

Barkston Ash Catholic Primary School

London Road, Barkston Ash, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, LS24 9PS

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership from the new headteacher and governing body have been instrumental in the rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in the past two years.
- Teaching is good and all staff regularly check pupils' understanding as lessons progress and correct any misunderstandings.
- Children in the early years provision achieve well because of the good teaching and care they receive.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Children are polite, courteous and proud of their school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school; something parents fully agree with. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied and is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities. Opportunities to play sport are a strength of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. They learn from an early age that they have both rights and responsibilities towards the community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading or mathematics. In the Reception class, children are not given enough direction and encouragement to write independently and often enough. For some pupils in Key Stage 1, their progress is hampered by untidy presentation.
- Pupils are not consistently given guidance to act upon the advice received about how they could improve their work.
- The skills of new subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum are not yet fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also heard three pupils reading from Years 1, 3 and 5. He also discussed their reading progress with them. A meeting was held with a group of pupils from Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, as well as development plans and information about anonymized teachers' performance. He also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also scrutinised.
- The inspector took account of 86 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also spoke to parents informally. He also considered 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mark Colley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium funding 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.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well-below average and no pupil speaks English as an additional language.
- Classes are taught in mixed-aged classes across school.
- In the past two years the school has seen significant changes in leadership. Most governors are relatively new to post and in September 2013 the school appointed a new headteacher and senior teacher.
- The school works in partnership with other local primary schools through the Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Schools' Alliance.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to raise standards and accelerate progress further, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring pupils respond to the written comments they receive from their teachers
 - giving more encouragement and direction to children to write more often and independently in the early years
 - ensuring pupils take more care and pride in the layout and presentation of their work particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Continue to support new subject leaders in their role of checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils learn in all subjects of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In the past two years, the new headteacher and governing body have moved this school forward significantly, addressing an initial decline from the last inspection. Changes in staffing have contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and their behaviour.
- Effective management of changes to staffing, particularly at a middle leadership level, are supporting improvement. Middle leaders are now beginning to be involved in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in all subjects of the curriculum. In some cases, this work is at an early stage of development and so leadership is not yet outstanding overall.
- The early years provision is well led and this enables almost all children to settle quickly, enjoy learning and make good progress in the Reception class.
- Staff have appropriately challenging targets for improving their performance that focus on pupils' achievement and their own areas of responsibility. Teachers know what constitutes good practice and how their pay increases only when targets are met. All staff, including support staff, have every opportunity to develop their skills through relevant training.
- School leaders ensure there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. Funding through the pupil premium is used carefully to help to provide support for disadvantaged pupils so that they make at least similar rates of progress to their classmates.
- Leaders evaluate school performance closely and accurately. This leads to well-thought-out priorities and demonstrates the leaders' capacity to further improve the school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the curriculum themes they study particularly those linked to some excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural areas. For example, themes, such as those within the positive psychology week, provided pupils with opportunities to learn how to be happy and maintain good self-esteem. They also gain an understanding of cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Sports funding is used very effectively. Staff expertise has improved from good training and teaching alongside specialists. Pupils have a much wider range of activities in which almost all pupils participate enthusiastically. They are now gaining recognition for their achievements through sporting competitions within the area.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Parents appreciate the accessibility of the headteacher and staff. They value the improved support and communication they receive including from the school website.
- The local authority has provided good support particularly in supporting recent changes in staffing, and believes the leaders have the ability to carry on making improvements.
- Partnerships with surrounding schools through the Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Schools' Alliance are very effective and have enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement significantly.
- Systems and procedures to safeguard pupils are well managed and regularly checked by governors and, as a result, they meet statutory requirements.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors are both strong and effective in supporting and challenging the school. Governors understand the performance management of the headteacher and how the performance of other staff links to salary progression. They receive valuable information from school leaders about the progress of pupils and make regular visits to the school to gain accurate and comprehensive first-hand views. They are provided with detailed information which enables them to have a secure view of the quality of teaching and provide effective support to senior leaders managing teachers' pay awards.
 - Governors are effective in managing the finances of the school. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium and sport funding are used and the benefits they provide for pupils in the school. Governors make sure that they meet their statutory responsibilities. For example, safeguarding requirements are in place, reviewed regularly and effective.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, carers and staff agree. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour both in class and around school are good. Pupils value the number of roles and responsibilities they have within school such as play leaders, sports captains and tutors for younger pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are taught to know themselves as learners, to understand how they best learn and to show perseverance when work is difficult.
- The school has a welcoming atmosphere: pupils are polite and courteous, getting on well with one another and showing respect to adults. All pupils are fully included in all activities; equal opportunities are promoted well.
- Although most pupils present their work well, a small number of Key Stage 1 pupils do not always take enough care over how well their work is presented, including the layout of their calculations and the quality of their handwriting.
- Attendance is above average and staff work hard to ensure it remains so.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding
- Risks are fully assessed and the highest priority given to keeping pupils safe both on and off the school site. Access to the school is secure and staff are carefully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe extremely well because of the expert guidance and support they receive, whether in specific sessions on safety in every class at the start of the year or through ongoing themes within the curriculum.
- Bullying in school is rare. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and can explain how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- All parents responding to the online questionnaire think their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. Inspection findings endorsed these views.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved rapidly in the last two years. As a result all pupils make good progress over time. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and high expectations of what they want pupils to learn and of how they are to behave in lessons.
- Pupils work happily together. For example, when older pupils were learning about mathematics pupils listened willingly to one another's calculations, working together in pairs or small groups to solve challenging calculations linked to percentage and proportion. Such work makes them think hard as well as extending their enjoyment of mathematics.
- There is good teaching of reading. Pupils build on their good start in the early years and achieve well in this skill. Staff skills in teaching phonics (linking letters and their sounds) are strong. Reading is a high priority and pupils have many opportunities to read independently and with adults in school.
- Teachers' marking provides useful feedback and detailed information for pupils. Marking illustrates where pupils have been successful in their learning. This ensures that pupils are clear about how they are getting on. However, teachers' feedback on how pupils could improve their work is not consistently acted upon. This means that occasionally pupils continue to display the same weaknesses and make the same errors.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to write for a range of purposes and in different subjects. However, in Key stage 1, occasionally pupils' work is presented poorly. Pupils are not regularly reminded of the importance of legible writing and the importance of the layout of their work. This is also the case in some mathematics books. In these cases some basic errors are made and progress over time is less evident
- Staff encourage pupils to develop confidence in speaking and listening by giving them opportunities to discuss their work and express their views.
- Teaching in early years is good. Children develop their skills and abilities well through an interesting range of activities and experiences. However, the more specific writing needs of some pupils are occasionally overlooked
- Teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress that is as good as others. They explain tasks to them so that they understand completely what they have to do but then make sure that the pupils do the work for themselves.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good. In 2014, their attainment at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in reading and their attainment in writing, mathematics and in the English, grammar, punctuation and spelling test was broadly in line with the national average. With the exception of writing, attainment has risen since the last inspection and school data indicate that this will continue next year across all subjects.
- The proportion of pupils that made better than expected progress was above average in all subjects.
- The most recent data and work in pupils' books show that pupils in Year 6 are already working at levels which are above those typical for their age. Achievement in other classes is also showing significant proportions of pupils making good levels of progress and achieving well in reading and mathematics. However, progress in writing is more variable.
- In 2014, an above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils scored well in the national check on phonics skills, an improvement on 2013 reflecting good teaching of early reading.
- Since the last inspection, attainment has declined at the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, where attainment in 2014 was below the national average. The school's tracking system and pupils' own work currently shows that this trend has now been addressed and Year 2 are on track to attain above the national average in 2015.
- A small number of pupils are supported by pupil premium. There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to compare their attainment with that of others, without risk of identifying individuals. However, in all year groups, disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as others in the school.
- The most able pupils are usually challenged and given opportunities to extend their learning. In Year 6 in 2014, an above-average proportion of pupils gained the higher levels in reading, writing and English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra help tailored to their needs that ensures they make good progress.

