

Cliffe Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street, Cliffe, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 6NN

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement needs to improve throughout the school, particularly in mathematics and writing, because pupils make expected, rather than good progress over time.
- Standards are average by the end of Year 6. They have fallen in recent years because during a long period of instability of staffing, teaching has not been regularly good enough to sustain above average standards.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills in solving problems both in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- They do not write often enough, or at length or in subjects other than English. There are weaknesses in their grammatical, punctuation and spelling skills that pull standards down.
- Children in their Reception Year do not have regular and exciting chances to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoor area, which need developing.
- Expectations of pupils' learning and the presentation of their work are not always high enough, and the work they are given is not consistently at the right level to enable them to make good progress or to reach higher levels.
- Judgements about the quality of teaching do not focus enough on how well all pupils learn, to ensure accuracy about how well pupils are achieving.
- Not enough leaders have responsibility for whole-school issues, to extend the staff's knowledge of achievement and teaching across the school.
- The governing body does not have enough first-hand information about teaching and achievement in the school to be as effective as they are determined to be in steering it forward.

The school has the following strengths

- Marking of pupils' work is regular, detailed and specific. It tells pupils how to make further progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school.
- Their attendance is above average.
- Pupils feel safe in school because the school cares for them well and the site is secure.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is increasingly well promoted through the curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons. She observed four of them with the headteacher. She visited several other lessons for shorter periods in order to see learning in a wide range of subjects or topics.
- The inspector spoke with pupils while they were playing and learning, watched an assembly and listened to pupils reading. She watched several pupils being taught in small groups.
- The inspector held a formal meeting with a group of pupils to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a lot of documentation about the school, including information about pupils' achievement, how well the school's improvement plan is helping it to improve the school and how well teachers' targets link in to it. She checked governing body minutes, samples of pupils' work and policies to keep them safe.
- The inspector considered the 32 parental responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) in carrying out the inspection. She spoke with several parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector checked the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age and mixed-ability classes throughout the school. The children in their Reception Year learn with Year 1 pupils and there is a Year 1/2 class, a Year 3/4 class and a Year 5/6 class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion supported through school action has fallen and is in line with the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The pupil premium provides support for a ninth of the pupils in the school. This is below the national average. The pupil-premium funding is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is in a partnership with five other local primary schools to strengthen sports provision and to develop the new curriculum.
- There has been considerable turbulence in staffing for the last three years, including in the leadership and management of the school. Several temporary teachers have also been in post during this time. This has been due to unavoidable circumstances. A permanent team of staff has been in post since September 2014 and the headteacher has returned full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is at least good by making sure that:
 - teachers always have high expectations of pupils' learning and the presentation of their work
 - activities match accurately the levels at which the pupils are working, especially for the most able pupils, and including in the Reception Year.
- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - pupils have regular well-planned opportunities to practise their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects
 - there is a whole-school policy for the teaching of punctuation and spelling which all staff follow
 - pupils strengthen their grammatical skills by writing regularly at length
 - pupils have plenty of chances to practise the skills they have learned in mathematics through solving problems
 - the activities in- and outdoors for the children in their Reception Year give them exciting opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by making sure that:
 - judgements about the quality of teaching are based on secure evidence about how well all groups of pupils learn
 - middle leaders' roles are broadened so that they have responsibility for whole-school areas for development
 - the governors have the necessary knowledge about teaching and achievement to challenge and support leaders and managers fully.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The changes and improvements made by the headteacher and senior leaders have not had time to have a full impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress, and on the quality of teaching. While leadership roles are being distributed more, not enough staff have responsibility for whole-school issues.
- However, staffing is stable, and there is a common sense of purpose. The headteacher's determination to get the school back to where it was is supported by a secure knowledge of its strengths and what it needs to do, and very appropriate plans to make sure this happens.
- Although some staff are either new to the school or their responsibilities, they are all making a difference to the pace of improvements. The quickening rate of progress in mathematics this term, for example, is due to the good strategies in place across the school and the rigorous checking of their impact.
- Leadership is being strengthened by being shared more equitably across the school among middle leaders who are monitoring the effectiveness of the new curriculum. However, they do not have enough responsibility in whole-school roles, particularly in monitoring teaching and progress.
- Good systems are in place to check the school's work. The school development plan focuses on the right priorities to bring about improvements and teachers' challenging and measureable performance targets reflect this.
