

Old Town Primary School

Billy Lane, Old Town, West Yorkshire, HX7 8RY

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Leaders and managers have not improved teaching or raised achievement to the point where it is consistently good in all classes and over time.
- There are gaps in school leaders' understanding of achievement data that have led to errors in target-setting, how teachers' performance is managed and in how well the quality of teaching is checked.
- School leaders have an overgenerous view of how things are going.
- The quality of teaching varies. Too much is not good enough.
- The work pupils do is sometimes too easy and occasionally too difficult.
- Reading in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 is not taught well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They are well-mannered and wear their uniform proudly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They grow to appreciate each other's differences and the school prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has a good working relationship with the local community and has tremendous support from parents.
- The governing body provides good challenge to school leaders and has a particularly rigorous approach to ensuring that pupils are safe.
- There are signs of improvement, particularly in the current Year 6, where standards are set to be above average and pupils are making good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed various parts of lessons, all of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Additionally, pupils' work was reviewed to check on the progress they had been making over time, and the inspector listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, members of the Governing Body and the school improvement partner. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Parents were met in the playground as they collected or dropped off their children.
- The inspector analysed the 16 responses that had been submitted to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and several questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents, including school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support children who are eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- At around 17% for the past two years, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- No pupils currently speak English as an additional language.
- The early years provides full-time education to children in a Reception class.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school other than at the normal times.
- At the time of the inspection, building works were under way to build an additional classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement so they are both at least good by:
 - keeping a close eye on how pupils develop their reading skills in the early years and Key Stage 1, and identifying very precisely their next steps in learning
 - improving how teachers question pupils so that more are given the opportunity to answer
 - raise expectations of what pupils can do in lessons
 - making sure that when teachers give advice in their marking of pupils' work, pupils then act on it
 - sharing more widely the good practice that exists in the school which ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Improve the impact of leaders' and managers' work by:
 - improving leaders' understanding of achievement data so that targets for pupils are challenging, teachers' performance management targets are rigorous and teachers are held more accountable for pupils' progress
 - ensuring that middle and senior leaders check on the quality of teaching more robustly and that they do not rely on snapshot pre-arranged lesson observations
 - providing more accurate information to school governors on the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- School leaders work hard and are committed to doing their very best for their pupils. The headteacher has the complete backing of all staff, and parents are almost entirely positive about the school. A key problem, however, is that school leaders' understanding of achievement data is flawed and this has led them into evaluating the quality of teaching and achievement too generously.
- Subject leaders have spent much of their efforts in deciding how the new curriculum for 2014 should be taught. This has taken their time away from the essential business of checking on the quality of teaching, sharing good practice and raising the bar in terms of achievement so that pupils in the school do as well as they are able. Their understanding of data in their subjects in each class lacks detail and this limits their ability to put things right quickly when things start to go wrong.
- Staff are beginning to be held more accountable for the progress their pupils make, but suffer from a lack of rigour in the process. For example, meetings to discuss achievement between the headteacher and teachers are not recorded, in the belief that it is not needed in this small school. Targets are set too low in Key Stage 1 and expectations of what children can do in the Early Years are not high enough.
- The management of teachers' performance sometimes lacks rigour. Teachers' targets that relate to the amount of progress their pupils should make are not always challenging enough.
- Leaders and managers check on the quality of teaching, but leaders place too much weight on pre-arranged formal lesson observations. This is painting an over positive picture of teaching which is not typical on a day-to-day basis.
- Pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. They gleefully told the inspector about their ukulele lessons and how much they enjoyed school visits that brought learning alive for them. The inspector was impressed by a vigorous fencing lesson run by a visiting sports professional. There are good opportunities to practise writing across a range of subjects. Pupils grow vegetables in a nearby allotment which are then sold in the village shop. They develop a good understanding of British values and growing up in a racially tolerant society through a very active relationship with a culturally contrasting school in Bradford, which involves visits to each other's schools and joint projects.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is generally managed well and allocated mainly to supporting them in small groups using specialist teaching assistants and offering support to those whose behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. Some of the spending of the funding is vague on the school's published statement, however. The funding over time is having a reasonably positive impact on achievement, with gaps between disadvantaged and others closing in recent years.
- The sport funding is managed reasonably well, although the plan for spending has minimal detail on how staff will improve their own knowledge of how to deliver sports once the funding ceases.
- The local authority does not directly support the school. It has brokered support through linking the school with others nearby, so they can support each other. Additionally, the school has arranged for an external school improvement partner to advise and support the school and for a mathematics consultant to help raise achievement. This support has been partially successful, for example in improving teachers' skills in teaching calculation methods. However, it has not helped school leaders to improve teaching or raise achievement. In some cases, this support has not been helpful, because it has endorsed the school's generous view of itself.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good understanding of achievement data and ask very searching questions on a regular basis to challenge and support school leaders. Their understanding of the quality of teaching in the school is incomplete. This is not because of a lack of challenge, but is because the information they receive focuses too much on the positives. Governors make sure that pay rises are linked to teachers' abilities in the classroom. Finances have been expertly managed by governors so that any unforeseen expense relating to the renovations to the Victorian building is financed effectively. The inspector was impressed by the sheer commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by all members of the governing body he met. They take part in charity events, such as sponsored bike rides and make very frequent visits to talk to pupils or work as assistants in the classes to which they are attached. They have considered very carefully how British values are promoted and ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to experience life outside of the small village in which the school is located.

