

Woodthorpe Primary School

Summerfield Road, York, North Yorkshire, YO24 2RU

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress is not consistently good in all classes and for all groups of pupils. Standards in Year 6 in writing were below average in 2013 and 2014. In 2014 too few pupils attained the higher levels in all subjects at both key stages.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress because support for them is not always effective.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in both key stages. The most able are not always challenged sufficiently, particularly in their writing.
- Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently good enough and this prevents standards rising more quickly in writing.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and nationally are not closing quickly enough, because support for these pupils is not always good enough.
- The pace of improvement has not been fast enough since the previous inspection to secure good achievement for all pupils.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have not checked on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement with enough rigour. Leaders have not made sure that actions taken are having enough impact to speed up pupils' progress.
- Not all middle leaders and subject leaders are sufficiently effective in checking that teaching and learning are of the highest quality in their areas of responsibility and that all pupils achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a flying start to their learning in the early years because teaching is consistently good and leadership of early years is good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show kindness and respect for others.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after. Their behaviour is good and they develop good attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher is determined to bring about improvement. She has the ability to do so and is supported well by her senior leaders. They know the school's strengths and have accurately identified areas for further improvement. Their actions have started to improve pupils' achievements effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching throughout the school, including numerous shared observations with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils’ workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, and middle leaders, including subject leaders. Inspectors also had a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s evaluation of its own performance, current data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation. Inspectors also reviewed the school’s management of the pupil premium funding and the primary school sport funding. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, were also taken into consideration.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 52 responses to on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the view of a number of parents who spoke directly to inspectors.
- The inspection team also considered the 38 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaires and talked to staff during the inspection about their views about the work of the school.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Edward Price	Additional Inspector
Deana Aldred	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Nursery attend part time. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There have been a number of staff changes in the school since the previous inspection.
- 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?

- In order to raise achievement in all subjects, improve the quality of teaching so that all of it is good or better by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are challenged appropriately, and expectations are higher, particularly of the most able
 - lower-attaining pupils are encouraged to read regularly and helped to apply their skills in phonics (knowing letters and the sounds they make) confidently to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary
 - disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have support at the level they need to achieve well in every class
 - teaching assistants are deployed effectively in all lessons to support pupils who need additional help and teachers use the assessment information they have to plan work that builds effectively on what pupils have already achieved
 - pupils are encouraged to respond to the feedback in marking so that their subsequent work improves quickly.
- Improve the provision for writing by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations in writing are consistently high for all pupils
 - pupils' skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation are developed effectively and pupils apply these skills accurately in all their writing
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length to extend their skills further.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders and subject leaders are more effective in checking that all pupils make good progress in their areas of responsibility
 - governors check even more closely that all pupils have the support they need to achieve well, particularly those who are supported through additional funding
 - there is greater rigour in checking that the learning is good for all pupils in every class and every subject.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement is not consistently good. The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has taken the right action to improve teaching. Much is now good or better, but a significant proportion still requires improvement. Improvement has not been fast enough, partly owing to numerous staff changes. With more stability in staffing and more rigorous monitoring of teaching, the school is well placed to move forward at a faster pace.
- The headteacher has a clear vision and strong determination to improve pupils' achievement. She has an accurate view of the school's strengths and where performance needs to improve. She has, with effective support from the governors, taken decisive action to eliminate inadequate teaching. Senior leaders recognise that they need to check more rigorously that learning is good in every class and that teachers challenge all pupils appropriately, particularly the most able pupils.
- Some middle leaders and subject leaders are not fully effective in leading improvements in their areas of responsibility so that learning is good for all pupils. This is particularly so in writing, where standards are below average.
- Staff have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through external training and with support from senior leaders. Staff have benefited through the performance management process and teaching is improving. Newly qualified teachers are supported particularly well by senior leaders to develop their skills. Senior leaders have regular meetings with all teachers to discuss pupils' progress and staff know that any increase in their pay is linked closely to the achievement of pupils in their class.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not always make good progress. Senior leaders have identified the need to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants check on the progress of these pupils more closely and provide timely support, together with well-planned activities to help these pupils make consistently good progress. The leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement.
- The leadership of early years is good. Children are prepared well when they enter Year 1 because teaching in the early years is consistently good.
- The headteacher, staff and governors promote strong relationships throughout the school and pupils benefit from learning in a safe, happy environment where they feel valued. Leaders ensure that discrimination is tackled rigorously and that all care arrangements are good. Parents are very appreciative of everything the school does for their children.
- However, as the most able pupils, those who are disadvantaged and those who are particularly vulnerable do not all make good progress, the school is not doing enough to ensure equality of opportunity for all its pupils.
- Well-planned topics take account of the new National Curriculum requirements. The linking of subjects, such as history and literature, is helping pupils extend their knowledge and skills well. Recent action taken to improve writing has started to have some impact, but practice across the school remains inconsistent. Greater focus on problem-solving and number skills is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in mathematics and an increasing number of pupils are now working towards the higher levels.
- Leaders are at the early stages of developing new approaches to assessment without National Curriculum levels; in the meantime staff are still following previous procedures to assess and track pupils' progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through, for example, literature, geography, religious education and through good relationships. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on diverse social and cultural values and to treat those who hold beliefs different from their own with tolerance and respect.
- Pupils are taught to understand the importance of democracy through practical activities. For example, playground buddies and school councillors represent the views of their classmates when making decisions about, for example, fund-raising activities. Leaders ensure that teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to discuss values that include tolerance, respect and trust, so that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils know that there are communities that are different from their own who share common values.
- Additional sport funding is used well to develop the skills of teachers. They provide a wider range of sports clubs and activities, such as athletics, cricket and outdoor pursuits. Experienced sports coaches work alongside school staff and more pupils are now engaging in the clubs on offer.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements. Leaders are very aware of the challenges some pupils and their families face. Where staff have any concerns, they act quickly to provide support and involve other agencies as necessary.

