

Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England Primary School

Embleton, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3XR

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A period of instability in leadership and teaching since the last inspection has resulted in a decline in the school's effectiveness. From their starting points, pupils do not make good progress, including in English and mathematics.
- In key stages 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Work sometimes lacks challenge. At times, pupils are unclear about what they are expected to do and learn.
- The curriculum does not enable pupils to fully develop some of the skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate to their varying ages and stages of development.
- At times, staff do not effectively manage pupils' behaviour. Consequently, a small minority of pupils misbehave.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not good in English and various other subjects. Teachers do not always insist on good presentation or neat handwriting.
- Early years provision requires improvement. Arrangements to assess children's skills, knowledge and understanding lack rigour. Activities do not consistently capture children's interests or fully develop their learning. As a result, children in the early years do not make consistently good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has made effective improvements to the school's organisation. Together with support from the diocese, local authority and governors, capacity to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes has increased.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the needs of others.
- Members of the new governing body are knowledgeable and increasingly effective. They have stabilised staffing and are determined to see the school succeed and flourish.
- Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure are effective. Pupils are safe from bullying or harassment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and pupils make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - making sure that expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high
 - ensuring that teachers' explanations enable pupils to work productively
 - assessing pupils' knowledge and skills accurately and using this to plan effectively and provide work that meets pupils' needs and abilities
 - asking probing questions that check and deepen pupils' understanding and extend their thinking
 - providing rich opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in English and across a range of subjects
 - insisting on high standards of presentation and neat handwriting
 - making sure that pupils are clear about expectations of good behaviour and that behaviour in the classroom is consistently well managed.
- Improve the provision in early years so that children make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers regularly and carefully check what children already know and can do and use this information effectively to plan activities and learning that meets children's needs and abilities
 - staff provide a wide range of stimulating activities in all areas of learning that captures children's interests, fires their imagination and provides appropriate challenge
 - where children choose from a range of learning activities, staff engage with children to move their learning forward and take the opportunity to assess children's progress
 - parents are regularly well-informed about their children's progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership by ensuring that leaders:
 - monitor the quality of teaching so that staff know exactly what they need to do to further improve their skills and effectiveness
 - tailor teachers' professional development and training to meet the needs of individual teachers and place a high emphasis on improving pupils' outcomes
 - provide a curriculum that enables pupils to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school's new governing body has acted swiftly to bring about essential change following the decline in the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. They have appointed a new headteacher and stabilised staffing following a period of turbulence.
- Leaders and governors have been well supported by both the Diocese of Newcastle and Durham, and Northumberland local authority officers. They have provided much-needed training, advice, guidance and support.
- The headteacher has brought about improvements to some aspects of school life. The school is well organised and managed. However, monitoring of the quality of teaching is not sharp enough to help teachers improve their effectiveness. Approaches to checking teaching do not focus clearly enough on the extent of pupils' learning.
- Teachers have benefited from recent training provided by the headteacher. However, more needs to be done to address teachers' individual needs in order to help accelerate improvements in their practice. Performance management arrangements are not yet sharp enough to bring about improvements in the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is broad and covers a wide range of subjects. It is enriched effectively with a wide range of trips and visits. Pupils value the extra-curricular clubs provided. They enjoy voting on which activities they would like to do after school. However, leaders are yet to ensure that the curriculum fully meets pupils' needs.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to provide a broad range of sporting activities and to enable pupils to keep fit and healthy. Pupils benefit from coaching in a range of sports, including trampolining, multi-skills and climbing.
- Leaders effectively use the very small amounts of funding received to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed. Pupils readily help each other and are very happy to take on responsibilities. They enjoy fundraising activities for charity. Interesting displays in the school corridor show that pupils are concerned for others and have compassion for those in need.
- Parents are very happy with recent changes and are particularly pleased that the headteacher works solely with this school. They value her caring approach and feel that the school is supportive of the specific needs of individual pupils. One parent commented, 'Parents are all strongly encouraged to make our children's learning a team effort between us and the school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are determined to bring about change and are already making their mark. They have worked hard and undertaken training to ensure that they have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

