

Skelton Community Primary School

Brecksfield, Skelton, York, North Yorkshire, YO30 1YB

Inspection dates

11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well over time. The majority of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress in their first year in school because provision is effective. Teachers know the children well.
- All teachers work closely together to check pupils' progress so that learning is purposeful. Teaching assistants increasingly contribute to improving pupils' learning.
- There is a strong focus on reading which has become an important part of school life. Many pupils love to read.
- Pupils have many opportunities to explore their local environment and to discover the wider world. This has helped them to enjoy writing and to write for different purposes.
- Teachers and managers hold regular and effective meetings to discuss pupil progress and to identify emerging weaknesses. This helps the school to plan additional support for teachers and pupils.
- This is a small, happy and friendly school where behaviour is good. Everyone knows and cares for each other which helps to create a strong sense of community. Pupils feel safe in school.
- The headteacher is passionate about the education of the pupils and has demonstrated immense resilience, fortitude and leadership. This has helped to overcome the impact of staffing changes since the last inspection.
- The governors and the newly appointed leadership team have the skills and the enthusiasm to support the headteacher to move the school forwards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of some of the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 is not as good as it should be, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide enough guidance for pupils to ensure that they become successful when solving problems in mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has been inconsistent which has meant that some pupils do not use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read and write.
- A few pupils do not always behave well enough to become successful learners.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed an assembly and 10 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' books and learning journals were looked at, including those retained by the school from the previous year.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and two middle leaders, a group of pupils, teaching assistants, three members of the governing body and the Local Authority Challenge Partner.
- A group of pupils read to the inspector and discussed how the school had helped them to improve their learning.
- The inspection took account of 67 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) and the results of an internal school survey of parents' views. Discussions were held with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including achievement data, the school's evaluation of its own performance and development plan, behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pauline Pitman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection the school has experienced immense and unpredictable changes in staffing.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011. Following the departure of the deputy headteacher and further changes in staffing the headteacher was the only member of the senior management team. There is now a senior leader in post and subject leaders for literacy, numeracy and science.
- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are taught in separate classes. Years 3 and 4 are combined as are Years 5 and 6.
- There is one full-time Reception class and no Nursery class. An independent part-time pre-school provision is located on the school premises; this was not part of this inspection.
- There are more girls than boys.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs or those with a disability is well below the national average.
- The school is situated in the heart of a well-established community but it also takes pupils from elsewhere, sometimes mid-year. This means that its population is less stable than some schools nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school is beginning to work with other schools in the North cluster of schools in York.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress by:
 - providing further training so that all teachers, especially those new to the school, have the mathematical subject knowledge needed to extend pupils' skills to solve problems
 - setting work that challenges pupils, particularly the most able, to gain the mathematical skills they need to be successful
 - embedding the new system of teaching phonics so that every pupil gains the skills needed to read and write more accurately
 - offering more support to the few pupils who need further encouragement to behave well and become successful learners.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment the headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the academic and social needs of the pupils have been met. She has developed a culture of high expectation by insisting that attendance is important and that pupils' work is of a high quality. She has continued to make this small and vibrant school a focal point for the community.
- Major changes in staffing, including senior leaders, have meant that the headteacher has often worked single-handedly to plan the curriculum, to check the quality of teaching and learning and to manage the life of the school. Despite this, she has initiated a number of important actions to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching which have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour across the school.
- Following new appointments there is now stronger leadership of teaching including the quality of teaching assistants. Since September 2014, the headteacher has delegated responsibilities to leaders who now have the necessary skills and commitment to school improvement. This has allowed the headteacher to build on previous developments and to raise the profile of good teaching and improve learning across the school.
- Subject leaders are effective and keep a close overview of pupils' progress. They offer advice and support to teachers to help them address any gaps in pupils' learning. For example, training has been provided to improve the teaching of phonics. Although this is not fully embedded improvements in progress are emerging.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is much stronger and this information is used to plan support. However, not all teachers have the subject knowledge they need in mathematics to consistently set challenging work for pupils, particularly the most able.
- The Local Authority Challenge Partner has offered high quality support to the school which has been well received and has contributed greatly to the school's improvement.
- Approaches to teacher appraisal and performance management are effective and help all teachers to focus on key priorities for the school and for their own professional development. This has helped them to understand the relationship between performance and pay.
- The school website includes very detailed information about the use and impact of pupil premium funding. For example, to support learning, a children's champion was appointed and more pupils are offered one-to-one support. A specialist writing tutor, who is also an author, offers writing support for Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupil progress meetings are used very effectively to discuss the progress of all pupils and as a result, pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding have made good progress.
- Every individual pupil is included in the life of the school and, from an early age, pupils are taught to respect and understand each other's differences. This effectively promotes equal opportunities and helps to tackle discrimination and foster good relations.
- The curriculum is interesting and engaging and, coupled with the strong spiritual, social, emotional and cultural curriculum, enriches pupils' understanding of the wider world and their role in society. The school strongly promotes British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual freedom.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are constantly reviewed by the school and by governors. Children feel safe in school and their parents agree.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively. Sport coaches enable pupils to participate in physical education and sport twice a week. Coaches also offer professional development for school staff. Boys and girls are now able to regularly participate in football and there is an after-school sports club which is well attended.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led. The Chair of the Governing Body brings to the school a range of important skills that enable him, with the support of other governors, to hold leaders to account.
 - Governors are effective because they know the school well. They increasingly visit classrooms and talk to key staff so that they have a better picture of the priorities for the school. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and particular strengths and areas for development.
 - Many of the key governors have a good knowledge and understanding of school achievement and attendance data and use this knowledge to ask pertinent questions and to check on progress. For example, one governor has worked closely with the new subject lead for mathematics to monitor developments.
 - The Chair and subcommittee governors understand systems for performance management and how