- The local authority provides support and training for staff and governors and works with the school to review its performance and identify improvement priorities to help the school move forward. The support has not been sufficient to secure good achievement for all pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high aspirations for pupils and their families and engender good relationships. Governors are supportive and keen for all pupils to achieve well. Some governors visit the school regularly and monitor the school's work through, for example, examining pupils' work and observing classes to see what pupils are learning. Governors have received good training in how to examine data on pupils' progress. Governors are aware that not all pupils are making good progress. Governors do not check rigorously enough, however, that the actions leaders take to raise achievement are effective in raising pupils' performance.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium money is spent, but have not evaluated its impact sufficiently closely to ensure that provision meets the needs of all these pupils successfully. Governors do not hold leaders fully to account for discrepancies between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils. Governors have not ensured that leaders take the necessary action to close this gap quickly. Governors have a better overview of the school's sport funding and know its impact.
 - Governors oversee decisions regarding teachers' pay and make sure it closely reflects pupils' progress.
 - Governors make sure safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Staff set high standards for behaviour and most pupils respond well, showing high levels of respect and friendliness to adults and classmates. Pupils work and play together sensibly and show kindness to those who need support. This reflects their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's behaviour management systems are firm but fair and staff adhere to these consistently. Occasional lapses are managed effectively and pupils know the consequences if they fall short of the expectations placed upon them to behave well at all times. Parents who responded to Parent View agree that behaviour is good and the school takes good care of their children.
- Pupils typically behave well in the playground, the dining hall and in lessons. They are polite, courteous and well mannered. They listen to others attentively and help each other when adult support is not readily available. They settle to work quickly in lessons, only losing interest and concentration when they are not challenged at the right level or are unclear about what is required of them.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to learning because they know school is important. They try their best, even when they find some learning challenging. They are proud to be at the school, with many saying that school is 'brilliant' because teachers make learning fun and that they organise exciting activities such as residential visits to London and other places of interest. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the range of clubs where they can make friends and extend their skills, for example in sport, music and creative arts.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the need to look after the environment, care for others and to respect differences. A few were quick to say that 'You are free to choose what you want to be and everyone is different and unique. It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you get on nicely with everyone'.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their improving attendance, which is now securely average. Leaders have worked hard to promote good attendance and most parents respond positively in making sure their children attend and arrive on time.
- Through responsibilities such as school councillors, playground pals and mentors, pupils learn to look out for the interests of others and organise, for example, playground activities that everyone can enjoy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to stay safe outside school. They trust all staff and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. They say that teachers act promptly if they know something is wrong.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take many forms and say teachers discuss such matters regularly in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils say incidents of bullying in school never happen now. They know that it is unkind to call people names and to laugh at people different from themselves. They are very aware of the threats posed by social media sites and cyber-bullying and to report such incidents promptly.
- Staff are trained well in child protection. Staff know the pupils' families well and maintain good links with