- Governors are increasingly able to check for themselves the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. They have a programme of visits to the school, which demonstrates their determination to get things right and ensure that the school improves.
- Governors check that any funds received, such as pupil premium, additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for promoting PE and sport are used appropriately.
- Governors provide valuable support and challenge for the headteacher. They understand their statutory duties and undertake them with care. For example, they have been closely involved in a recent safeguarding audit and ensured that the actions arising have been addressed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safety in the school and great care is taken to make sure that all areas in the school are as safe as possible.
- Policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils are clear and are carefully checked by governors. Staff are suitably trained so that they know how to respond should a child in their care be vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has declined since the previous inspection. Although teaching has now been stabilised, the quality of teaching over time is not good. As a result, pupils do not make good progress, including in English and mathematics. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are too low. Work often lacks sufficient challenge.
- Explanations of what pupils need to do and learn are sometimes unclear. Furthermore, teachers do not identify carefully what pupils have or have not understood. As a result, pupils sometimes become confused and learning time is then wasted.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are not always accurate and are, sometimes, over-generous, especially at key stage 2. This impacts on teachers' planning for future learning. As a result, activities are not always well matched to pupils' varying learning needs and abilities. Work is too hard for some pupils and too easy for others.
- Teachers often ask pupils to share their thoughts and ideas in class but miss opportunities to use this to ask questions that challenge and deepen pupils' thinking. Sometimes, teachers rely too much on the most able pupils to answer their questions. This results in other pupils becoming less involved in their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement. Mathematical understanding is developed well through problem-solving activities but pupils do not consolidate their understanding of formal mathematical methods.
- Opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes, audiences or at length are limited. Teachers do not consistently insist on high standards of presentation and neat handwriting. Pupils do not receive effective support to improve these aspects of their

work.

- Effective teaching of phonics is supporting pupils to make better progress in reading. Pupils are taught to express their thoughts and opinions effectively, using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Helpful guidance from teachers in science enables pupils to reflect on their progress and make improvements. Pupils were keen to talk about their learning in science. They enjoy carrying out practical work and learning to think as a scientist. They record their experiments clearly and think carefully about their conclusions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Too many pupils are not confident learners. They are reluctant to ask for help to support them with their learning. Older pupils quickly resort to chatting with each other if activities are too hard, too easy or do not interest them. Similarly, sometimes younger pupils' interest wanes and they go off task.
- Pupils enjoy the range of sports on offer and love going to the sports centre for their PE lessons. They especially like the challenge of the climbing wall. All pupils are very active and enjoy playing outdoors with a range of equipment at break and lunchtimes. No one is left out.
- The school's work to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is effective and enhanced through a wide range of trips and visits. Key stage 2 pupils talk with interest about their recent visits to a mosque and a synagogue and thoughtfully compare these to their own experiences in their local church.
- Pupils are at an early stage in developing an understanding of the values that lie at the heart of British culture and society. Pupils talk enthusiastically about a recent visit to the police station and in particular to the detention cells. They remember a visit from their local councillor and understand some aspects of her role in the local community.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They can explain how to keep themselves safe when using mobile devices. They greatly enjoyed learning about lifeboats and safety at sea when the Royal National Lifeboat Institution brought one of their boats to school.
- No one in the school tolerates prejudiced or discriminatory behaviours and pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. They say that if children occasionally fall out and need help, teachers are always on hand to resolve any problems.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A small number of pupils do not always behave well in lessons. This is because they are not given clear boundaries regarding what is acceptable and what is not. The strategies teachers use to restore a positive learning environment are not always effective.

