

Linthwaite Ardron CofE Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School

Church Lane, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 5TA

Inspection dates

28 February and 22 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 has declined. Pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. In Year 6 in 2017, pupils' progress in writing was too slow.
- Learning does not get off to a good start in the early years. Assessments of what children know and can do do not provide a reliable baseline on which to track children's progress.
- Across the school, the achievement of different groups of pupils is variable. Disadvantaged pupils' progress lags behind that of other pupils. The needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not consistently well met. Additional funding the school receives to support both of these groups of pupils is not used to good effect. The support they receive is not always effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good. Their views of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are too generous. The information they collate to track pupils' achievement is unreliable.
- Sometimes, work that pupils are given does not reflect their varying abilities. Some pupils repeat work unnecessarily. Work for the most able pupils often lacks challenge. They do not attain the high standards they are capable of.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They have not yet had enough opportunities to fully develop their skills to have a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- Governors have not challenged leaders rigorously enough about the school's performance, including the achievement of different pupil groups.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics is good. Younger pupils make good progress in learning to read. All pupils reach the required standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well to support the teaching of PE.
- Pupils are happy in school and feel that they are well cared for. Their behaviour during lessons and around the school is good.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that all staff and governors are familiar with safeguarding procedures. Pupils are kept safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - information from tracking pupils' attainment and progress is accurate and used effectively to evaluate the school's performance, especially how well different groups of pupils are doing
 - plans for improvement detail precisely how leaders and governors intend to measure the impact of their actions on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - additional funding is used effectively so that differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and other pupils nationally diminish quickly
 - the early years and subject leaders' roles are developed and they are provided with opportunities to monitor rigorously their areas of responsibility
 - the skills of the governing body are strengthened further so that they are able to hold leaders to account for the school's performance more effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' outcomes improve, especially at key stage 2, by:
 - making certain that rigorous plans for the teaching of writing are quickly introduced and the impact is robustly monitored
 - accurately matching the work pupils do to their level of ability, so that unnecessary repetition is avoided and all groups, especially the most able, make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are given more effective support so that they make at least the same rate of progress as other pupils nationally.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of education provided has lapsed. Pupils' progress has declined, particularly in writing, and actions taken have not been swift enough to halt the decline.
- While senior and middle leaders undertake various monitoring activities, these are infrequent and often lacking in focus. For example, visits to lessons and the checking of pupils' work do not consider with enough precision the impact that teaching has on pupils' gains in learning. Leaders do not fully take into account the progress made by different pupil groups, such as the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders' actions, therefore, do not have a reliable impact on improvement.
- Subject leaders are keen to do well and are very clear about what is required of them. However, many are new to their roles and, as yet, they have not had enough time or opportunities to fully address the changes that need to be made in order to monitor rigorously their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders and governors know what needs to improve. However, plans for improvement lack the necessary detail to pinpoint precisely how and when this will be achieved and how the impact of their work, such as on outcomes for pupils, will be measured.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been spent effectively. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils lags behind that of other pupils nationally and, overall, disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Leaders are yet to ensure that differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are narrowed quickly.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not spent effectively. Consequently, progress for these pupils is not consistently good.
- Leaders ensure that the primary school PE and sport funding is used to provide a range of sporting activities, including football and fitness. Pupils understand the importance of being fit and healthy and enjoy regular physical activity. The work of the sports coach is valued by pupils, who all spoke about their enjoyment of sports and physical activities.
- All staff work successfully to establish a caring and inclusive ethos. A happy atmosphere permeates the school. Daily assemblies, links with the local church, visitors from the local community and visits further afield contribute well to pupils' effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being.
- The curriculum incorporates all of the subjects that it should. Educational visits and the use of specialist teachers of art and French add inspiration and engagement within the wider curriculum. This captures pupils' imagination. There is a strong emphasis within the curriculum on developing pupils' reading and phonic skills. However, there are still gaps in pupils' writing skills, which need further improvement.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not challenged leaders effectively to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They have been too reliant on limited information provided by the headteacher, which has been overgenerous in its evaluation.
- Governors recognise that they have not held leaders effectively to account for all pupils' and groups of pupils' past achievement. They have focused too heavily on attainment alone, and have not taken into consideration pupils' starting points when they join school.
- Governors have a growing understanding of the variances in achievement of different groups of pupils, such as the most able pupils. They are also well aware that, over time, the pupil premium funding has not had an effective impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, they are yet to hold leaders to account effectively for making sure gaps in the achievement of these different groups are closed quickly.
- The chair of the governing body is ambitious for all pupils and families. He is encouraging more governors to readily challenge leaders about the information they receive. As such, governors are becoming clearer about what the school does well, and where it needs to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and have a clear understanding of what to do if they are concerned about a pupil or an adult in school. The school works well with external agencies and parents to support pupils and their families.
- Leaders' work with vulnerable pupils and families is a priority. Leaders and staff are rightly proud of the level of care and support that they provide for pupils who have additional social and emotional needs.
- Pupils and parents agree that pupils feel safe and are safe. All staff have taken part in training to help them protect pupils from harm. The curriculum teaches pupils how to manage some of the risks they face in modern society, including raising awareness of keeping safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable and, therefore, requires improvement. Not all adults have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, especially the most able. Pupils' rates of progress and learning across the curriculum, therefore, are variable over time.
- Teachers do not always take enough account of pupils' existing skills and understanding. Work planned and presented, therefore, does not always match pupils' needs with enough precision. Inspection evidence found that some pupils repeat work that is not necessary. This results in pupils not being stretched or challenged and as a result staff do not move pupils to more demanding work, which they are capable of,

