

Harrogate, St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Belford Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 1JA

Inspection dates 14–15 May 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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- St Peter's has gone from strength to strength over the past two years.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors have worked tirelessly. They have robustly addressed the areas identified at the time of the last inspection as requiring improvement. The whole of the staff team are determined to provide the very best for the pupils.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children get off to a flying start in school. They develop a real love of learning and make rapid progress.
- Pupils go on to achieve well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and they continue to rise.
- The quality of teaching has improved owing to strong leadership of teaching and learning. Most of the time teaching is now good; some is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite to visitors and many pupils conduct themselves extremely well in and around school.
- Pastoral support is very strong. The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils are invited to join small 'family groups' when they start school. This helps them to feel very safe from the start, and fosters excellent relationships.
- Governors know the school well and offer a good level of challenge and support.
- The school provides a good curriculum that supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- Music, the performing arts and sporting activities are all given high priority.
- Many memorable experiences and special events add interest and enjoyment to school life, such as the many residential visits, the hosting of the daffodil tea for the community and the recent 'Master Chef' events.
- All of the parents who responded to Parent View say that their children are happy at school. Attendance rates are consistently high.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. Some pupils could do even better, particularly boys in writing activities.
- Pupils' work is not always well presented.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects such as science, geography and history are not as high as in discrete English and mathematics lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching and learning in 17 part-lesson observations, four of which were conducted jointly with a senior leader. They made many other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed break times and spoke with pupils from every year group.
- A range of documents was examined. They included leaders' views of the school's performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through informal discussions, telephone conversations and correspondence with parents. The school's own questionnaire to parents and the 104 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors analysed the 16 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about the school.

Inspection team

Fiona Gowers, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Pattinson	Additional Inspector
Jan Lomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding that the school receives to support those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is smaller than that found nationally, as is the proportion who speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- 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.
- Children attend the early years on a full-time basis.
- The school has the silver kite mark for physical education.
- The school works collaboratively in teaching schools alliances with a number of other schools in the locality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, helping pupils' achievement across the curriculum to continue to improve, by ensuring that:
 - the attainment of boys in writing rises
 - pupils' work is consistently well presented
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects are as high as in discrete English and mathematics lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders provide a very nurturing and harmonious community. The needs of the pupils are very much at the heart of everything the school does. Parents say it feels like 'joining a family' when children start school and that they greatly value high quality care provided.
- Fundamental to the aims of everyone in the school is the strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Very good relations are fostered. Staff endeavour to get to know each individual pupil well. Discrimination is not tolerated. All try to ensure that every pupil at St Peter's has equal opportunity to succeed.
- Leaders and managers have robustly tackled the areas identified as requiring improvement at the time of the last inspection. They have ensured that many key aspects of the school's work have improved significantly, such as pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This is a school with a much clearer view of where it wants to go.
- The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, provides a strong and effective steer for the school's work. There is a strong team spirit. All are committed to continued improvement and to securing the best possible standards for pupils. Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire about the school were almost all entirely positive about every aspect of the school's work.
- Middle leaders are playing their part in improving the school. They often have the opportunity to work alongside a more experienced leader and this helps them come up to speed quickly.
- Plans for improvement have been successful because they have involved staff, governors, parents and pupils alike. And this helps ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction.
- Senior leaders keep a careful check on how well each pupil is doing. They look at progress data regularly, scrutinise pupils' workbooks and talk to pupils about their work. This means they are quick to identify any pupil who is at risk of falling behind in their learning or those who can be pushed on further. However, despite these significant improvements, there is still some way to go before all pupils reach their full potential, particularly boys in writing.
- Since the last inspection, the school has focused primarily on improving pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Senior leaders are now rightly starting to focus more on checking on pupils' work in other subjects. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching has improved owing to the strong leadership of teaching and learning. Senior leaders provide regular feedback on how well teachers and teaching assistants are helping pupils to learn. This has led to largely good quality teaching throughout school.
- New staff have been introduced to the school's procedures with thoroughness and newly qualified teachers are supported well.
- Performance management procedures are used well to reward good teaching. Pay progression is closely linked to pupils' progress and the school's key priorities for improvement.
- The leadership of the early years is a particular strength.
- The leadership of special educational needs is effective and well organised. There has been a strong focus on improving the provision for this group of pupils in the classroom and this is helping many make faster progress, relative to their starting points.
- Strong partnerships are developing with other schools in the locality and the diocese, as well as within the two alliances of teaching schools. Benefits can be seen in the sharing of expertise and the development of the school's assessment procedures.
- The school's curriculum now provides many rich and stimulating experiences. It helps pupils develop respect for those of other faiths and cultures. Music, drama and the arts are also given a high priority. For example, the school tries to ensure that every pupil gets the chance to take part in a school production. The 'Singing Squad' regularly sing in the community and pupils won a competition to write a song to commemorate the Yorkshire leg of the 'Tour de France.'
- Sport funding is used very well. Indeed, over one hundred pupils take part in out-of-school competitions and the school has had a marked degree of success. Key Stage 1 pupils recently became the county champions in gymnastics and the Key Stage 2 hockey team has secured a place in the forthcoming county finals. Staff expertise in the teaching of physical education has increased significantly and pupils take part in many different sporting activities, ranging from archery to cross-country running and cycle cross.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, the school held their own elections, which ran parallel with the recent general election. The different candidates wrote their own manifestos to explain why others should vote for them and the whole school community voted. Such activities help