performance is related to pay. They are kept up to date about the actions taken to address any weaker teaching and ask for regular updates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly and well behaved around the school. They feel very much part of a happy and secure school. This is because the headteacher and her staff create a very warm, inclusive environment where children can thrive. Some children treat other as if they were brothers and sisters and it is commonplace to see older pupils helping younger children.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Relationships are highly positive and there is a strong sense of mutual respect where pupils' contributions are valued. For the past two years attendance has improved and is just above the national average. The headteacher has worked diligently to encourage all parents to send their children to school. This has made a difference and fewer pupils are now persistently absent.
- Lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour but if this occurs teachers and their assistants react appropriately and quickly address any difficulties. They discuss the school's system for rewards and consequences which pupils understand. However, a few pupils have not developed the skills needed to sustain their attention and good behaviour. The school is reviewing the behaviour policy and seeking out support for these pupils.
- Pupils present their work well. There has been a successful drive to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation in books. Pupils understand why this is important and all pupils make every effort to set out their work neatly. Assemblies and wall displays are used to show off outstanding pieces of work which help pupils to feel proud of their work and their school.
- Lunchtime is enjoyable for pupils because they enjoy a well prepared meal in a pleasant environment. Older pupils act as helpers for the younger children. The playground is spacious and interesting. Play equipment keeps pupils busy and active and many pupils enjoy a game of football without spoiling the play of those who prefer a less energetic lunchtime.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The broad curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe in school and in the wider community. Visiting speakers support them to stay safe and teachers have provided them with sensible advice about remaining safe on the internet. There is a comprehensive and up-to-date e-safety policy available on the school's website.
- Pupils feel safe from any bullying. Incidents of bullying or racism are extremely rare and are dealt with rapidly and appropriately. Pupils report that this is a very harmonious and safe environment in which to learn and a more recent survey of parents shows that they agree.
- The governor responsible for safeguarding has actively supported the school to keep pupils safe.
- Parent questionnaires indicate that the vast majority of parents agree that pupils are safe in school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the last inspection there has been a complete change in leadership and teaching staff within the school. Systems put in place and actions taken to improve teaching have had to be constantly revisited by the headteacher as new staff have been appointed. This has made it more difficult to consolidate practice and move more teaching towards outstanding.
- Staffing is now more stable. Records of the quality of teaching over the past year and during the inspection indicate that teaching is now good. New staff are supported well and expectations of high quality teaching and learning are greater. The tracking of pupils' progress is more rigorous and teachers are more aware of the needs of their pupils.
- The headteacher has set up a system to mentor and coach new or recently qualified teachers in school. This has been instrumental in supporting improvement.
- All teachers effectively check pupils' progress and use this information to identify where pupils are in their learning so that they can plan future activities. Questions are used well and encourage pupils to think about their learning. However, some of the most able pupils are not challenged enough to deepen their understanding, especially in mathematics.