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

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils apply themselves well to their work, particularly when it is interesting and fires their enthusiasm.
- Pupils' work is usually presented well, and they take a pride in their work.
- Year 6, proudly wearing their distinctive jumpers, willingly take on responsibilities such as being dinnertime servers which ensures that they grow into responsible young people ready for the next stage in their education.
- The inspector was impressed by pupils' maturity and how one helped another to behave by reminding him very sensitively not to talk out of turn.
- In the playground, pupils are very caring of their younger peers. The inspector saw playground helpers making sure pupils joined in games and vigilantly looking out for anyone who was left out.
- The school has recently introduced a system of 'restorative justice' as a behaviour management tool, so that pupils are able to reconcile their differences amicably. Pupils have been trained to mediate to resolve disagreements. This has improved behaviour and has helped pupils to understand how one person's actions can affect another's feelings.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Very frequent sweeps across the school by members of the governing body, checking on health and safety and safeguarding ensure that safety is given highest priority.
- Pupils told the inspector that bullying does occasionally go on, but there is always a caring adult to turn to if the need arises. They are aware of the different kinds of bullying.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe when using the Internet.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much. This inconsistency means pupils' progress is not steady as they progress through the school. So, while there is some very good teaching, overall, its quality requires improvement.
- The quality of questioning tends to rely on pupils putting their hands up to answer questions. This means that motivated pupils answer, notably boys. Girls are happier to sit and let boys do the answering, which is a contributory factor towards boys making better progress than girls in the school.
- In one class, however, where pupils were all making rapid progress, the teacher used many different questioning techniques, including using mini whiteboards and very targeted questions to individuals, based on the teacher's excellent knowledge of their abilities.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although again, it is inconsistent in quality. Pupils do not always read and respond to the marking to improve their work. The inspector saw a few books where teachers have let another adult, such as a trainee teacher mark books, but have not then checked this marking, resulting in errors or even spelling mistakes.
- The work that is given to pupils is sometimes too easy and occasionally it is too difficult. In general, expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Where teachers have got it just right, they have used their assessment records very carefully in their planning. For example, in one lesson, the teacher used her very good knowledge of pupils to ask searching questions to improve their knowledge and understanding of percentages.
- Teachers sometimes use imaginative strategies to help pupils make links between subjects, such as the impressive work Years 3 and 4 have been doing on rivers, which combines research skills and develops their writing alongside knowledge and understanding of geography and science. However, there are insufficient opportunities for staff to learn from this good practice that exists in the school so that the overall quality of teaching improves.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children's starting points when they enter the Reception class naturally vary from year to year in this small school. However, generally they are below those expected of their age. As they move through the school, their progress varies from class to class and between subjects. Overall, not enough pupils make good progress.
- Boys tend to make better progress than the girls, particularly in mathematics, although this issue is being addressed through improved mathematics teaching and support that is being provided from a mathematics consultant.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress when they receive very targeted attention to their needs, often on a one-to-one basis. Their confidence improves as does their self-esteem. However, the general inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school means that their achievement requires improvement.
- Those pupils who arrive at the school other than at the normal times make similar progress to that of their peers.