pupils gain a secure working knowledge and understanding of the importance of democratic processes.

- Staff ensure that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and that they are thorough and reviewed very regularly.
- The local authority has provided some good support for the school. It has supported the role of the governors in checking on the work of the school regularly. The local authority is confident that the school provides a good education for its pupils and that it will continue to do so.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. Leaders regularly check on the progress of eligible pupils compared to other pupils in the school, ensuring that any gaps in their relative performance are closing. Leaders and governors also talk to groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to secure their views on how well they are doing and to find out how they can be helped still further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been reconstituted since the last inspection. It is now much more involved in the long-term direction of the school. For example, it is taking a leading role in the process to convert to academy status.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work to reward good teaching and to tackle underperformance. They have a clear view of the quality of teaching in school.
 - Additional training has helped governors gain a clearer view of how well pupils achieve, both within St Peter's as well as when compared to pupils' achievements in other schools nationally. Governors have high aspirations for all staff and pupils; they share a strong commitment to improve. For example, governors checked rigorously that the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.
 - The school benefits greatly from the knowledge, skills and expertise within the governing body in areas such as finance, buildings, health and safety, human resources, the Church, and the local community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, pupils and staff all believe rightly that almost all pupils behave well. Pupils listen carefully and act promptly to instructions. Indeed, many pupils conduct themselves extremely well in the playground and when walking round the school, as well as in lessons.
- Children in the early years behave extremely well and demonstrate a keen thirst for learning. This sets them up very well for learning as they move on up the school.
- Pupils' attitudes are overwhelmingly positive, especially when they are inspired by the teaching. Their positive attitudes have a strong impact on the progress they make. The majority of pupils apply themselves well in lessons and work very hard. Nevertheless, there is occasionally a little off-task conversation when pupils find their work a little too hard or too easy.
- Many pupils are clearly very proud of their school. For example, Year 6 pupils rose to the challenge of creating a virtual tour of their school using computerised tablets.
- Pupils carry out a very wide range of roles in school with great maturity, such as on the school council, the sports crew, the art squad and as a librarian. They wear their badges of responsibility with great pride.
- Although many pupils complete their work to the best of their ability, this is not always the case. A scrutiny of pupils' books throughout school shows that a few pupils do not always take quite as much care with the quality and presentation of their work as they might. This can lead needlessly to careless errors at times.