- Overall the teaching of mathematics is effective but in some classes it is not as strong as in other subject areas. A few of the newer teachers have not acquired enough subject knowledge to set challenging tasks for the most able and to offer the guidance needed to solve problems.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and often which helps them to make good progress. However, the teaching of phonics has not always been systematic or effective. This has meant that some Year 1 pupils have not developed the skills they need to read and write effectively. Recent training and support from the local authority has improved the systems to teach phonics although these are not fully embedded. Nevertheless, training has had a positive impact and supported pupils in Year 2 to improve their skills and use them in their reading.
- There has been a huge drive to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Teaching is now successful in providing pupils with many cross-curricular opportunities to develop writing skills and improve handwriting. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write persuasive letters to defend the destruction of the rainforest while others write non-chronological reports about historical figures. Teachers make writing more interesting by exploiting pupils' experiences during outside visits. Authors and visitors have helped pupils to learn how to write for different purposes.
- Teaching assistants are increasingly effective, especially when they work closely with the teachers, plan their activities carefully and engage fully in supporting pupils to learn.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and those with a disability are supported well. Interventions are timely and appropriate and are managed well, sometimes by teaching assistants. This has helped pupils to make good progress.
- All pupils are offered weekly homework that extends their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Many pupils arrive in Reception with skills which are below those typical for their age, particularly in writing. They make good progress and are prepared well for learning in Year 1. Analysis of current data and the work in pupils' books show the impact of stronger teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers are more aware of the needs of their pupils and as a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school which accelerates in Years 5 and 6.
- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils have reached high standards in reading for two consecutive years. However, too few of the most able pupils reached the higher levels compared with other schools nationally in mathematics and writing. More recently there has been a strong emphasis on developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills which is having a strong impact on raising achievement.
- In Key Stage 2, the results of national tests show attainment and progress of pupils have been similar to the national average in writing and above in reading. However, in 2014, Year 6 pupils achieved less well in mathematics compared with reading and writing. This was due to the impact of significant staffing turbulence and weaker assessment practice during lower Key Stage 2 leading to gaps in learning.
- As a result of more stable staffing, and the unrelenting drive of the headteacher and her team to improve teaching, the attainment of pupils in reading is now above average, and writing average, at the end of both key stages. A higher proportion of pupils now reach above average levels.
- In mathematics, many pupils are confident in carrying out basic calculations. However, not all teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills and some lack the confidence to solve more complicated mathematical questions and problems.
- Pupils' workbooks are organised well and presented neatly. They illustrate improvements in writing. Pupils make good use of strategies, such as word walls and recipes for success, to help them know how to improve their writing. Many write imaginatively with increasing accuracy in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Attainment in reading is good. Although the system to teach phonics is not fully embedded, there is a greater fidelity by staff to follow the phonic programmes and pupils are making better use of these skills to tackle new words. All pupils enjoy reading and find it fun. Pupils develop their language skills and a deeper understanding of what they read so that they can use key information to help them to become better writers of English. Specific book lists are provided on the school's website which link to the units of work in each key stage and pupils use these to find out more about the topics.
- Overall the progress of the most able is improving and is now good. However, some of the most able pupils have not always made the progress expected of them especially in mathematics. This is because transient teachers have not always had the skills and knowledge to extend pupils' learning or the ability to help them to reach the highest levels especially in mathematics. Current pupils in the school are much better equipped to reach the higher levels expected of them when compared with last year especially in

reading and writing.

- Disadvantaged pupils achieve broadly in line with other pupils in school and are at least one term ahead of other pupils nationally in reading and writing. They do less well in mathematics and there is approximately a one term attainment gap in mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally and a one and a half term's gap between them and others in the school.
- Although there are very few pupils with special educational needs or with a disability in the school and analysis of their progress and attainment data does not generate meaningful statistics at the end of Year 6, it is clear that these pupils make good progress. This is also the case for the pupils who start school at different times including those from minority ethnic groups. Provision across the school fully meets their needs and they are successfully included into the life of the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Children arrive into Reception predominantly from the independent provision located on the school premises. Transition arrangements help the school to quickly identify starting points of the children and any barriers to children's learning so that the school can plan teaching immediately.
- Over a third of children enter Reception with skills below those that are typical, especially in reading, writing and number and in their understanding of the world. For example, in 2014Last year there were no children working above what is typical for their ages. However, by the time these children left Reception the proportion reaching a good level of development was in line with the national average. For many children this represents good progress enabling them to be well equipped for life in Year 1.
- Children enjoy learning. They are cared for effectively and behave very well. The children help each other, enjoy socialising and quickly become friends. They immerse themselves fully in a range of interesting curricular activities. The school is developing further opportunities for children to opt to select their own activities in the outdoor learning environment.
- Teaching is good. As a direct result of good training phonics are taught regularly and more effectively. Children sit and listen carefully and practise saying and writing their sounds and letters. This has meant that a very high proportion of pupils now make good progress in this aspect of learning. There is very good support for pupils who are new to the school or who speak English as an additional language. They quickly learn and begin to catch up.
- There is a renewed focus on the teaching of reading, writing and number. Children are encouraged to read at home and are offered time to practise their letter and number formation and to increase their confidence as writers. Parents comment on how much their child can now do compared with a few weeks ago and all parents have confidence in the quality of provision.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader and the teaching assistant are very knowledgeable and have undertaken regular checks on children's progress which are used to plan the next steps in children's learning. Communications between parents and the school are good. There is a useful information pack and parents are encouraged to contribute to key developments in their child's learning. Parents report that the staff are dedicated, diligent professionals who care for their children well.
- Reception is a safe place to learn because the safety and well-being of every child is at the forefront of everything the school does. Parents 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.
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School details

Unique reference number	121335
Local authority	York
Inspection number	449759

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Buck
Headteacher	Alison Halley
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
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Fax number	01904 470344
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