

Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School

Meadow View Road, Kilnhurst, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 5UA

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

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|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of children | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of children | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and children

This is a good school.

- The areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection have been addressed effectively; pupils' progress has improved.
- Leadership and management have improved to involve all leaders in the setting and checking of targets for development.
- Governors support the school well. They receive information about the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' progress. This means they know how well the school is doing.
- In the early years, all groups of children make consistently high rates of progress from their starting points. This leads to outstanding achievement in the early years.
- In both key stages, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is at least in line with the national average. Progress across year groups is now consistently strong in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teaching over time in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is good. As a result pupils achieve well.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are happy in school and feel safe.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding well.
- The lead from the executive headteacher is highly ambitious for the pupils and staff and has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Actions are based on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance and pupils' skills and attributes.
- The local authority's challenge and support is effective because it is based on a thorough knowledge of the context of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- The quality of teachers' feedback and marking in Key Stage 1 is not of high enough quality to enable all pupils to make high gains in their learning.
- Some of the school's systems, including their plans to implement the new National Curriculum and revised assessment arrangements, are still at an early stage of development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 10 lessons and part lessons, over half of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed many aspects of the school’s work, including the support for pupils who need extra help. They listened to pupils read, and had discussions with them to establish their views of the school. Inspectors examined pupils’ work over time in their books and that displayed in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included: records of notable incidents such as bullying logs; the tracking of individual pupils’ progress; the school’s plans for improvement; safeguarding and child protection policies; and pupils’ attendance records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and head of school to evaluate their impact on the pupils’ achievement.
- Meetings were held with the leader of the early years, and other senior and middle leaders. A discussion was held with two governors, including the Chair of Governors, and a conversation with the local authority representative took place.
- Inspectors evaluated the overall views of parents. Informal discussions were conducted with 10 parents willing to offer a view as they brought their children to school. An evaluation was made of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The views of staff were considered through 20 staff questionnaires and through discussions.

Inspection team

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Lead Inspector, Additional Inspector

Paul Spay

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on role has increased slightly since the last inspection.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is higher than in most other schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The numbers of pupils who join the school at different times than normally expected is higher than the national average.
- The on-site pre-school provision is next door to the Reception class, and the children share an outdoor area. It is not managed by the governing body and is therefore subject to a separate inspection.
- Since June 2014, the school has established formal one-year collaboration with two other local Church of England primary schools: Thrybergh Fullerton and Dalton Trinity Croft.
- The headteacher of Thyrberg Fullerton is the executive headteacher for all three schools.
- Each school has a separate head of school and governing body. All three provide representation on a collaborative governing body committee. The current headteacher at Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary was not in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- There have been significant changes in staff, responsibilities and systems in readiness for the beginning of the autumn term 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Improve teaching from good to outstanding, in order to raise standards even higher, by:

