

Dryclough CE (VC) Infant School

Dryclough Road, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield, HD4 5HX

Inspection dates

3–4 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- School leaders including governors have not ensured that teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils have not achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics and the school is not improving quickly enough.
- Middle leaders are not having an impact upon raising standards at the school.
- School leaders have not made sure that teachers are fully equipped to accurately assess pupils' levels of learning and progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is uneven across the school. Teachers do not always provide activities that challenge pupils at an appropriate level. Consequently, some pupils become distracted from their learning and do not behave well in lessons.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils accurately follow the advice they are given to help them to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always insist pupils complete enough good quality work. Teachers congratulate pupils on work that is not of a good enough standard. Consequently, pupils sometimes have the wrong idea about what is good work and what needs to be better.
- Changes in staffing have slowed the pace of development in the school.
- Children in Reception class make expected rather than good progress because the quality of teaching and leadership requires improvement. Too few children leave the Reception class well prepared for the work that they will meet in Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leadership team are ambitious and have set appropriate priorities to support improving standards at the school.
- Governors acknowledge the need to develop their skills and are keen to challenge and support school leaders more effectively.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is good in Year 2.
- Attendance is improving.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are kept safe by adults who care for them well.
- The provision for pupils whose current circumstances make them vulnerable is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are disabled are supported to achieve well.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in school narrow as pupils move up the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities taken by teaching assistants. Eight part-lessons were observed jointly with the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and observed and spoke to pupils during lessons, and at lunchtime. One inspector also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, a member of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- A letter received from a parent was taken into account.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to consider.
- Inspectors also considered responses from 36 staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Burrow	Additional Inspector
Melvyn Hemmings	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. However, there are few pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes.
- A breakfast club is provided for pupils and managed by the governing body.
- The two acting headteachers have been in their current posts since September 2014, though they were previously deputy headteachers at the school. An assistant headteacher was appointed to the school at the same time.
- Since the previous inspection twelve new teachers have joined the school, four joined in September 2014 and two in January 2015.
- The school has had support from a local leader of education from Berry Brow Nursery and Infant School. Plans are firmly in place for further support from a National Leader of Education from Glodwick Infant School to join the school for 60% of the week.
- The school federated with Thornton Lodge Nursery School in April 2012. The Nursery is managed by the same senior leadership team and governing body. It was inspected in November 2013 and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so pupils behave well and make at least good progress especially in the early years and Year 1 by making sure that teachers always:
 - have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils are to produce
 - inform pupils when work needs to be improved and check they follow the advice given so pupils can learn from their mistakes
 - provide tasks for pupils that are not too easy or too difficult so they can build upon what they already know and can do.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management including governance by:
 - making sure that the targets set in the school development plan are explicitly linked to pupils' progress
 - continuing to build the skills of middle leaders so they are able to contribute fully to raising standards in their area of responsibility
 - providing training to make sure all staff can accurately assess the stage that pupils have reached in their learning.

