

Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ings Lane, Staxton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 4SS

Inspection dates 26–27 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a happy and caring school where pupils thrive and achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and this is helping to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils feel very safe in the school's caring environment. The school's work to keep them safe and secure is outstanding.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress through the school.
- Due to the high standard of provision, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and get off to a good start.
- Reading is a particular strength because phonics (how letters link to the sounds they make) are taught well and every pupil practises them regularly.
- As a result of good teaching, standards are consistently above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who need extra help do well because they receive good support.
- The headteacher's inspirational leadership successfully sets a positive tone for the whole school. Leaders at all levels ensure that teaching is good and that pupils achieve well.
- Governors are knowledgeable and provide a high level of support and challenge, which contributes to promoting school improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is well promoted.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The number of pupils attaining standards that are above the national expectations is not yet consistently high enough, especially in boys' writing, for achievement to be outstanding.
- Information on pupils' progress is not used as effectively as it might be.
- Marking is not consistent in informing pupils of how to improve their work and pupils are not given time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Some pupils' presentation of their work and handwriting is untidy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all the classes. He saw eight lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. He also observed a physical education session taken by a specialist sport coach. A school assembly was also observed.
- The inspector heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read, examined the work in pupils' books, and observed pupils' activities in the dining hall and playground.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other members of staff, the special educational needs co-ordinator, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. He also met informally with parents.
- The inspector spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as having a more formal meeting with a group of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, a summary of the school's view of its performance, the school's improvement plan, and documents showing how the quality of teaching is checked, the school's information on pupils' progress, teachers' plans and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and nine responses to the inspection questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Peter Bailey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children whose parent is in the armed forces, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below average.
- There are three mixed-age classes.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school part way through the year is much higher than usual.
- The school provides a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further and ensure that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment, particularly in boys' writing by:
 - ensuring that the school's detailed and highly informative pupil tracking data are more effectively used to set aspirational targets for all pupils
 - ensuring that teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to write at length, with depth and good quality, in subjects other than English
 - improving pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work by developing and consistently applying a whole-school approach to promoting these skills.
- Ensure the consistent use of high quality marking of pupils' work, by:
 - always providing comments that are informative and making sure that pupils fully understand what they must do next to improve their work
 - checking that pupils acknowledge that they have read and understood comments and are given time to respond to guidance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall, children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills generally below those expected for their age. In the safe, caring and happy learning environment, children settle quickly. The initial focus is to ensure good progress in personal and social skills, enabling a readiness to learn. Children make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning by the time they enter Year 1, with a good level of development and standards that are close to expectations.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Attainment has risen consistently over the last three years and is now well above the national average for reading and above that in mathematics. Attainment is not as strong in writing, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school's data and work in pupils' books show that the trend of improvement is being sustained and the attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is on track to be higher in all subjects.
- Pupils' phonics skills develop quickly and pupils are able to apply these skills to help them read. In the phonics screening check in 2013, pupils' overall attainment exceeded the national average. Pupils read regularly throughout the school, they use expression well, and have a good understanding of what they read. They express an enjoyment in reading for pleasure and information. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about reading, their favourite authors, and the books and reading materials they prefer.
- Good progress is sustained in Key Stage 2. Overall attainment dipped in 2012. However, from their starting points those pupils made good progress. In 2013, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress was broadly in line with the national average in mathematics, reading and writing.
- In the 2013 Year 6 national tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards was above the national average, but not enough pupils did better than this. Boys' attainment in writing at this higher level was particularly low. For the most able pupils in Year 6, the school has implemented additional weekly sessions that are taught by subject specialists in mathematics and English, to assist them in reaching the standards they should.
- Work in pupils' books, supported by the school's data, shows that all groups of pupils, including the most able in Years 3 to 6, are making good progress to reach and exceed expected standards. School data indicate that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach predicted outcomes that are above the national average at the expected Level 4 and at the higher Level 5.
- From their starting points, most pupils achieve well. This includes those who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, because the school rigorously monitors their progress and provides good quality extra support. However, an insufficient proportion of the most able pupils has achieved the higher than expected levels over time.
- Effective support is given to pupils who join part way through Key Stages 1 or 2, so that they settle quickly and make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding is effectively allocated to improve achievement by supporting one-to-one tuition, providing reading support and other extra help for those pupils entitled to this support. The school's robust tracking systems closely monitor the progress of these pupils, and data show that this additional support is very successful in raising the achievement of these pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do as well as other pupils in the school, as there are no significant differences in their progress and attainment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good, with some that is outstanding, and this enables most pupils in all year

groups to learn well and make good progress. Work in pupils' books and pupils' outcomes show that teaching has been good over time.

