

Pickering Community Junior School

Middleton Road, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 8AJ

Inspection dates 9–10 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, the school's effectiveness has improved and is now good.
- The drive and determination of the headteacher to improve the school are shared by staff team and governors. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been successfully tackled and this has led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is now good and some is better. As a result, pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are higher. Work is generally matched well to pupils' varying needs and abilities. In particular, pupils with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour in classes and around the school is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that everyone in school cares for them very well.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand that responsibility, respect and tolerance are important.
- Computing is a strength in the school. It contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment of learning and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.
- The role of middle leaders has strengthened. They now make an effective contribution to driving school improvement forward.
- Governors are fully committed to making the school the very best it can be. They provide senior leaders with the right balance of challenge and support.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school's work. They acknowledge that this is a school where 'children blossom' and 'develop a love of learning'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work provided for the most able pupils sometimes lacks challenge.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills by solving problems.
- Some agreed teaching policies, such as marking of work, are not always adhered to by all staff.
- The school improvement plan does not make it clear how and when leaders intend to check pupils' achievement throughout the year, so that they know their actions are having an impact.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed several lessons or parts of lessons. Some of these observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, governors, and a representative from the local authority senior leaders, middle leaders and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through informal discussion and considering responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents to the inspection team and the school's own questionnaire to parents.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed pupils at playtime, lunchtime, in assembly and in a lunchtime computer club.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' work from across the school and also looked at work from last year.
- Inspectors analysed the 32 returns from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Carol Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Pattinson	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Firth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Pickering Community Junior School is larger than the average sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll is rising.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a Vulnerable Person's Champion. This team member works across the Pickering Junior and Infant Schools to provide support for vulnerable pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are 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?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to ensure consistently rapid rates of progress and the highest levels of pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure that all pupils have regular opportunities to apply mathematical skills in a range of problem-solving activities
 - ensuring that the school's marking policy and 'non-negotiable' guidance is strictly applied at all times
 - providing the most able pupils with work that is always challenging, so that they reach their potential in all classes.
- Improve the school improvement plan by making clear how and when pupils' achievement is to be measured throughout the year.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders, governors and middle leaders have successfully built upon the improvements made since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are now good.
- The whole-school community shares the leadership's commitment and the drive for further improvement. This is seen in the very positive responses to the staff and parent questionnaire. It is also shared by the pupils, who describe their school as 'happier, safer, more enjoyable and epic'.
- Leaders' ambition for the school is reflected in the challenging end of key stage targets that are set for pupils' achievement. The school's improvement plan clearly pinpoints the right priorities and is strongly focused on improving the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding. However, the plan does not make it fully clear how and when pupils' achievement will be measured throughout the year so that leaders are clear about whether the school is on track to achieve its end of year targets.
- Leadership at all levels is now strong. Since the last inspection, middle leaders have developed their roles and they are now making an important contribution to the school's drive for further improvement. These leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development within their areas of responsibility. For example, the leader of mathematics has already taken steps to extend opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem solving. Guidance, including about the range of problem solving activities has been provided but this is not fully embedded among all staff.
- The leadership of teaching is strong and provides good support for staff who are at different stages in their development. Support for newly-qualified teachers is good. Teaching and support staff say that they are well supported to improve their skills and knowledge. The systems for the performance management of teachers are rigorous. Pay progression is closely linked to pupils' achievement and the national standards for teachers.
- The pupil premium funding is being used very effectively to help disadvantaged pupils learn at a faster rate. Much of the support for these pupils is through additional small group teaching and the work of the Vulnerable Person's Champion. Leaders, including governors, check carefully to ensure that this funding is having a positive impact.
- The school promotes equal opportunity well through checks made on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and providing additional support or challenge, where needed. As a result, all groups of pupils now make good progress.
- The range of subjects is planned so that pupils develop a love of learning. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and confidence in a wide range of activities, including sports and music, through the 'Singing Squad'. Pupils appreciate the wide range of visitors, visitors and special activities that make lessons exciting. For example, pupils described how they used hay bales to build Hadrian's Wall on the school field and then staged a battle. Pupils were able to explain how this experience inspired them to find out more about why the Romans invaded Britain and why they were so ruthless.
- Computing is strength of the curriculum. It is well resourced and a specialist teacher plans learning to ensure that it provides the full national curriculum entitlement and beyond. During the inspection, a class watched a video aimed at encouraging pupils to become aspiring computer scientists. Later that day, the school's lunchtime computer club was full of pupils totally absorbed in making their own computer programmes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to help in their community and enjoy recognition for their efforts through the school's 'citizenship awards'. There is a wide range of activities that enables pupils to understand other faiths and cultures. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Pupils say they appreciate the care that the staff take and they 'feel perfectly secure' in school.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. More pupils are taking part in sports clubs especially athletics, rugby, the martial arts and basketball. The number of pupils who can swim 25 metres has increased.
- Partnerships with other schools have strengthened. This now includes closer working with the infant school to improve the links for pupils in preparation for their move into Year 3.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. Since the last inspection, it has helped to strengthen links with other schools and build the skills and confidence of middle leaders. The local authority is now confident that the school is providing a good education and only requires basic support.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has continued to play a significant role in maintaining the momentum in school improvement so that the school's effectiveness is now good.
- Governors have a clear vision for the school's future improvement and have shown they are willing to take difficult decisions so that the school provides the best for the pupils.
- Governors have a good understanding of how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. They are very active in the school. Through regular visits, they are able to see how well initiatives are making a difference to pupils' progress. For example, a visit was specifically planned to look at how well the marking and feedback policy was working to help pupils improve their learning.
- Through the school performance improvement committee, governors have now developed a good understanding of teaching quality, pupils' progress data and the performance of the school. More precise measures of success in the school improvement plan would enable the governors to be even more effective in checking progress in these areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Sometimes it is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and flourish in what they describe as a 'family atmosphere'. Pupils' very positive attitudes to school reflect in their above average attendance.
- High expectations, very clear boundaries and good use of praise are central to the good behaviour and attitudes evident. School records and the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors support this view.
- Almost all pupils listen respectfully to adults and other pupils. They cooperate well with each other in discussion groups. This good behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning helps them to make good progress.
- Sometimes, pupils need occasional reminders about expectations of their behaviour. When this occurs, they respond quickly to adults, so lessons continue to flow smoothly and progress is good.
- Pupils' good attitudes are also reflected in their smart appearance, the tidy school and the care that pupils take in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils are consistently polite. They move around the building very responsibly and rarely require reminders about the school's high expectations.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school is a safe place to learn.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and report that 'this no longer happens'.
- Pupils can explain how the school has helped them to understand how to stay safe in different situations. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe on the internet and how to deal with cyber-bullying when using new technology.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good and sometimes better. This is confirmed by evidence of pupils' work in books, visits to classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's own records of the quality of teaching over time.
- Since the last inspection, there are higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the quality and quantity of the work pupils produce. Pupils' misconceptions are more frequently picked up and addressed during lessons.
- The introduction of 'non-negotiables', which include clear expectations of marking pupils' work, is improving the quality of teaching. Where progress is rapid and achievement is highest these 'non-negotiables' are very consistently used. Where progress is less rapid they are not quite so secure.
- Lessons are planned so that pupils are provided with 'top tips' for learning. These simple reminders give pupils clear guidance about what is expected and exactly what they need to do in order to be successful.
- Teachers' good understanding of what pupils know and can do ensures that they plan work that is generally matched well to pupils' varying needs and abilities. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are provided with work and support that is well adapted, so that they can make consistently good progress in their different classes. Work for the most able pupils, in some classes,

