

West Vale Primary School

Stainland Road, West Vale, Greetland, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX4 8LS

Inspection dates

3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Teaching over time has not been consistently good. As a result while pupils make the progress expected of them, too few do better than this.
- Some of the work set for pupils is not at the right level of difficulty for all, especially the most able.
- Insufficient emphasis is given to making sure pupils spell words correctly and in providing good opportunities for them to use their writing skills in subjects such as history and science.
- Teachers' marking is not always effective in helping pupils to improve their work.
- Leaders, managers and governors do not ensure that school improvement planning focuses precisely on what needs doing to improve pupils' achievements.
- Middle leaders have not ensured that teaching and learning in their subject areas of responsibility are of a consistently good quality.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Reception class because leadership and management in the early years, along with the quality of teaching, are all good.
- The new curriculum requirements have been introduced well.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school have narrowed.
- Pupils are a pleasure to talk to, they behave well and say they feel safe in school.
- Much has been done to improve the quality of the learning experience in classrooms and this contributes well to pupils' good attitudes to learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all years including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors observed pupils as they arrived for school and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation including systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, policies, and a record of the school's lesson observations.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views of the school through informal discussions with individual pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Inspectors held discussions with representative groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and with parents.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also analysed the outcomes for the school's own parents' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Lambert

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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.
- The Reception class provides full-time early years education.
- More pupils than usual join and leave the school outside the normal times of the year or do not complete all their primary schooling here.
- The school has had staffing disruption since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring:
 - the work pupils are asked to do is well matched to their individual needs, including the work set for the most able pupils
 - marking is effective in helping pupils to know how to improve their own work
 - spelling skills are taught well
 - good use is made of the skills of teaching assistants in supporting pupils' learning
 - pupils are given good opportunities to use their writing skills well in subjects such as history and science.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring:
 - school improvement planning is focused precisely on what needs to be done to improve pupils' attainment and progress and that monitoring makes sure the steps taken to address weaknesses are successful
 - middle leaders are effective in making sure both teaching and learning in their subject areas are of a good or better quality
 - teachers have more opportunities to share the school's own good practice in teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- There has been staffing disruption since the previous inspection. Even taking account of these difficulties, leaders and managers have not had a strong enough impact on ensuring that both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements continue to be of the good quality they were at the last inspection. As a result of this, pupils' progress across the school is not consistently good.
- The school's improvement plan lacks a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and on the steps needed to ensure success.
- While some middle leaders are new in post there are signs that all middle leaders are increasingly involved in helping improve both teaching and learning in their subject areas; however, this is at an early stage.
- The headteacher, staff and governors show a determination to secure the best for pupils following recent instability. The school is now demonstrating a good capacity to improve as already seen in improved teaching in mathematics, better progress in reading and the narrowing of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- While there is still more to do to ensure the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is fully effective, leaders have taken steps to check that it is being spent on activities to help these pupils. This is evident in the narrowing in the gap in attainment between this group and other pupils.
- Now that the school is emerging from a period of uncertainty a more rigorous procedure for checking the quality of teaching is in place. The monitoring of teaching and of the performance of teachers meets requirements but does not yet ensure teaching is consistently good. While there is some sharing of good practice in teaching, this aspect is not a strong feature of the school. Staff pay awards and targets set for teachers are now more closely linked to pupils' achievements.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection and the majority who completed the questionnaires are positive that their children are happy at school.
- Good relations are fostered consistently well between staff and pupils. The school is successful in ensuring that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and demonstrates a firm commitment to equality of opportunity. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the new requirements but opportunities are missed for pupils to use their writing skills well in some classes.
- Effective use has been made of the primary school sports funding to enable more pupils to learn new skills. Pupils say they enjoy these opportunities to take part in sport and say they become better at what they do. Staff have also improved their skills in teaching physical education to pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Pupils have many opportunities to learn how to value and respect one another and this is reflected in their good behaviour. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority over the last two years has worked well to support the school and minimise the impact of the instability in staffing in recent years. It continues to do so.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors recognise that staffing disruption has meant that the school has not improved as they would have liked but are confident that it is now moving forward. Governors do hold the school to account and are very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because they know what questions to ask and know that the headteacher will provide them with the information they need to carry out their roles effectively.
 - Money has been spent well in improving the internal quality of the school building. Governors make sure that the school's finances are used well. They ensure that the primary sports fund is used for the purposes intended. Their questioning as to how effective the use of additional government funding has been in helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve more has led to improvements in what support the school provides.
 - Governors ensure the systems to check on the performance of teachers are thorough. They receive information about the quality of teaching. They make sure that any underperformance in teaching is being addressed and ask questions to ascertain that any salary increases are linked to performance.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a very calm and orderly community where pupils are known well as individuals.
- Pupils are polite and show care and consideration for others and adults. They are keen to share their work with others and to talk about the work they are doing. For example, a group of pupils were keen to share with an inspector what they had discovered as part of a study of the First World War.
- The school has good systems in place for identifying, reporting and addressing any inappropriate behaviour including racist or discriminatory comments. The school deals effectively with any issues.
- Pupils work well together in class. They behave sensibly and are proud of the school. During the inspection, members of the school choir were keen to demonstrate their singing skills in preparation for an Easter concert.
- Around school, pupils behave well. They move sensibly round the building and at break time play well together.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in the school's very well organised dining hall during lunchtimes. The school's catering staff have put in much time and effort to make sure lunchtimes are very happy social occasions.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection, show that behaviour over time is good.
- While there are relatively few opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities, pupils are proud to be playground leaders or school's council members.
- Attendance is broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Record keeping and follow up with parents about safety issues, including minor injuries, are effective.
- Pupils take great care of one another. For example, pupils in Year 2 say how much they appreciate their friends and their teachers who are there to make sure they are safe.
- Pupils say that bullying does not take place. They have a good understanding of all forms of what constitutes bullying, including the potential dangers presented on the internet. Pupils know they should never talk to strangers. They understand that adults who come into school have to wear the visitor's badge to show them they are safe to talk with.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well over time. In some classes, pupils receive work that is either too easy or too hard.
- Inspection evidence and school records show that, where teaching is good, there are clear signs of progress by pupils. However, this is not consistent across the school.
- The school has improved the teaching of mathematics. There are some good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills. For example, pupils are stretched to use their newly acquired understanding in solving challenging problems.
- Where teaching is not as strong and it is clear from pupils' books that the most able pupils have understood how to carry out a new number calculation, pupils have to complete at least another 10 examples of the same type of calculation. This slows considerably the progress they make.
- Other weaknesses in teaching include missed opportunities to teach spelling skills well and to use marking effectively in order to help pupils to improve.
- Where teaching assistants are deployed effectively across the school, they make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially that of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs. However, in some age groups, teachers do not use the skills of teaching assistants effectively to support learning.
- Inspection evidence points to effective monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, with this monitoring showing none to be inadequate and examples of good teaching. This improvement is resulting in pupils now making better progress.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of their behaviour. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning in this positive environment.