relevant family support agencies so that help can be organised quickly if staff have any concerns.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough of it is good or better over time. Teaching has not improved quickly enough in Years 1 to 6 and so pupils' achievement is not consistently good.
- There have been a number of staff changes in the school since the previous inspection. This has not helped to secure good improvement in teaching over time.
- Expectations generally are not high enough, particularly of the most able pupils and pupils are not always challenged appropriately to enable them to achieve well. Pupils who have gaps in their learning cannot always do new work as confidently as they should in order to achieve well.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Recent actions and new methods are helping to develop and extend pupils' skills, but these have not had an impact on standards, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils write regularly in literacy and in other subjects, but teachers do not always insist that pupils apply their basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately and so pupils' work does not improve quickly enough. Pupils do not always have enough time to write at length in order to develop their skills further.
- In mathematics, pupils of all abilities sometimes undertake the same level of work before the most able move on to harder work and the lower-attaining pupils move to work that they can manage successfully. Owing to weak teaching in the past, some older pupils in Key Stage 2 are still making up lost ground. Despite consistently good teaching in Year 6, not all pupils are achieving as well as they should. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of calculation and problem-solving skills and more pupils are beginning to make better progress. The most able are being challenged well in Year 6.
- The teaching of reading is very effective in the early years and this good start is helping more pupils in later years to achieve well. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to read and talk about their learning. Occasionally, however, lower-attaining pupils who are less secure with phonics, (letters and the sounds they make), struggle to read unfamiliar vocabulary and make sense of their reading and so they do not always make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs make variable progress because support for them is not consistently good. Where teachers' planning is accurately matched to their needs and teaching assistants are deployed effectively, pupils make good progress.
- The most able pupils equally are not challenged well in all classes and so some do not make the rapid gains of which they are capable to achieve the higher levels, particularly in writing.
- The school's assessment procedures have improved significantly and are now more reliable and accurate. However, not all teachers use this information well enough to adapt the work to best meet pupils' needs. For example, sometimes pupils repeat work they have done previously at no greater depth. As a result, they make no better than expected progress.
- The school has introduced rigorous approaches to marking and feedback to help pupils improve their work. In most classes, teachers remind pupils to respond to this feedback in subsequent work, but some pupils continue to make the same errors, for example with handwriting, presentation and spelling. Reminders that pupils check on their written work before handing it in are infrequent.
- As the quality of teaching is improving, with more of it being good, pupils are beginning to achieve more. Progress is the best when teachers plan well, ask probing questions and give pupils time to discuss their ideas. However, this high quality questioning does not happen enough, particularly when the focus is on completing set tasks, rather than securing good understanding.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in the school where engaging presentations and a high level of challenge encourage pupils to think about their learning. In a thought-provoking history lesson about World War 2, pupils found it hard to believe that the damage in the blitz had been so devastating. By reflecting on how such events changed people's lives forever, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was enhanced effectively.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress pupils make is not consistently good in all classes. It is good in the early years, but through Years 1 to 6 it varies too much.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils' attainment was broadly average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were below average, because not all pupils made the expected progress and too few attained the higher

levels. At both key stages and in all subjects, not enough pupils attained the higher levels. In writing at the end of Year 6, standards were below the national average. In 2014, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average for pupils at the end of Year 2.