Safety

- School's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Inspectors spoke with pupils from every year group; all said they feel very safe and secure in school and that they would find someone to talk to if they had any worries or problems at all. One group of pupils agreed that 'everybody helps each other here, no matter what'.
- The school does much to boost pupils' self-belief in their own qualities and capabilities. Pastoral support is very strong. One parent typically commented that their child's 'confidence has soared' in their time at St Peter's.
- Pupils are given a wide range of strategies to keep themselves safe. Matters of e-safety are given an extremely high profile. Pupils are trained to be 'digital leaders'. They check that pupils in every class have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and that they know how to avoid potential risks when using the internet or mobile telephones.

- Pupils are very clear about what might constitute different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is very rare and that, if any issues do arise they are sorted out well by the school.
- The school deals very effectively with a very small minority of pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. Disruptive behaviour is not allowed to impinge on the learning of others. Pupils say that 'no-one puts anyone off their learning here'.
- Procedures to check that pupils attend regularly are extremely rigorous. Attendance rates are consistently high among all groups of pupils, reflecting both the school's very effective procedures and how much pupils like their school.
- The school is very highly regarded by parents. The school is oversubscribed and has been since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents who made their views known are extremely supportive of all aspects of the school's work. Although there were a small number of negative responses to the questions on Parent View, no evidence emerged during the inspection that suggested that the school's work to keep pupils safe was not typically of the highest quality. 'We know our child is safe, well cared for, nurtured, respected and well educated.' This comment sums up the views of many parents.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching is now almost always good and sometimes it is even better. A scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own records confirms that this is typical.
- Relationships are positive throughout school. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable. They ask pupils probing questions to get them thinking hard and encourage them to try their best.
- Teaching assistants support pupils effectively. They use a wide range of approaches to help pupils learn well.
- Lessons have a clear focus and pupils are aware of the purpose of each learning activity. For example, in lower Key Stage 2, pupils used drama techniques to explore how a different character might respond to particular scenarios. They then looked at the typical features of a range of diary extracts. This was in preparation for writing a diary extract themselves from the point of view of a character in their class book.
- Pupils' work is typically well marked, which helps pupils understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work further.
- Pupils apply themselves with enthusiasm in mathematics. A greater emphasis on practical activities and investigations is helping them gain a thorough understanding of key mathematical skills and processes.
- In Key Stage 1, teachers and teaching assistants made good use of practical resources to help pupils learn to halve numbers. Some pupils enjoyed halving groups of elephants practically, while others used apparatus to help them halve larger two-digit numbers. Indeed, some pupils became so competent that they were able to halve odd numbers using whole numbers and fractions.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from focused and well-timed support, both in lessons and in smaller intervention groups.
- Teaching in the early years is highly effective. The wide range of activities on offer enables children's learning to get off to a cracking start.
- Senior leaders identified that pupils' progress slowed a little when they started Key Stage 1. The school subsequently increased the range and variety of classroom activities and staff skilfully adapt each activity to provide a greater level of challenge for the most-able pupils. This approach is paying dividends and motivating pupils to work hard.
- Expectations were particularly high in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Pupils were fully absorbed and were stretched in their thinking in a dice game investigation. Pupils worked extremely hard as they tried to work out which numbers would be the most likely and least likely to occur so they could win. They worked together to devise and then test their own theories.
- Nevertheless, not all teaching helps pupils learn quite as well. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher now, particularly in mathematics and English lessons. However, teaching in other subjects such as science, history and geography is not always quite as effective. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, at times, pupils of differing abilities complete much the same work and so it is much too easy for some and too difficult for others.
- The teaching of reading is well structured and is a particular strength. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and greater access to electronic readers is motivating boys, in particular, to read more widely. Computer programmes used at home and in school serve to motivate the more reluctant readers because they enjoy the challenge of trying to earn extra points in a computer game.

