

Baldersby St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Baldersby St James, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, YO7 4PT

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved rapidly since the appointment of the executive headteacher, because she has inspired the staff and governors. Together, they have improved pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour.
- The governors provide effective support and challenge, ask pertinent questions and work closely with the senior leadership team.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school; the older pupils take their responsibilities seriously and support younger pupils in a mature manner.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons. Pupils are proud of their school, feel safe and now show good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good and, as a result of good teaching, current pupils are now making good or better progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2, standards in reading have continuously improved while standards in writing and mathematics have varied over time. However, they have all been above national standards for the last two years.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide well-targeted support to ensure that all pupils now make good or better progress.
- Teachers assess how well pupils are doing accurately; their effective marking and feedback in English and mathematics enhance pupils' learning.
- Well-planned provision means that children in the early years settle quickly into school life and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this has helped to keep attendance rates high.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- New initiatives put in place by the senior leadership team have not had time to impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement over time.
- Pupils' work and teachers' marking and feedback are not as strong in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics.
- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils do not always use their knowledge and skills to solve mental mathematical problems accurately and speedily. They do not always identify misconceptions to improve their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons and also visited an assembly. Five lesson observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior and middle leaders.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: teachers' planning; the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; information on pupils' attainment and progress; records of behaviour and safety; the monitoring of teaching and performance management; minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at break times. The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also looked at the eight responses to the school's recent staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, 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, those supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Early years provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the Thirsk cluster of schools and the North Star Teaching School Alliance.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a temporary executive headteacher in January 2014 from Alanbrooke Community Primary School. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further, so that it is consistently good or better, to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics by:
 - giving pupils greater opportunities to work things out for themselves
 - helping pupils to identify misconceptions in calculations and methods so that they can improve their own learning
 - making sure that pupils develop the ability to use the knowledge and skills they have to solve mathematical mental calculations speedily and accurately
 - raising the standards of pupils' work and teachers' marking and feedback in other subjects so it is as strong as that in literacy and mathematics
- Embed the leadership and management strategies that are improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching across the whole school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has implemented many new strategies which have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that these are now both good. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to ensure that the school's view of its own performance is accurate. The school's development plan provides an effective tool for school improvement. The executive headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations and are working enthusiastically together as they aim for further improvement.
- This small school is a friendly learning environment. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved so their behaviour is now good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, which has enabled attendance to be above the national average.
- The senior management team collects and uses a good range of information to check on and track the improving progress made by individuals and groups. This good and better progress is also seen in pupils' English and mathematics books. High quality, targeted support is provided for any pupils who are falling behind.
- The early years provision is good. The children settle quickly into the school's routines so they make a positive start to their school lives.
- The management of the performance of teachers ensures that staff are held to account for the quality of their teaching and for pupils' progress; this accountability is appropriately linked to pay awards. The staff share effective practice and professional development with local cluster schools.
- The executive headteacher identifies accurately what makes teaching effective and what needs to be improved. Feedback to staff is thoughtful and well considered.
- Staff morale is very high because they feel valued in their roles. Subject and middle leaders are accountable for the progress pupils make in their areas of responsibility. They feed back to the governing body about the strengths and areas of development in their relevant areas. Support staff are used effectively to ensure that individual pupils make good progress through sharply-targeted support. They work collaboratively with teaching staff.
- The curriculum is well planned. Tolerance and respect are emphasised throughout the school, and this prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are proud of the 'Woven together sculpture' which, as pupils stated, 'shows how everyone together makes a strong family'. Discrimination is not tolerated and good relations are fostered well. The curriculum promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils, whatever their needs, and ensures that they are fully involved in the life of the school.
- Parents' responses from Parent View and from those who spoke to the inspector are very positive about all aspects of the school.
- Effective use is made of the pupil premium funding to support the few disadvantaged pupils. These pupils make progress similar to or better than other pupils within the school. The provision of an additional Key Stage 2 mathematics teacher daily is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school uses the primary school physical education and sport funding effectively to train staff to a high standard. This was seen during a Key Stage 2 physical education lesson on balance. The funding also provides a part-time specialist teacher who is shared with other local schools and gives pupils greater sporting opportunities involving other schools.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures pupils make good progress from their various starting points. Effective analysis of the needs of these pupils ensures that targeted support is provided.
- The local authority has worked well with the school, giving effective guidance and support. It helped to provide an effective temporary executive headteacher and acknowledges how much the school has improved under her leadership.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good. Governors are knowledgeable and have high expectations for the school. They understand how the school performs against national averages and use their good understanding of data to ask pertinent questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - The governors carry out a range of visits and meet senior and middle leaders regularly. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that teachers' performance is well managed and there are clear links between this and pay awards.

