

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, West Tanfield

Mowbray Terrace, West Tanfield, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5JN

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is an inclusive and happy school. It continues to provide its pupils with a good education.
- The executive headteacher provides committed leadership. Alongside her staff and the governing body, she has successfully steered the school through a challenging period. As a result, staffing is stable and the quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' progress is improving across the school. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points. However, this progress is not always reflected in pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage.
- Staff are adept at teaching the mixed-age classes. Pupils respond well to the efficient routines and procedures arranged by teachers. As a result, pupils are mature, responsible learners who work productively on a wide range of well-designed activities across the curriculum.
- Teachers provide pupils with plentiful opportunities to improve their reading and writing to a high standard. Pupils are beginning to strengthen and apply their reasoning skills in mathematics, but this is not yet consistent, and few pupils reach the higher standards.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Pupils develop their phonics skills quickly and apply them well when reading.
- Leaders have secured positive relationships with parents and carers, who value the care their children receive. Parents are less involved in learning activities, such as reading.
- Leaders provide a caring and nurturing environment where pupils grow in confidence and are keen to learn. This has a positive effect on their personal development.
- Pupils behave well and are respectful of others. Pupils attend school regularly and say that they feel safe.
- Leaders and governors ensure that teachers lead a range of subjects effectively. Observations and examples of pupils' work across the school demonstrate pupils' enjoyment in a range of exciting topics.
- Children make a good start to the early years. Adults know each child very well and tailor teaching and learning to ensure that all children grow in confidence. Children enjoy their learning and make strong progress. Opportunities for children to extend their learning outdoors are limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teachers build upon pupils' current strong progress to further raise their attainment across the curriculum by:
 - challenging the most able pupils to develop their reasoning and skills more effectively to attain the higher standard in mathematics
 - building upon the good relationships with parents to encourage greater parental involvement in learning activities, such as developing strategies to effectively support pupils' reading at home.
- Ensure that children in the early years have more opportunities to explore and learn outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- St Nicholas Church of England Primary is a small, welcoming and friendly school where staff morale is high, and pupils are happy and hard-working. There is a clear vision based on the school's Christian values. The executive headteacher, staff and governors are ambitious and committed to improving the life chances of all pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the school. The recent decline in the number of pupils on roll has led to a reduction in the number of staff and the reorganisation of two mixed-age classes. The school now has an effective teaching and support team. The executive headteacher, staff and governors have shown great resilience and strength in tackling these significant events and have maintained a good standard of education.
- The executive headteacher and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is still needed. They provide the school with a clear direction and are accurate in their analysis of the school's priorities. Leaders and staff are ambitious for the school and determined that it will be the best it can be.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. They have made their high expectations clear to staff. The highly effective, specialist support provided by partnership schools, the local teaching school alliance and the local authority support teachers and their assistants well. As a result, although there is still work to do, the quality of teaching in the school is at least good and continues to improve.
- Staff value the training opportunities they have to improve their practice. They work together closely so there is strong consistency in the way staff use the agreed teaching approaches. Staff responses to Ofsted's online survey show that they are unanimous in feeling supported and proud to be working at the school.
- The executive headteacher's and teachers' focus on improving standards throughout the school and raising expectations of what pupils should achieve is rapidly improving pupils' outcomes. Currently, most pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Pupils enjoy an engaging curriculum that enables a range of subjects to be studied in meaningful and relevant contexts. For example, the visit to 'The World of James Herriot' enabled pupils in Reception and key stage 1 to explore aspects of history, geography, science and animal care, preparing them well for their 'Moving Pictures' topic. Similar experiences for older pupils – including trips and residential opportunities – enhance pupils' experiences, improve their self-confidence and enable them to become well-informed young citizens.
- In this very inclusive school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Staff use religious education lessons and assembly themes to promote equality and diversity. They encourage pupils to reflect on their feelings and to learn about and respect people from different faith groups and cultures. Pupils gain insight into important principles – such as the rule of law and democratic processes – through