- In 2014 in Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were approximately one year behind their classmates in reading and two terms behind in writing; in mathematics there was no significant difference. In comparison to the national picture, the disadvantaged pupils in school were approximately two terms behind in reading and just over a term behind in writing and mathematics. Over time, the gaps have narrowed steadily.
- In the 2014 national phonics check for Year 1, pupils reached similar standards to those nationally. However, it was apparent when the inspector listened to pupils reading that there are gaps in their learning. Some pupils in Year 2 do not use techniques that they should have been taught to read unfamiliar words and the records that are kept to identify the next steps in their reading and highlight words they need to practise are weak. The records tend to contain congratulatory comments or simple comments on the title of the book they have read.
- Pupils' achievement in writing varies. Overall it requires improvement because they make repeated mistakes, sometimes with their spelling, punctuation or grammar which are not corrected by teachers. Some of the mistakes older pupils make are because these basic errors have been allowed to persist. This means that while they sometimes write using interesting vocabulary and good quality sentences, they use capitals in odd places or misspell common words.
- Similarly, pupils' achievement in mathematics requires improvement. Pupils learn their times tables and basic number skills, but their understanding of numbers varies because it is not checked on well enough by teachers or school leaders. In some classes, pupils do many repeated addition, multiplication, division and subtraction exercises, but do not have enough understanding of how to use them in real situations. This means that as they get older, they are not able to apply their mathematics skills to a good level.
- The work that teachers set for the most-able pupils is sometimes too easy and this slows the progress of which they are capable. This starts in the Early Years when expectations of what children can do are too low. This means that as they progress through the school, relatively few reach the highest levels.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management in the early years requires improvement. Systems to assess pupils are developing well, but lack sharpness in identifying the next steps in children's learning. The curriculum is developing reasonably well and good plans are in place to use the outdoor area more fully in children's activities, once the building work is complete. As in the rest of the school, checks on the quality of teaching to identify problems and spread good practice are infrequent and lacking in rigour.
- Children's behaviour is generally good and children are very safe in school. There are good policies in place to ensure that children are kept safe. For example, arrangements for parents to pick up their children after school are robust. They behave well, except when teaching does not stimulate their interests and then their minds wander. Children quickly learn habits that serve them well as they get older, such as table manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you' and good hygiene when using the bathroom.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Phonics (how letters relate to sounds) is not taught well because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their phonics when doing other activities or the work they are set is often either too easy or too difficult. Some of the activities children take part in lack purpose and do not have specific objectives. This, in part, is because the next steps in children's learning are not clearly identified.
- Children's achievement requires improvement. While in most areas of learning, more children reach the early learning goals than they do nationally, in the essential areas of reading and writing, they are below national figures. This is due to next steps in learning not being explicit enough and the quality of teaching being inconsistent over time. As a result, children move into Year 1 with some catching up to do. Those

children who are disabled or have special educational needs are identified quickly and suitable support is put into place to ensure that their needs are met. However, since there are so few, it is not possible to evaluate their achievement without identifying individuals.

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	107524
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	449143

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Codd
Headteacher	Janette Batty
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
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