- The governing body ensures the school’s safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. It checks the school is helping pupils to understand and practise tolerance and respect for different faiths and cultures.
- Members of the governing body have a range of experience and expertise and some have just completed training on analysing the information published nationally about how well pupils achieve. Governors manage the school’s finances well and ensure that additional funds are spent effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, friendly and considerate of each other. They show great respect to their teachers and other adults in the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are proud of their school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which contribute to their current good progress. They are keen to take part in all activities. They eagerly discuss their ideas and answer questions willingly. They work well together and share their ideas. Pupils say they ‘like to learn new things’ and that they ‘learn new things every day.’
- Pupils’ positive attitudes and good behaviour are evident around the school, in the corridors, at lunchtime and in the playground. The older pupils support the younger pupils willingly and sensitively. They take their roles, such as librarians and playground monitors, seriously.
- Attendance is high because pupils want to come to school to learn. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They know staff do not tolerate bullying. They are very confident that if any form of bullying occurred, it would be dealt with quickly. A group of pupils told the inspector, ‘We get on well with everybody.’ They have a good knowledge of right and wrong.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All relevant policies and procedures for ensuring pupils’ health, safety and well-being are in place. Safeguarding issues are logged accurately and followed through effectively.
- Records show that there are few concerns about behaviour and safety for any groups of pupils and if these occur, strategies are in place to deal with them effectively.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school because everyone knows and helps each other. Adults look after them well. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including when using the internet.
- Parental responses to the online questionnaire and discussions with the inspector show very positive support for the school’s behaviour and safety strategies. School staff and governors also state that pupils feel safe in school and that behaviour has improved.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Work in pupils’ books, as well as checks completed by the school’s leaders and evidence gathered throughout the inspection, demonstrate that the quality of teaching is improving and is now good.
- Expectations of pupils’ behaviour and work ethic are high, and there is a mutual respect between pupils and their teachers. As a result, pupils are keen to get on with their work and they try to learn successfully by following their teachers’ instructions. They are encouraged to try hard and they are helped to learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to give clear explanations. They use questioning well to extend pupils’ learning and they assess pupils’ work accurately.
- Teachers prepare lessons that engage and interest pupils. However, there are times when pupils could work on tasks on their own for longer without adult support.
- Pupils are enthusiastic towards their learning and willingly discuss what they are doing. They work well together, sharing their ideas in pairs or groups. They listen to and respect each other’s views.
- Pupils needing planned additional support, such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, are given well-targeted support by teachers and teaching assistants, so

they learn well and make good progress.