- In the current Year 2 and Year 6, almost all pupils are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion working at expected levels in writing is considerably better than last year. However, a few pupils across all levels of ability make too many errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels is rising in reading, writing and mathematics but it is not quickly enough. Some pupils are still making up for lost ground owing to weaknesses in teaching in previous years.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in their learning at both key stages. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length which limits their progress, particularly that of the most able. In reading and mathematics, while the most able are being challenged well in Year 6, and a few are working towards the higher Level 6, the level of challenge is not consistently high in other classes.
- Achievement in writing requires improvement. Expectations are not always high enough of how quickly pupils can work, how much they produce and how accurate their work is. A few make too many errors in their basic skills, particularly when they write at length. When these errors go unchecked, their progress slows.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving strongly because the school's focus on teaching calculation and problem-solving skills is beginning to take effect. Pupils enjoy the activities teachers plan, particularly the routine learning of multiplication tables and practical investigations. Occasionally, when all ability levels start with the same tasks, the level of challenge is not high enough for the most able and too demanding for some. As a consequence, progress is not consistently good for all pupils.
- Phonics are taught well in the early years and this is helping more pupils make better progress in their reading in later years, hence achievement is increasing. However, lower-attaining readers do not always read enough in some classes in both key stages to ensure consistently good progress. These pupils sometimes lack the confidence to apply their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words so that they are not fluent readers. This lack of fluency impacts on their ability to spell accurately when writing.
- In 2014 disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 were two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, three terms in mathematics and four terms behind in writing. Compared with their classmates, they were two terms behind in reading and mathematics and four terms behind in writing. This reflects inconsistent support for these pupils over time. Current pupils are in a similar situation and so the gap between their progress and their classmates is not closing quickly enough compared to schools nationally. However, the numbers of pupils in this group are relatively small. The school's data show that the gap in attainment is narrower now than has been the case in previous years because the support for these pupils is improving.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also inconsistent. Some of these pupils make good progress and others less so because the monitoring of the support these pupils receive is not rigorous. On occasions the planning is not precise enough to help these pupils move forward at a good pace.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills that are a little lower than those typical for their age. They make good progress in all the areas of learning and a higher than average number attain good levels of development at the end of their Reception year. A few exceed these good levels and are working well into levels expected from Year 1 pupils. Overall, children are prepared well for Year 1, with significant strengths in reading, writing and number skills and their personal development.
- Teaching is good across all areas of learning. The welcoming environment, good relationships and well-established routines help children feel safe, secure and happy in their learning. Expectations of children's behaviour are high and they respond well at all times, developing good attitudes to school and learning.
- Engaging activities, both indoors and outdoors, keep children busily excited. They show a healthy appetite for learning and want to do well. The school celebrated 'World Book Day', with staff and pupils dressing up as characters from their favourite story. Children were entranced by the wonder of it all and talked eagerly about their chosen character. Many re-enacted their chosen stories, sharing out roles fairly so that everyone had something to do and say.
- Staff encourage children to develop their curiosity well. Children make good progress in their numeracy because staff encourage children to count out when sharing or checking how many children are in class. Timely adult interactions make children think about their work and share ideas confidently. For example,

children measuring how much sand they could get into different containers, made good estimates, recognising quickly that the shape of the container was as important as the size.

- Reading and writing skills are promoted well. Phonics are taught very effectively. Staff model sounds clearly and precisely, making sure that children hear and re-create them accurately. Carefully planned group and free choice activities enable children to apply their understanding of phonics confidently in their reading and writing. For example, children were thrilled to find hidden objectives that contained the sounds they were learning and proceeded to spell these with great accuracy. Others eagerly wrote lengthy accounts about fairy tale characters, trying out new vocabulary to make their writing more interesting. Children explained that adjectives make writing better.
- Staff identify any children who need additional help early. Disadvantaged children and those who are disabled or have special educational needs receive good individual support. Their progress is checked on closely so that if any concerns arise, specialist support, such as from speech therapists, is organised promptly. Parents are kept fully informed as relationships between home and school are fostered well.
- Children learn from the good examples that staff set as to how to treat each other with kindness and respect. They listen to each other attentively when answering questions and take turns patiently when sharing large toys or playing on climbing apparatus. They are very aware of how to play safely, as they advised, wisely, 'You mustn't run about because you might get bumped; you must tidy up or it will be a mess; you mustn't run about with scissors – that's very dangerous'.
- Welfare and safeguarding arrangements are good. Staff take good care of children at all times.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Teamwork among staff is very strong. Every effort is made to understand each child's needs. Children's progress is monitored closely and assessment information is used effectively to modify planning so that children have the support they need to make good progress.

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	121290
Local authority	York
Inspection number	453412

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Johnson
Headteacher	Joanna Rawling
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2013
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