- The teaching of writing has improved. Teachers make sure that pupils have more time to complete their writing and there is a strong emphasis on helping pupils increase the accuracy of their spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers are trying to ensure that the quality of boys' writing improves by providing more opportunities for boys to write about themes that genuinely interest them. There has been some success, but the school is aware that there is still some way to go before all boys do as well as the girls in writing activities.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children achieve very well in the early years. From their starting points, many children make rapid progress in all areas of learning.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1. Following a dip in 2013, standards have risen and continue to do so in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 1 are building well on their very strong start in the early years and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are set to rise still further next year.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics for their age was just below that found nationally. However, senior leaders took swift action and standards in phonics have risen markedly. Pupils now use phonics skills well to read and write unfamiliar words with increasing levels of confidence. Indeed, many pupils in Key Stage 1 are expressive and fluent readers.
- Pupils now achieve well in Key Stage 2 and are catching up from the period of slower progress at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and have risen markedly in all subjects. Standards are particularly high in reading, because pupils read widely and often.
- The most-able pupils achieve well because they are provided with a good level of challenge in lessons, especially in English and mathematics. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who reached above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than that found nationally.
- Boys do not do as well in writing as girls. In 2014 one fifth of the boys attained Level 5 in writing, compared to three fifths of the girls.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. In 2014, test results at the end of Year 6 showed that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils when compared to other pupils in the school was one term ahead in reading, matched in writing and three terms behind in mathematics. When compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were two terms ahead in reading, slightly ahead in writing and two terms behind in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically make as much progress as other pupils nationally and some do even better.
- Any comparison between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in each year group would be statistically unreliable, given the very small numbers in some year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. Teaching assistants provide good support and forge very strong relationships with pupils. They ask searching questions and patiently help pupils work things out for themselves. This helps pupils gain a better understanding of new skills and concepts.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age in most areas of learning.
- Over the past two years, the quality of teaching in the Reception classes has improved significantly. It is typically outstanding and never less than consistently good. Indoor and outdoor learning areas are vibrant and stimulating.
- Children often make rapid progress relative to their individual starting points and their attainment has risen significantly. In 2014, the proportion of children who reached the expected level by the end of the Reception year was much higher than that found nationally in all areas of learning. Children are on track to reach similar levels this year too.
- Leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Teamwork is strong and all are committed to provide the best possible start for children at St Peter's. Excellent attention is given to children's safety and their well-being. This helps them settle in quickly and feel very safe and secure.
- Leaders identified that, although boys in the setting were doing better than other boys nationally, they did not always do quite as well as girls in writing activities. Staff have been very successful in motivating all children, including the boys, to engage enthusiastically in writing activities.

- During the inspection, children thoroughly enjoyed the wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors. For example, children were fully absorbed designing a house in the 'builder's yard', keeping records and taking finger prints in the 'police station', making appointments in the 'doctors' surgery' and planning and building a 'fire station'. Every activity inspired children to explore, discuss and write. Adults extended each child's thinking and early writing skills skilfully.
- Much is done to extend children's mathematical and reasoning skills. During the inspection children concentrated hard as they tried to ensure that water flowed freely down a long gutter. They discovered that the water would flow freely if they adjusted the height and angle of flow. They then set about considering how they could support the gutter to make it higher.
- Children's behaviour is first rate. With so many exciting activities on offer, they learn to stay focused and engaged for extended periods of time. Relationships are positive. Adults are very warm and caring. All in all, children are extremely well prepared for the transition into Year 1.
- Adults skilfully question children and this helps them gain maximum benefit from the many rich activities. For example, children had great fun outdoors exploring which containers held the most water. Children were asked if the size and shape of each container affected how much water each container held. They were then asked to consider how they would test that. Some children went on to comparing different capacities, confidently using three-digit and four-digit millilitre scale measures.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and children very readily use their phonics knowledge in their own writing. Activities such as computer games and speed trials are capturing the imagination of all children, including the boys. Children confidently read the 'tricky' words they have been learning, and were clearly thrilled with their accomplishments, exclaiming: 'This is the best thing ever!' and 'That was a record!'
- Parents typically speak of the 'absolutely brilliant start to school' provided and inspectors agree.

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	121568
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	462223

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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrea Morley
Headteacher	Julia Collins
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2013
Telephone number	01423 569684
Fax number	01423 521080
Email address	admin@st-peterscofe.n-yorks.sch.uk

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