- Phonics (the letters and the sounds they make) are taught well in the early years and Key Stage 1 classroom. Effective support from the teacher and teaching assistant enables pupils to make good progress. The pupils then use this knowledge to help them read and spell unfamiliar words. Pupils across the school enjoy reading either independently or within guided reading groups.
- Teachers support pupils' writing well with high quality examples which enable the pupils to write at length. Key Stage 2 pupils discussed enthusiastically the structure and formal language required for a persuasive letter. Their written letters were of a good quality for Year 3 to Year 6 pupils and were completed at a fast pace.
- Teachers make mathematics interesting so that pupils enjoy their mathematics activities. Pupils in Key Stage 2 now have the opportunity to work in two smaller classes with an additional teacher. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Key Stage 1 pupils cut ribbons into halves and quarters to improve their understanding of simple fractions, while Year 5 and Year 6 pupils compare and order fractions after forming equivalent fractions. Some pupils do not use their mental mathematical knowledge quickly and confidently to improve their learning further. Additionally, some pupils do not correct misconceptions and calculation choices so that they can work more independently.
- Cross-curricular activities, such as the Betty's enterprise project, promote well pupils' attitudes to learning. The pupils raised over £400 to buy fruit for Key Stage 2 pupils by selling drinks and apple pies in their own café. They had to design uniforms, plan menus, cook pies with fruit grown in the school grounds and set up a school café.
- Marking and feedback in literacy and mathematics books show pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work. Pupils usually have time to respond to teachers' comments to improve their learning. Marking and feedback are weaker in other subjects.
- During the inspection, Key Stage 1 pupils showed high quality observational pencil drawing and shading skills. Other pupils showed their geographical knowledge of the aerial view of a classroom. However, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, work in other subjects is not always to the same high standard as seen in pupils' English books.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children usually start in the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of children who have reached a good level of development, which is the expected standard at the end of the Reception Year, has increased greatly over time, so that in 2014 all pupils reached a good level of development. Again, in 2015 all children are predicted to achieve the expected outcome. As a result, the children are well prepared for the rigours of Year 1.
- The standards reached by Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils vary over time. This is because the individual results of the very small number of pupils can easily distort the overall picture for any one year group. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics improved from 2012 to 2013 to above the national average. There were too few pupils in 2014 to compare their attainment with others without risk of identifying individuals. This is a similar situation for the current Year 2 group.
- Standards at Key Stage 2 in reading have improved continuously since 2012, but attainment in writing and mathematics showed a significant dip in 2014. However, all three subjects have been above national averages for the last two years. Inspection evidence from observing learning, scrutiny of pupils' work in books, discussions with pupils and analysis of school data shows that the school is addressing these concerns in writing and mathematics and that the 2015 predictions show a more positive picture.
- The proportion of pupils who made expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading and writing was well above that seen nationally in 2014. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in mathematics was also above national proportions. The current school data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that in 2015 Year 6 pupils are making good or better progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a strong focus on helping pupils to use and apply their phonic skills accurately in their reading and writing, with daily sessions for pupils in the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2. Consequently, results for the Year 1 phonics screening check are improving over time. Results are predicted to rise above the national average in 2015. Pupils enjoy reading across the school and, by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, they have attained standards that are well above the national average.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well because teachers have high expectations. Consequently, these

pupils attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics and are currently making good, and sometimes better, progress.

- The few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their various starting points due to effective targeted support.
- The work and records for the few disadvantaged pupils currently in the school show that they are achieving as well as other pupils. In Year 6 in 2014, there were no disadvantaged pupils, so comparisons cannot be made with other pupils either in the school or nationally.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the early years as a result of effective leadership, good provision and good teaching. Most children join the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make good progress from their different starting points so that they are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Standards by the end of the Reception Year have risen so that last year all children reached a good level of development. The 2015 data also predict that again every child will reach a good level of development.
- The early years children work and play well together, sharing resources and listening to each other. The Year 1 and Year 2 pupils who are in the same class are very good role models for the early years children. The children follow routines well and show respect to staff and each other. Behaviour is good.
- The children learn well in the vibrant, safe indoor and outdoor learning environments. Resources are easily accessible to the children. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore for themselves, so that they can practise the skills they learn as they play. During a mathematics session, for example, the children read, counted and ordered numbers to twenty. Then they could choose to make a number line, make a certain number of play dough caterpillars to sit on a leaf, find and count stones and shells in the sand tray or find and count teddy bears and bottle tops in the water tray. They worked on these activities enthusiastically.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning and development. Staff assess continuously how well children are doing and use this information to plan the next learning activities. The needs of individual children, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives additional funding, are met well.
- The school has good relationships with parents who are informed in detail about their children's learning. Parents provide evidence for their children's learning journeys. The school's early years parental questionnaire shows that parents are highly supportive of the school.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. All learning activities are well planned to extend the children's learning. Assessment is evidenced well. All safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

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	121478
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	453565

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alexandra Little
Headteacher	Keeley Ungerechts
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2013
Telephone number	01765 640277
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@baldersby-st-james.n-yorks.sch.uk

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