- Information about pupils' learning is used carefully to check their progress. Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils and meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss how any underachievement is being addressed.
- The school's major focus is to ensure that teaching is at least consistently good. It is checked regularly but records of lesson observations show that there is not enough focus on how well all groups of pupils in the class learn to ensure that findings are accurate.
- Teachers find the regular training provided by the school, especially round the new mathematical and literacy strategies, very helpful in improving their effectiveness as teachers.
- Pupils and their parents like the new curriculum and the topics, around which much learning is based. It has broadened chances for the pupils to express themselves creatively. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, in the opportunities it gives them to reflect, for example, on society, inequality and the values of different cultures. Not all pupils have the same chances of success in their learning because teaching does not always cater equally well for all abilities, particularly the most able. Thus, the school's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils to learn well requires improvement.
- Both the staff and pupils are benefiting from the additional sports funding, in the range of activities available and in the staff's greater skills in teaching a range of sports. More pupils take part in after-school clubs, including Key Stage 1 pupils because they have more opportunities to do so.
- Parents like the school, support its work and value the regular contact between home and school and the opportunities to attend workshops so that they can support their children's learning.
- Parents are right in feeling the school helps to ensure their children are safe. The school's procedures for safeguarding meet the statutory requirements and include up-to-date training of staff and good procedures.
- The local authority's recent review of the school's performance shows it knows it accurately. It is a supportive authority and will continue to support the school's improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows that teaching is variable and that achievement needs to improve.
 - The headteacher provides the governors with a lot of information about the school's performance about which they question her. They focus much more now on pupils' achievement and have set up an achievement committee. They have been helped by the training they have undertaken on what statistics are saying about how well the school is doing.
 - They know they need to find out more for themselves about the school's work and are starting to take the initiative more. They are in the early stages of developing links with subject leaders.
 - The governors understand the importance of targets for teachers' performance in improving teaching and their link to pay rises.
 - They know how pupil-premium money is spent and its impact.
 - The governors are determined to be able to challenge and support the school fully in order to help it to get back to where it was. They feel an external review of governance would be helpful in accelerating the effectiveness of all of the governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons. They are keen to start learning and do what the teacher tells them quickly.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because in a few lessons where teaching does not interest pupils, some get restless and the teachers have to remind them to concentrate.
- Round the school and outside, pupils behave very sensibly and with consideration for others, including in the dining hall.
- In the playground, they mix well, treating others considerately and with respect, reflecting their understanding that everyone is equal whatever their differences.
- This is a happy school, with a caring ethos, and which provides the pupils with many chances to grow as young citizens.
- Pupils have lots of responsibilities, of which they are very proud. The older pupils look after the younger ones in the playground in their roles as play and lunchtime squads and as school ambassadors. The children in their Reception Year are equally proud to be chosen, for example, to take the register to the office.
- The pupils' good personal development is strengthened by the opportunities for older pupils to run lunchtime clubs such as Lego and art, for the younger pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe because there are always teachers around if they have any worries. The site is secure.
- The pupils say there is no bullying and the school's records back this up. The pupils know unkind behaviour is not tolerated.
- The school makes sure from the start that pupils know of potential dangers, including the importance of using the internet safely and not talking to strangers.
- Through topics and stories, the pupils find out about other dangers they may face and how to avoid them. This includes the prejudices that some people meet because of their beliefs or race.
- Pupils and their parents understand the importance of regular attendance. It is above average. The school council has made sure that pupils are very aware of their attendance by agreeing with the staff to have small treats for the class with the best attendance each week.
- No pupils are persistently absent and there have been no exclusions at the school.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching is variable in a number of ways and leads to pupils making only expected rather than good progress by the end of Year 6.
- Expectations of the quality, presentation and amount of pupils' work differ.
- Work, especially for the most able pupils, does not always help them to achieve their potential because it is not sufficiently challenging in the mixed-age classes. Not enough pupils apply confidently the skills that they have learned.
- There are not enough chances for pupils to practise and strengthen their literacy and, especially, their numeracy skills in other lessons.
- When teaching is good, pupils make good progress because pupils' work is challenging. For example, in Year 6, the excellent stimulus of the trench, built by pupils and their parents in the school grounds in readiness for the First World War topic, brought alive pupils' understanding of the feelings of the soldiers. It resulted in pupils' good progress in using adverbs in making their writing more powerful.
- Marking is helpful in driving pupils' progress because it tells them what they know well and gives very useful advice about how to make their work even better.
- Homework is a growing strength in quickening pupils' progress. It is interesting, provides many chances to practise literacy and numeracy skills and very regular communication via homework books between parents and teachers.
- The staff and pupils get on well and pupils feel confident in answering questions even if they are not sure their answers are correct.
- Generally, teaching assistants provide good help to groups of pupils in helping them to develop secure

skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Sometimes, this support does not start early enough in the lesson.

- Classrooms and corridors are very attractive environments, with beautiful displays of pupils' colourful work. There are, however, far more examples of pupils' creative and expressive skills, including in the Reception/Year 1 class, than of their writing.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement needs to improve throughout the school, especially in writing and mathematics, because teaching is variable and leads to pupils making expected, rather than good progress, over time. Not enough pupils reach higher standards, especially in mathematics.
- Standards are average over time by the end of Year 6. Teaching does not consistently give pupils enough practice in using their literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge, to secure better skills.
- This year, not enough pupils made the progress expected of them in grammar, punctuation and spelling because there is not a consistent whole-school approach to teaching these skills. Pupils do not practise writing at length often enough to become skilful writers. There were gaps in pupils' mathematical skills by the end of Year 6, leading to a dip in achievement.
- The school's predictions for 2015 show more consistent, quicker progress and higher standards. This term's data and work in books, including in Year 6, indicate improvement in the progress of different groups.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standards in the screening check in phonics (the sounds that letters make), is below average, although improving from last year. Almost all pupils reached the required standard when they retook it in Year 2. Emerging readers use phonics automatically, to help them to work out the correct enunciation of words.
- Pupils are now encouraged to read more for enjoyment and have incentives for reading at home, which is doing the trick in getting most pupils reading, and in considering different ways of writing and how characters develop. This is leading to improving Key Stage 1 results.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress overall. This is starting to improve. Fewer pupils are on the special needs register because they are identified correctly and support is more accurately targeted.
- Not enough of the most able pupils achieve well because teaching does not enable them to develop the skills they need. For the first time this year, the most able pupils are being entered for Level 6 and are being given specific support to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and understanding. Gaps in learning at all levels have also been identified and intervention is in place to fill these gaps.
- Few pupils are entitled to pupil-premium funding and therefore comparisons between their achievement and that of pupils not entitled to the funding are statistically unreliable. The school provides specific support, including additional literacy and numeracy support and phonics, and extra after-school clubs. Progress of these pupils is good where teaching and support are good.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The most able children are not always sufficiently well challenged to ensure they achieve as well as possible. The outdoor area in particular does not help the children to develop equally well all aspects of learning, particularly literacy and numeracy.
- The children's levels of knowledge and skills when they start school are typical overall for their age, with some weaknesses, particularly in their literacy skills.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development varies from year to year. In 2014, it was below average, reflecting the children's level of progress which requires improvement.
- Good planning by the leader and good teaching are ensuring that the pace of progress is quickening for different groups of children, including those children with additional needs. All of the boys are making progress and some make good progress. However, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not reach their potential.
- Their quickening progress is based on the leader's good knowledge of the children's needs when they start school, through meeting them and their parents and through much improved links with the pre-school. She has run phonics training to enable parents to support their children at home.
- This term the children have made good progress in phonics. All of them can recognise at least five sounds

and many others can recognise the rest of the sounds, by making actions that match the sound.

- The focus on literacy includes a daily challenge for the children to hold a writing implement accurately, to help them to shape letters accurately.
- Opportunities for the children to write and do number work are less enticing than other activities. However, in a numeracy activity, children found the practical investigations fun, such as using a metre rule to work out concepts such as bigger and smaller.
- The outdoor area, while a very attractive area of the school, is underdeveloped and does not offer the children a full range of activities, especially to help them develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Children's learning in the 17 areas of learning is tracked and recorded well, including through effective home-school journals.
- The children's behaviour, safety and personal development are good. They follow instructions immediately, know the importance of treating one another well and are starting to take other children's needs into account.

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	121529
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449308

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Middleton
Headteacher	Suzanne Hay
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
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