- ensuring that marking and feedback to pupils in Key Stage 1 is clear so that they know how successful they have been and what they need to do to improve further
- further accelerating the learning gains made during the past year while continuing to introduce the new National Curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Ensure that the systems and partnerships now in place continue to develop so as raise pupils' achievement further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, together with the head of school, provides very strong leadership. Staff share the same ambition; all demonstrate a proven ability to improve teaching and pupils' achievement..
- Since the previous inspection, the school has benefited greatly from sharing expertise and good practice through working collaboratively with partner schools, and a number of other schools in the vicinity. In addition, the input of local authority advisers and external consultants has been effective in guiding school leaders in their work to raise standards.
- The executive headteacher and head of school check the quality of teaching regularly. Together, they provide good challenge and support to improve practice through an effective mentoring system.
- The leadership of middle leaders has improved. All are aware of their responsibilities and carry out their roles with informed efficiency. The leadership provided by staff with responsibility for specific groups of pupils; those with special educational needs or disadvantaged pupils, for example, is good and has helped to direct teachers' work to boost pupils' academic performance.
- The responses to all elements of the staff questionnaire provided by inspectors were positive, as were the comments made to the inspection team.
- Pupils are provided with interesting experiences in different subjects, including science, physical education and music, which they enjoy. These provide plenty of opportunities for them to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a variety of situations. One pupil confirmed this by saying, 'I love spelling and look forward to physical education because we do spellings then too.'
- Plentiful opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development in daily learning. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective about their beliefs and experiences and to use their imagination and creativity in their learning. This was observed in a Year 3 art lesson where pupils were linking their art work to healthy eating through the work of Arcimbaldo.
- The primary school sport funding has helped to increase pupils' interest and participation in sports and develop their health and well-being. It has also widened the range of extra-curricular sport as well as giving teachers training to build their confidence and expertise in different sports.
- The school values its good partnerships with parents and families. Parents who expressed an opinion, have a high opinion of the school and value the liaison between home and school and the information they receive about their children's progress at regular parents' evenings.
- The school has recently updated its website to ensure consistency across the partner schools. This new version provides a good range of information for parents.
- The after-school club is open to all pupils and provides them with opportunities to develop their social skills by joining in with other pupils to play a variety of games.
- The local authority is confident that the school is now able to maintain and improve upon its current good performance with minimal external support.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body is committed to the school and supports and challenges it effectively. Governors have a good understanding and respect for the school's community.
- Recently, governors have improved their effectiveness as a result of the local authority's strong support and training and input from external advisers.
- Governors bring to their roles a varied range of professional and personal skills which benefit the school. They are now in the process of conducting a skills audit to ensure a more effective balance of expertise in order to challenge and support the school even more rigorously.
- Governors participate fully in checks on the school's performance, including comparisons with other schools and national data.
- They speak knowledgeably and accurately about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and on the use of performance management systems to reward effective teachers and tackle underperformance.
- Governors have worked diligently to ensure statutory requirements, including safeguarding, are in place.
- School finances are spent wisely and they give appropriate attention to ensuring additional funding for sports, and for disadvantaged pupils, has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of children are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and supportive.
- Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors, and are attentive when engaged in conversation and when discussing their views in group or class work.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they say that good behaviour and attendance is typical of their school. This is confirmed by their punctuality, by school records and the views expressed by staff and parents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to keep safe, for example, in relation to e-safety, road and water safety. They say that they feel safe and happy in school.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. They are concerned about some occasional name-calling and rough behaviour at break times but say adults in the school quickly resolve any incidents. One pupil said, 'We can be boisterous at playtimes, but we can always tell any teachers if we're worried about anything.' Pupils feel well cared for by all the adults, and know they can go to anyone should they need help or have any concerns. They are confident of the school's respect and attention.
- Pupils are eager to learn and bring effort to their work. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their praise of spelling. One pupil said, 'I love spelling. We even spell when we do games in the hall.'
- Most pupils are focused when tackling schoolwork and cooperate well with each other.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly during the last year and inspection evidence shows that it leads to good progress across the school. Work in pupils' books, the outcomes of the school's checks, and the activities observed during the inspection confirm that teaching is good, with particular strengths in Key Stage 2.
- Throughout the school, relationships are good; an ethos of mutual respect exists between teachers and pupils, which aids learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together to create effective teams to challenge and support the needs of pupils of all ability
- Recently, a number of new teachers have been employed. This has been managed very well in order to ensure consistency of expectations and practice across the school and the right amount of challenge in English and mathematics, especially for the most able pupils.
- Rapid and effective action has been taken, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, during the past year to enable pupils to make faster progress and to reach standards that are in line with national averages in English and mathematics.
- Teachers plan collaboratively across three schools and benefit from each other's expertise and strengths across the age groups and across subjects. Imaginative and purposeful activities help pupils to solve problems and deepen their understanding. Plans for implementing the new National Curriculum and its assessment arrangements are at an early stage of development. The introduction of the new curriculum has already resulted in some learning gains for pupils but the school recognises that the potential for accelerating these gains further.
- In Key Stage 1, teaching is successful in ensuring that pupils accurately recognise and sound out new vocabulary and so develop into confident and enthusiastic readers.
- Marking and feedback to pupils in Key Stage 1 does not always give pupils sufficient information about what they do well or the information they need to improve their work. In addition, they are not always given sufficient opportunity to respond to teachers' comments.
- In Key Stage 2, however, marking is exemplary and provides pupils with encouragement, distinct structures and clear information on how to move forward in their learning.
- The school has revised its procedures for tracking pupils' progress to ensure early identification of pupils' needs and effective intervention, which includes the deployment of learning-support staff to assist individual pupils. This means pupils get appropriate help and support when they need it and, consequently, they make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. A wide range of experiences, resources, books, interesting artefacts and interactive technology help make learning absorbing for pupils.