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 school is not improving quickly enough because school leaders have not been able to establish consistently good teaching and achievement across all year groups. The newly established leadership team have a clear view of the direction that they want the school to take. In a short time they have successfully improved the rate of pupils' attendance and boosted staff morale.
- School leaders have introduced systems to collect pupils' progress information from class teachers. Leaders have recognised that the data provided does not always accurately reflect where pupils are with their learning and development.
- Teachers' performance is regularly checked by senior leaders, who make sure staff attend training that matches the school's priorities and the developmental needs of individuals. This includes middle leaders who are attending a national training programme. However, middle leaders do not always have the skills to fully contribute to raising standards in their area of responsibility.
- The school development plan accurately identifies appropriate priorities and objectives. However, the targets are not explicitly linked to pupils' progress or measurable enough to help school leaders evaluate the impact of their actions and raise standards quickly.
- The school is committed to making sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and any form of discrimination is effectively tackled. It supports many pupils who have additional vulnerabilities and some with complex needs. The progress of disadvantaged pupils improves as they move up through the school which confirms that the school's actions are effective. However, the school recognises it still has further work to do to raise the achievement of all pupils to at least good.
- The subjects and opportunities on offer contribute well towards pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and prepares them for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils vote to elect other pupils onto the school council; this teaches them about the importance of democracy. Moreover, learning to accept the choices that other pupils make, even when their opinions differ from their own, helps pupils to develop tolerance and fosters good relations.
- The primary school sport funding is spent effectively. Specialist coaches work with pupils and staff to help develop their sporting skills. The school offers a variety of after-school sporting activities and pupils are involved in a range of inter-school competitions. As a result pupils are developing increasingly healthy lifestyles.
- Since the previous inspection the local authority has provided a high level of support to the school. For example, local authority officers have provided coaching and development for early years staff and arranged the support of a local leader of education to support school leaders. However, the changes in school leadership and teaching staff mean that the development is largely lost to the school. The local authority is committed to continuing with a programme of intensive support and has commissioned support from a national leader of education who will spend 60% of each week at the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are sound and meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- In the past governors have not received an accurate picture of standards in the school and recognise that some of the information that they have received was overly positive. Meetings of the governing body have recently become more frequent. The acting headteachers, and other staff, now provide governors with much more information about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Governors acknowledge the need to develop their skills including their proficiency at analysing pupils' progress information so they can hold school leaders more effectively to account for standards in the school. They know that teachers pay must be linked to how effective they are and fully support the acting headteachers in tackling underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some teachers have to regularly remind pupils how to behave in class and this interrupts learning more often than it should.
- When activities are too easy or too difficult for pupils they lose concentration and become distracted from their learning.
- Pupils play well together, they are able to share the toys and play equipment with each other. In class they have good manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you' to adults and other pupils.
- The pupils' council are proud of the equipment they helped choose for the playground as they believe it makes playtime 'happier'.
- There are pupils in school whose current circumstances make them vulnerable and as a result they find managing their own behaviour difficult. The school provides good support for these pupils. For example, through relaxation sessions to calm pupils and prepare them for learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Pupils do not all have a clear view of what bullying means and as a result they could not identify whether there is any bullying at the school or not. Parents who spoke with the inspector were mostly positive about the school but some felt that incidents of bullying could be managed more effectively. School records show that any bullying reported to staff is dealt with effectively.
- The school has systems in place to make sure pupils know about how to stay safe when using the internet and are very aware of the dangers associated with fire. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that the adults care for them well.
- School leaders have worked relentlessly to improve attendance and punctuality. The school breakfast club provides a calming start for pupils at school and has helped to improve punctuality for some pupils. Attendance rates have also improved and are getting closer to the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Observations of teaching during the inspection and work in pupils' books indicate that the quality of teaching over time is not consistently good especially in early years and Year 1. This results in Year 2 staff having to help pupils to catch up more than they should have to and prevents some pupils from making good progress.
- The quality of teachers' marking and guidance to pupils is improving. However, some teachers do not check that pupils act upon verbal or written advice so they can correct their work and learn from mistakes.
- Teachers understand that praise motivates pupils and teachers use it regularly. However, there are times when this is overused and teachers celebrate and accept work which is not good enough. As a result pupils do not always know when work needs to be improved. The quality of presentation in workbooks is variable. Teachers do not always insist that pupils do enough work, write clearly or cut out and stick work in their books carefully. This slows the development of pupils' skills.
- Discrepancies between the level of progress that teachers indicate pupils in their class have reached and the quality of learning and progress observed by senior leaders and inspectors indicate that teachers do not always accurately assess pupils' learning. As a result activities are sometimes too hard or too easy to challenge all pupils effectively.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers and support pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils well. Effective professional development has helped staff to develop a more consistent approach to supporting learning. In the past teachers and teaching assistants worked with small groups of pupils and closely guided pupils' work. They now ensure a balance between explaining and showing pupils what to do and providing opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and work things out for themselves. As a result pupils are becoming more confident in using the skills they are learning and able to build on their secure knowledge base to learn even more.
- There has been a drive to improve the quality of learning in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, staff have had training to develop their skills in teaching mental mathematics and strategies to help pupils to use their reading skills to develop their writing. There is also a clear attempt to make the learning of these subjects more interesting for pupils by linking them through themes and topic work that pupils thoroughly enjoy. However, there has not been enough time for these actions to have had a sustained and positive impact on pupils' progress especially in Reception and Year 1 classes.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The standards of attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 have improved in reading, writing and mathematics to well above national levels. However, current school leaders are justifiably concerned about the accuracy of assessment and agree that the attainment and achievement of pupils in school requires improvement.
- The achievement of Year 1 pupils in the latest national screening check for phonics (matching letters with the sounds they make) was below that of other pupils nationally. However, most pupils retaking the check in Year 2 achieve well. This demonstrates the good quality learning and catching up that takes place in Year 2.
- All pupils, including the youngest, enjoy reading and take books home regularly. Pupils can talk enthusiastically about the books that they read and during the inspection pupils were keen to discuss their favourite books with visitors. Pupils comment that their teachers help them with their reading because they make sure that there are lots of books to choose from and there is plenty of time to read at school. One pupil shared how he had chosen a book about space because it was linked to lessons in class and 'the moon looked like a very peaceful place to be.'
- In Year 2 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained standards in reading, writing and mathematics approximately one term behind other pupils in school and very similar to other pupils nationally. However, though gaps narrow as pupils move up through the school, disadvantaged pupils currently at school achieve at the same rate as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and as such achievement requires improvement.
- The most able pupils are supported through challenges in the classroom. However, because tasks are not always provided that challenge pupils effectively, the achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement.
- The additional needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are met well. Pupils make good progress as a result of early identification and the extra help and support they receive from school and other agencies.
- The small proportion of pupils at the very early stages of learning English are well supported by bilingual teaching assistants as and when the need arises. Their progress overall is similar to other pupils in school in that it requires improvement.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Most children make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points which are often below typical. Though the proportion of children achieving a good level of development improved at the end of 2014 it remains lower than that seen nationally. Consequently, not all children are ready for the learning that they will meet in Year 1.
- The quality of leadership, and teaching, require improvement because staff do not always expect enough work of a good standard from children. Learning activities do not always challenge children sufficiently well to enable them all to make consistently good progress. This can lead to some children becoming restless and silly on occasion. As a result their learning suffers.
- The school rightly recognised that the education and surroundings for the Reception children is not good enough. The school has started to renovate the indoor and outdoor spaces which is helping to improve learning.
- The school works closely with parents to ensure there is a smooth introduction into the Reception classes. Parents who spoke with an inspector reported that they find the adults in the early years' team very approachable and welcoming. Information about how children are learning is shared with parents.
- The care shown to the children by the adults working with them is good. The safeguarding arrangements linked to the early years help to make sure the children are safe and well looked after. Children are aware of risk to themselves and others. For example, one child could explain the importance of wearing shoes with 'thick soles' so that he could safely walk on the ice.

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	107729
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	453626

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Jackson
Headteacher	Monica Best, Julie Dickinson (Acting Headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2013
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