sometimes lacks challenge and this hampers their progress.

- The teaching of reading has improved. Well-organised guided reading sessions ensure there is a strong focus on reading for pleasure, research and comprehension skills. In these lessons, pupils enjoy reading a range of high-quality books and they are well supported by teachers and assistants. Achievement in reading has improved as a result.
- The teaching of writing has improved. There are now more planned opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across different subjects. Imaginative tasks inspire pupils to produce longer and higher quality writing. This is leading to good rates of progress across the school. For example, while learning about rainforests in geography, pupils in Year 6 produced well organised and well presented writing about a grouse that was transported from Pickering to the rainforest.
- The teaching of mathematics is also improving. The range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and to develop their mathematical thinking has been extended in order to improve pupils' achievement. Although this approach is paying dividends, it is not yet consistently well applied or embedded across the school. Some pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their mathematical thinking, such as by solving problems, in order to make rapid progress.
- The quality of marking is good overall and, in almost all classes is contributing to pupils' good achievement, particularly in writing. Pupils are expected to respond to teachers' comments and, in most cases, do so. However, where this does not take place, opportunities to make more rapid improvement are overlooked.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to the good quality of teaching. They are well deployed by teachers and given clear guidance about their work with groups. As a result, their groups are well focused and this helps pupils to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and is now good. All groups of pupils make good progress from their varying starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, in reading, writing and mathematics combined, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment, Level 4, was above average. Overall, these pupils made good progress from their starting points. Almost all pupils made the expected rate of progress in all three subjects. This is higher than the proportions that do so nationally.
- School data and inspection evidence show that standards across the school are rising and building upon the improvements made last year. As a result, the pupils currently in Year 6, for example, are on course to make better rates of progress and reach higher levels of attainment than last year.
- Across the school, pupils achieve well in reading. Reading, and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), are given careful attention. Pupils read with confidence, fluency and with increased enjoyment, in school and at home, so that, by the time they leave the school, they are capable readers.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement in writing has strengthened and is now good. Pupils regularly practise their writing skills, including across curriculum subjects. Their handwriting is neat. Challenging and interesting writing tasks encourage pupils to improve.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics from their different starting points. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is because pupils have a good grasp of mathematical concepts. Their calculation skills are strong. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills, such as by solving mathematical problems, to extend their learning further.
- The higher proportions of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014 compared to 2013 are indicative of the school's success at meeting the learning needs of the most able pupils. However, the most able pupils are not challenged consistently well in classes across the school, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. This is because support in lessons is much better for these pupils. They now do as well as other pupils relative to their individual starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In Year 6 in 2014, test results show that disadvantaged pupils were approximately one and half terms behind other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics and two terms behind in reading. When compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils in school were two terms behind and reading and writing and one term behind in mathematics. Inspection evidence and school data shows that gaps in attainment across the school are closing and in some year groups and subjects they have been eliminated.

This is because, across the school, expectations of what disadvantaged pupils can achieve are high and levels of support are good.

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	121356
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	442307

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duncan Smith
Headteacher	Chris Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2013
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