The achievement of children**is good**

- Pupils have made rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the past year due to targeted input and specific intervention to support and challenge groups of all abilities. As a result of this, standards have risen considerably to be broadly in line with national average by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points and from their attainment at the end of Year 5.
- Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age.
- Currently, pupils in Key Stage 1 are making faster progress and reaching higher standards than seen in recent years. A Year 1 pupil summed up the reason for her progress by saying, 'We work hard and concentrate and know exactly what we are doing.'
- Progress in Key Stage 2 and the rate of learning have accelerated rapidly during the past year as pupils move up through the classes. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, progress was particularly strong. Current work shows that this good achievement in English and mathematics is being maintained and built upon.
- Pupils' attainment in reading has risen noticeably over the last year because of the high profile it has been given. In Key Stage 1, pupils' understanding of phonics has improved. In Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy reading a variety of books by a variety of authors. They read fluently and with good intonation to colour the meaning.
- Neither girls nor boys underachieve and school leaders are working successfully to close any gaps which might occur. This is indicative of the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all.
- Overall evidence shows that, throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers. In the 2013 national tests, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics was approximately one year behind all other pupils in the school and almost two years behind all other pupils nationally. By 2014, the gap had closed; evidence seen shows that, currently, disadvantaged pupils achieve at least in line with their peers in English and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs get good and timely support that meets their needs, and they do well.
- Checks on pupils' books and evidence seen in lessons show that the most able pupils are doing well. The proportion of pupils that reached Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 increased during the year due to targeted teaching in Year 6 to raise standards, particularly in reading and writing.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Almost all children attend the on-site pre-school provision prior to entering the Reception class.
- Due to the close proximity of both settings, the children share an outdoor area and 'open door' sessions are held weekly. This ensures that children enter the Reception class comfortably and confidently.
- Excellent relationships exist between staff, and they work closely with pre-school practitioners. This informs assessments and supports their knowledge of the children on entry.
- Clear and very effective systems are in place for tracking children's progress and attainment.
- Children of all abilities make outstanding progress and are encouraged to reflect on what they have done and how they might improve.
- The impact of teaching over time is outstanding. The environment is colourful, interesting and inspiring. There is a well-judged balance between direct teaching and child-initiated learning.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding; the teacher and teaching assistants make a strong and effective team.
- They place a strong emphasis on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) within well-planned and purposeful activities; consequently, children are confident and are extremely well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- Many informal opportunities are provided for parents to share their views about their child's learning. They are encouraged to complete 'I am proud' notes about their child, which are displayed in the classroom and help the children to grow in confidence and respect each other.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its children’s needs. This ensures that children 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 children’s needs. Children 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 children 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 | 106928 |
| Local authority | Rotherham |
| Inspection number | 442205 |

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 | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of children | 4–11 |
| Gender of children | Mixed |
| Number of children on the school roll | 180 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andy Brewerton |
| Executive Headteacher | Mark Wheeler |
| Headteacher | Karen Brammer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 December 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01709 570297 |
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