- Excellent relationships within the classroom ensure that pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and learn new skills quickly and confidently.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is of a consistently good quality. A wide range of stimulating and imaginative activities, both in the classroom and outside, ensure that children's learning is good. In the Reception class, for example, on the themed topic of 'Spring', the teacher's enthusiasm and the highly effective use of pictures on the interactive whiteboard of the life-cycle of a frog totally captivated the children from the word go. This set the tone for the very good learning that followed in the extension activities, which were a good mix of adult-led and children-initiated activities, and secured good learning and progress.
- The highly effective use of children's 'Learning Journals' (books which record children's development) create excellent partnership opportunities between the school and home, which powerfully support children's learning.
- Teachers have a clear focus on improving pupils' reading skills. Regular phonics sessions and guided reading activities further support the development of pupils' reading skills and love of books. However, opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing in other subjects are somewhat limited.
- Teachers skilfully ask open-ended questions that expect pupils to explain their reasoning, which further extends learning and understanding.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and usually plan good opportunities for pupils to learn, containing a variety of activities to keep pupils interested. For example, pupils made good progress and enjoyed learning in a Years 4/5 mathematics lesson when a practical problem-solving approach was skilfully used to enthuse pupils in reinforcing addition and subtraction skills. When the solution had been found, the most able pupils were stretched by changing the numbers involved and being asked the 'what if' question.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to support the learning of all pupils, especially those who may need a little extra help. This effective support builds up pupils' confidence and enhances their basic skills so they play a full part in the lesson and make good progress.
- The school has established a robust system for checking on pupils' progress and attainment. Each class teacher has a 'Next Steps File', which contains detailed information on each pupil's progress and levels of attainment. However, this information about pupils' progress is not always used consistently well enough by the teachers and teaching assistants to plan work for pupils, particularly the most able that builds on what they already know, in order to improve their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. The best marking consistently gives pupils advice on how to improve. However, the quality of marking across classes is variable. Sometimes it is not made clear to pupils how they can improve their work, nor are they given opportunities to reflect on teachers' comments and to respond to them, for example by practising further calculations or improving their writing. Also, poor presentation of some pupils' work and untidy handwriting are not tackled consistently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to participate as they have excellent attitudes to learning.
- There is a calm, organised learning culture. Relationships between pupils are good, they are acutely aware of the importance of good manners and treating each other with respect. Pupils move around the school courteously and are well mannered and considerate of each other. The school's ethos has a strong sense of fairness and is rooted in the Christian beliefs that permeate all aspects of the school's work.
- Evidence from the school's behaviour records and talking to pupils, show that poor behaviour is

extremely rare, and that the school responds appropriately and effectively when it does occur.

- Pupils play a significant role in the school. They take on a wide range of responsibilities, helping to build their maturity, confidence and social skills. These include being representatives on the school council, ensuring that pupils' views are heard, school monitors, and reading buddies. Two Year 6 pupils have successfully qualified as Junior Sports Leaders, and are able to lead activities at lunchtime.
- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and are very well prepared for the next stages of their education, both academically and personally.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. School leaders make sure that pupils are safe in school. Entry to the premises is well managed and staff who are recruited are rigorously checked.
- The pupils, staff and parents all say they feel the school is a safe place and behaviour is well managed.
- The school's safeguarding policies and practices are robust and comprehensive, meeting requirements. The school gives a high priority to ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy school and succeed. The school's records show that there is no discrimination or serious bullying. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe. They can talk about various types of bullying, but do not regard any of them as significant issues for this school.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and continues to improve. Persistent absence is well below the national average.
- The excellence of pupils' behaviour and their deep respect for each other testify to the outstanding quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In their questionnaires, all staff and an overwhelming majority of parents agree that pupils are happy, well behaved and safe at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with dynamic leadership. She is extremely committed and passionate in engendering a consistently positive approach to driving forward the school's improvement. She has an unwavering determination to provide every child with a solid foundation for the future. Team work across the school is strong in supporting the headteacher's fundamental beliefs.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are highly committed to the school's Christian culture and ethos. They are persistent in driving forward improvements in the school. Their high aspirations for the future are shared by all staff, parents and pupils. Staff who have areas of responsibility in the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, contribute well to the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and staff. Comments on all the staff questionnaires returned indicated a high level of confidence in the school's leadership. Staff morale is high.
- The school's leadership has an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing, as they thoroughly evaluate the school's performance. Leaders correctly identify the school's strengths and the right priorities for further development.
- The process to check the quality of teaching is well structured. Teachers commented they found the process supportive, with good opportunities in place for training. For example, the numeracy coordinator has recently successfully completed a mathematics specialist teaching qualification at Sheffield Hallam University and is using the knowledge gained from this to develop the teaching of mathematics further.
- Robust systems to check the progress of pupils are in place and provide accurate and up-to-date information on pupils' attainment. This information is also used with increasing effectiveness to manage the performance of staff. The link between performance and salary progression for staff

is clear and applied rigorously.

- The school uses the primary sport funding well. It has been used to increase the scope of sports activities available to pupils during and after school, to provide pupils with the opportunity to be coached by sports specialists, and for training to develop the teachers' expertise. There is a wide range of sporting opportunities available to pupils; these are well attended and contribute to the pupils' health and well-being.
- The school has successfully developed a mutually supportive relationship with parents, especially those of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The breakfast club is positively regarded by parents and gives pupils a good start to their day.
- The school works very effectively with a number of local schools to provide support and share expertise.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are exemplary.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and show respect and consideration for others. The school has developed links with schools in Kenya and Malawi. There are many opportunities for pupils to think about and express their feelings and to reflect on their learning and behaviour. This does much to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, which is a strength of the school.
- The local authority provides an appropriate level of support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely supportive of the school; governors are knowledgeable, ambitious and approachable. They are highly committed and very well informed about the school. They use statistical information astutely to evaluate the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally.
 - The governors play a critical role in challenging plans for improvement and setting rigorous targets for the headteacher. They monitor teachers' performance and pupils' progress, paying particular attention to the progress made by pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding. They are fully aware of the priorities for school improvement and monitor progress against the school improvement plan throughout the year. They continuously seek to further their own expertise by additional training in order to make them increasingly more effective in their role. The school's finances are managed effectively.

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	121534
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	440857

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Archer
Headteacher	Trina Price
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2011
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