when they are ready.

- Some teachers and teaching assistants do not check carefully how well pupils are learning in lessons. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Consequently, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching does not always help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding beyond the basic level. This means that too many pupils in key stage 2 do not make the strong and rapid progress that they should to achieve higher standards and greater depth.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils routinely use their phonic skills to blend sounds or as a basis for spelling. They also use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words with confidence. Consequently, this has supported the improvements in reading, particularly at key stage 1.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection. More pupils are now being guided to tackle mathematical problems and use their knowledge of numbers to solve them. As a result, most pupils are working at the standard expected for their age.
- Good relationships exist between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. These foster positive attitudes to learning and encourage many pupils to try their best. Pupils engage keenly with tasks and activities. They enjoy lessons and respond well to their teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A welcoming and caring ethos is at the heart of the school's work. From the moment pupils enter each day, they are greeted with a genuine sense of care from adults.
- A Christian ethos promotes good reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Time for reflection and prayer is used to help pupils consider what qualities they need in order to show how they welcome and support others.
- Pupils state that they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in and around the school, including when they use the internet.
- Pupils say that any instances of bullying are rare. On the occasions that this happens, the school deals with it well. Pupils learn about different forms of bullying and are taught to respect the beliefs and views of others.
- The school's work with outside agencies is effective. There are clear systems in place to offer help and support to pupils and their families. This ensures that the welfare needs of pupils who require support are met.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show a good awareness of the expectations that leaders have of their behaviour. This was seen consistently in all years within lessons and at play time.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They work cooperatively and respectfully with one another in lessons. They listen to each other's points of view, and are keen to help one another with their learning.
- Older pupils are keen to be role models for their peers. They are extremely proud when they are nominated, and then elected, as school council representatives.
- The school site is well kept and cared for. Pupils respect the learning environment, which is clean, bright and celebrates pupils' achievements with quality work on display.
- Leaders have clear systems and procedures to check pupils' attendance. Absences are followed up on the first day, and the school engages with a range of agencies where there are attendance concerns. As a result, attendance is above average and pupils attend regularly.
- Overall, parents' and pupils' responses to school questionnaires, and in conversation with inspectors, indicate that the school operates in an orderly and safe manner. Inspectors agree.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have declined. In 2017, although standards in reading and mathematics were similar to the national average, this did not represent good progress from pupils' previous starting points. In writing, standards were below average and pupils' progress was too slow.
- Inspection evidence shows that currently in key stage 2, while some pupils are now making better progress, the rate of progress is variable across the year groups and is not consistently good.
- In 2017, at the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics generally were better than those in 2016 and were similar to those seen nationally. Even so, this does not represent consistently good progress from their previous starting points. However, pupils in key stage 1 are doing well in learning to read. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 meeting the expected standard in the national phonics screening check has increased over the past three years and, in 2017, was above average. All pupils reach the expected standard in phonics in Year 2. This reflects the effective leadership and teaching of phonics.
- Over time, pupils do not achieve well in writing. In the past, pupils' progress in writing has been too slow and this means that some current pupils have some gaps in their skills and knowledge. Action plans to tackle this have now been established; however, approaches to the teaching of writing are still inconsistent. Achievement in writing, therefore, requires improvement.
- There are considerable variations in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The most able pupils do not reach the highest standards they are capable of achieving. Tasks sometimes lack challenge and do not demand enough of them. Pupils say they

