and achieve well in early years. From their different starting points, most children left the early years, in 2013, having exceeded the levels of development of those in most other schools. Recent evidence provided by the school shows that even more children exceeded these levels in 2014.
- Children, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, those who are disabled and the most able, make good progress and achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception years and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Teaching provides good opportunities for children to learn well when they are in class groups, small groups or playing on their own. Inspectors observed children playing and working enthusiastically and harmoniously alongside others: making choices, enjoying their learning and growing in confidence.
- The recently improved outdoor facilities ensure that children can practise and develop their physical skills, thus increasing their overall health and well-being. Good levels of staff supervision, both inside and

outside, ensure that children are kept safe.

- Parents' views are gathered about what their children can already do and staff use this information well to plan and provide tasks and activities that ensure effective learning
- Leadership in the early years is effective. Leaders gather sufficient information about how children are doing and build an accurate picture of their skill and needs right from the start. They plan for children to experience learning that builds their social skills and helps them understand how to manage their own behaviours and get along with others.

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	134278
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	442283

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bowen
Headteacher	Karen Briggs
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2012
Telephone number	01977 722630
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