The early years provision is good

- Overall, children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. However, the skills and knowledge of some boys are below those of girls, and this was particularly the case in 2014. During their time in Reception, children make good progress in all areas of learning relative to their different starting points.
- Children quickly learn to follow the early years routines because adults establish strong links with families through, for instance, stay and play sessions for younger children and meetings in the Reception class. Parents are able to discuss what children will be learning and how they can help their children's learning at home. The early years coordinator accurately assesses children's progress and analyses the resulting data in detail to provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in achievement and provision. This helps adults to better plan effectively for the needs of individual children.
- The quality of teaching over time is good. Teachers and support staff use a wide range of activities to make sure all children enjoy their work. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor areas. Children were observed having great fun taking what they had learnt earlier about weight and measures in their classroom to activities outdoors. Children sorted Santa's presents into heavy and light sacks on his sleigh consolidating and extending their understanding further.
- Learning is firmly based around children's interests. All the adults build skilfully on these to extend children's speaking, listening and mathematical skills, as well as their overall confidence. Adults have a clear knowledge of each child's needs. Effective relationships between adults and children ensure children behave well. Staff ensure that children are kept safe.
- Children's physical development, and particularly fine motor skills, is developed well through a good range of activities. These help them to hold a pencil effectively and develop their early number and letter writing. However, children do not always receive enough encouragement and direction to write often and independently. As a result opportunities to improve their writing skills are sometimes missed.

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	121635
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449176

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eden Noblett
Headteacher	Christopher Power
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2011
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