- Behaviour outside in the playground is good and pupils enjoy playing together.
- Most pupils listen carefully to each other's ideas and are keen to contribute in lessons. They are polite and respectful of each other and adults.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school works effectively with a small number of targeted pupils and their families to help these pupils improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Across the school, pupils do not make good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. In the past, for some, learning has been too slow. Changes made by the headteacher aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning are starting to help pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Pupil numbers in each year group are often very small and vary considerably from year to year. Very small pupil numbers also mean that it is not possible to report reliably on the outcomes of different pupil groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Furthermore, in 2017, there were no pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Therefore, there is no published end of key stage information to review.
- The school's own pupil progress information shows that the majority of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are working within age-related expectations. However, inspection evidence from reviewing pupils' workbooks in key stage 2 show that in English and mathematics, often pupils are working at standards below this. This does not represent good progress from their previous starting points.
- In English, pupils' achievement in reading is better than in writing. Pupils' phonic skills are developed well throughout the school. Over time, the school's results in the national Year 1 phonics screening check compare well to national averages.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not good both in English lessons and across other subjects. Standards of pupils' presentation and quality of handwriting are variable. This hampers their progress. Some younger pupils benefit from working with older pupils in their class to improve their spelling.
- In mathematics, pupils enjoy problem-solving activities. However, pupils have learned few strategies which enable them to effectively record their findings using correct mathematical notation and they do not make good progress in mathematics overall.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of early years provision has declined and requires improvement. Children's learning does not get off to a good enough start. From their starting points, children do not make good progress.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers' assessments of what children already know and can do are limited and often superficial. Staff checks on children's starting points at the beginning of the early years, their current skills, knowledge and understanding and the progress they make over time, are not secure. As a result, teachers are unable

to plan effectively for the needs and abilities of children.

- The learning environment and experiences provided do not capture children's imagination and curiosity, nor do they encourage them to actively explore. Children spend too much time wandering around the setting without clear purpose. The range of activities on offer in the various areas of learning is too limited.
- New approaches to both planning for, and assessments of, children's learning during times when they can choose activities to help them learn are not effective. Teachers plan little in advance for children's learning during these times. Adults do not interact with children well enough during these times to ensure that children's learning is purposeful and deepens their understanding. Children do not make good progress during these sessions as a result.
- Children do better in adult-led sessions, such as when learning phonics and number knowledge. Children enjoyed learning how to sound and write 'k' using an image of a kangaroo. They loved singing a counting song. In these sessions, nursery children gain much confidence from learning alongside their older classmates.
- Children are calm and they behave well. Most work happily by themselves or with their friends. Some children work with a real purpose and are able to sustain high levels of concentration on a single task. Some engage quietly by themselves with games and activities that do not challenge them.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and all welfare requirements are met. Children feel safe in the classroom and when learning in the outside provision. They are very confident in the playground and happily play with the older children. The school ensures that children with specific needs are supported by the appropriate external agencies.
- Parents value opportunities to learn how phonics is taught. However, they are not informed about their children's progress in the different areas of learning and so they have limited information to help them support their children's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	122290
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10040084

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Craft
Headteacher	Nicola Threlfall
Telephone number	01665 576612
Website	www.embletonprimaryschool.com/
Email address	admin@vincentedwards.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher, all teachers and almost every member of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, have taken up their responsibilities within the last 14 months.
- The school is a very small rural school. At the time of the previous inspection, it was a first school. It is now a primary school.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and or/disabilities is extremely low.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is extremely low.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.

- The school provides a breakfast club each morning and an after-school club.
- There are two classes: one for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; and another for Years 4 and 5. There are currently no Year 3 or Year 6 pupils on roll.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. In many of these observations, the inspector was accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to pupils in lessons and during lunchtime and playtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the governing body. A meeting was also held with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Newcastle and Durham on the second day of the inspection.
- Telephone meetings were held with the director of education for the Diocese of Newcastle and Durham and with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, plans for development, performance management documents, information about the work of the governing body, records of the monitoring of teaching and pupil progress information. Safeguarding documentation, attendance data and records relating to behaviour were also examined.
- The inspector examined the quality of work in a wide range of pupils' books, including work from the previous academic year.
- Account was taken of the views of parents through the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and several parents talked to the inspector during the inspection.

Inspection team

Janice Gorch, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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