- Reading skills are now being taught well and pupils have opportunities to use their skills. For example, Year 5 pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have found out about the features of characters in stories from other countries. While pupils receive opportunities to use their writing skills well in literacy lessons, opportunities are missed in other subjects to extend them further.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school and this has been the case since the previous inspection. There is evidence that pupils are now beginning to make better progress across the school because staffing is more settled. However, there are still inconsistencies in pupils' progress in some year groups.
- Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have been variable. In 2013, they were below average in writing and mathematics but above in reading. In 2014, they were below average in reading but above in mathematics and writing. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' are currently working at the levels expected for pupils of their age.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected of them was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was so even when taking into account the numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times. Inspection evidence and the school's most recent data show that, overall, pupils are making expected rather than good progress. In some cases, where expectations are higher, pupils do make good progress.
- Younger pupils' learning about phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is good. By the end of Year 1, the majority of pupils reach the standard expected for their age in the national screening check.
- Pupils this year are making good progress in reading. School leaders are taking effective action to reverse the drop in pupils' attainment last year.
- Pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to write in different styles. While some of the writing content is of a good quality, pupils' lack of good spelling skills impacts adversely on the overall quality of their writing. Also, pupils in some classes do not receive enough opportunities to use and extend their writing skills well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same progress as other pupils. They receive good support.
- The most able pupils do not always experience activities which provide them with a good level of challenge and so they do not achieve well. However, in the 2014 national tests in mathematics pupils did almost as well as those in other primary schools nationally at the higher level.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school but make slower progress from their starting points than other pupils nationally. The results gained by disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 national tests indicate that they were just over a term behind other pupils in the school. These results also show that disadvantaged pupils were just over a year behind other pupils nationally. Records of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school show that they are catching up with their classmates. This demonstrates the school's growing success in narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' achievements and that of other pupils.
- The school makes good use of additional primary sport funding is. Pupils now enjoy a wider range of sporting opportunities and uptake is high.

The early years provision

is good

- From starting points below those typically seen in children of this age, children make good progress in the early years. By the end of their Reception Year, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development is now above the national average. Good quality teaching ensures they are well prepared to move on to Year 1.
- The leadership and management are of a good quality with aspects outstanding. Strengths of leadership include clarity of expectations, effective use made of initial assessments of children's skills, and strong links with parents. These strengths all contribute strongly to children's good achievement. Children enjoy good learning opportunities that are both interesting and engaging in the classroom and the outdoor areas. The early years leader is aware there remains scope to further develop challenging learning activities in writing and mathematics.

- There are clear systems for identifying children's personal needs early in the school year and the effective welfare and care provided have a high priority. Children's behaviour is good.
- Staff work well together as a team and teaching is of a good quality. Staff check on children's learning carefully and achieve a good balance between activities directed by teachers and those children choose for themselves.
- Teaching focuses effectively on helping children to learn and develop basic skills. An example observed during the inspection was in reading when staff took great care to make sure letters were sounded out accurately in an environment where learning is highly enjoyable.
- Work seen in children's books shows that children are making good progress in writing. For example, they have moved from mark making to forming recognisable letters and writing their own simple sentences.
- Children enjoy doing the work they are asked to do, for example, working in the role-play veterinary surgery. During the inspection, this involved children in recording an important time and then politely reminding the lead inspector that he had not kept his appointment to have his imaginary pet animal checked over!
- Children are keen to work together, for example, working with others to use wooden blocks to create buildings.

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	107573
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	456103

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Lynch
Headteacher	Rachel Kemp
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2013
Telephone number	01422 372804
Fax number	01422 311330
Email address	admin@westvale.calderdale.sch.uk

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