could do more. As a result, over time these pupils have not made good progress, especially in writing.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils across the school is too variable and requires improvement. The pupil premium funding is not used effectively enough to bring about rapid improvement in their attainment and progress. Over time, their achievement has lagged behind that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. Gaps, although now narrowing steadily, remain too wide.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported sensitively by additional adult help. However, the leader responsible does not effectively evaluate this provision. Support is not always focused well on improving their progress. As a result, they do not make consistently good progress.
- The school's own assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress is not fully reliable. Inspection evidence, including work seen in pupils' books, indicates that leaders' view of the extent of the improvement in pupils' current achievement is overly optimistic.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class with levels of development broadly typical for their age. They leave the Reception class with levels of development close to those seen nationally. From their starting points, children's progress through Reception, therefore, is steady rather than good. Too few children leave the early years having made better than expected progress.
- Over the last few years, there have been some wide gaps in achievement between different groups of children. Fewer boys than girls make good progress across all aspects of learning. Until recently, systems for the assessment and monitoring of children's progress were not rigorous enough for senior leaders to detect differences in the outcomes of specific groups of children.
- Gaps also exist between the achievements of disadvantaged children in comparison with other children nationally. Variances in the achievement of different groups of children are not closing quickly enough.
- The leader in the early years is clear about the priorities and improvements required. Recent changes are clearly having a positive impact. However, these are at an early stage of development and the leader recognises that more work is required to further improve the environment and experiences that children have.
- Activities for children are appealing and the imaginative use of resources provides varied experiences for children to develop the full range of skills. Teachers nurture, encourage and direct children, promoting a sense of achievement and pride in learning.
- Children do not make good progress because the quality of teaching does not always meet the needs of the children. Systems used to assess children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they start school and record their progress have been evolving. Work is still needed to ensure that these assessments reflect accurately what children can do and can be used as a reliable baseline on which to track children's progress through the early years and into key stage 1.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents who spoke to inspectors were very

positive about the start their children get and feel welcomed when they bring their children to school each day. They are keen to be involved, sharing learning from home.

- Safeguarding is effective and legal welfare requirements are met. Staff have received the appropriate training and the indoor and outdoor areas are safe and secure. Staff provide comfort, support and encouragement, showing a good regard for children's well-being.

School details

Unique reference number	107740
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10037723

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

Type of school	Junior and infant
School category	C of E (Voluntary aided)
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Rushby
Headteacher	Eelin Megson
Telephone number	01484 845544
Website	www.linthwaite-ardron.org.uk
Email address	head.linthardron@kirkleeseducation.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. A small number of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons or part-lessons across the school to observe teaching and learning. A number of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, staff, pupils, parents and a representative from the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the school’s website and safeguarding, including the single central record and information of recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- The school’s self-evaluation, plans for improvement and analysis of pupils’ attainment, progress, behaviour, exclusions and attendance were evaluated.
- Pupils’ work in different subjects was scrutinised alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Pupils’ behaviour was observed by inspectors in lessons, during break and lunchtimes and during assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work informally during lessons, and met with groups of pupils to discuss their learning and listen to their views about their school. There were 60 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors took into account the 27 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and six responses from staff to the online survey.

Inspection team

Nicola Shipman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Bowyer	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Twaits	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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