holding their own school council elections and carrying out various roles of responsibility in school. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders use the additional funding to support the high proportion of pupils with SEND wisely and they regularly review how they spend it. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and experienced. She demonstrates an unwavering commitment to pupils who need extra support to attend school who benefit from all that is on offer. Her advice to staff about the best ways to meet pupils' needs means that individual programmes of support for pupils help them to make good progress.
- The actions of leaders are having a positive impact in narrowing gaps in pupils' knowledge and attainment and ensuring that all pupils, including the small number of disadvantaged pupils, are making strong and sustained progress. Staff evaluate pupils' attainment and progress on a regular basis. Plans are made to address any underperformance. This has resulted in improved outcomes for current pupils, particularly in writing.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is spent effectively. Staff are developing the appropriate skills to teach a variety of physical activities. Additionally, pupils benefit from having access to the forest school and a variety of sports clubs and activities. As a result, more pupils than in the past now participate in a wider range of sports.
- English and mathematics leaders routinely check the quality of teaching in their subjects through observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. Consequently, leaders can identify where teaching approaches are most effective and where they need to improve.
- The school provides valuable pastoral support to pupils and families. One parent said: 'This school provides a lovely nurturing environment for our children to flourish, while accepting each child's individual needs.' Staff work hard to establish positive relationships with parents. Even so, the school has not yet involved parents as much as they could in fully supporting their child's learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors understand their responsibilities and are extremely effective in their roles. They are highly aspirational for the future of the pupils in the school. Since the last inspection, governors have shown a determination to check that leaders improve the quality of teaching and learning, despite facing significant challenges. They understand the school's strengths and have a good knowledge of the school improvement plan and how progress will be measured.
- Governors regularly visit the school in their curriculum and safeguarding roles. Governors make good use of their understanding of the pupils' outcomes and the wider school community to set challenging targets for the executive headteacher, and teachers. External advice and training mean governors are well equipped to ask challenging questions of the leadership team.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and attend school regularly. Staff understand their responsibilities and complete the relevant training in respect of safeguarding children. Governors routinely check that leaders are following appropriate safeguarding practice at the school.
- Leaders have established clear processes to identify concerns over pupils' welfare. They ensure that any concerns are followed up swiftly and that records of concerns are organised and suitably detailed.
- The school's record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are well maintained and contain all statutory information.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe at school. They are taught about e-safety. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the potential dangers from working online. They know how to protect themselves and who they need to tell if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teachers challenge pupils to make links between their previous learning and their current work. Consequently, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects well. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and confidently.
- Teachers appreciate the support and professional development that they receive. They are constantly seeking to improve and develop their practice. Teachers are extremely reflective and they learn from each other. Good practice in teaching is shared across the school and more widely with partner schools. For example, the training teachers have received on assessment has enabled them to shape learning activities to better meet the needs of pupils.
- Staff teach phonics very effectively. Pupils enjoy their daily phonics sessions. Staff carefully and systematically check whether pupils have fully grasped the links between letters and sounds. Staff thoughtfully pitch phonics sessions so that pupils are given the chance to apply their phonic knowledge when tackling unfamiliar words.
- Staff support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils sensitively in lessons, structuring support when necessary but also encouraging independence. Teachers plan carefully to meet their needs, and effective guidance in lessons ensures that all pupils are active learners.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of texts in school and on the school's website. They are encouraged to read independently and often. Teachers provide high-quality support for pupils to hone their reading skills and develop their reading comprehension. In key stage 2, pupils' books show that they have worthwhile opportunities to develop their vocabulary, inference, prediction, explanation, retrieval and summary skills. This is aiding the acquisition of higher-order reading skills for the oldest pupils.

- Effective teaching ensures that pupils' writing demonstrates increasing accuracy when applying more sophisticated vocabulary and spelling. Teachers provide pupils with ample opportunities to develop their writing skills for a range of different purposes. Pupils carefully edit their own work and make changes to the style and content to strengthen the effect it has. Pupils are able to structure their writing appropriately for different forms and genres, for example by writing short, punchy paragraphs for newspaper articles. As a result, pupils make strong progress in writing.
- In mathematics, the work in pupils' books reflects the professional development that staff have received on sequencing the curriculum. Staff use questioning well to encourage pupils to think about what they are learning in mathematics. However, pupils do not have regular opportunities to select different problem-solving strategies for themselves or to reflect on their solutions. As a result, their confidence in using reasoning skills in mathematics is not yet well developed. At times, the most able pupils are not challenged with hard enough work to achieve at the higher standard in mathematics.
- Teachers ensure that pupils gain subject-specific skills and knowledge across the curriculum. They plan interesting topics which capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning and enable them to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils in key stage 2 enjoyed researching how they would travel to a specific European destination in the most cost-effective and efficient way. They were able to demonstrate their research skills online to identify appropriate routes and could clearly justify their choice and cost of transport.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together. They know the pupils exceptionally well and this secures the warm and trusting relationships that exist in the school. This leads to pupils adopting positive attitudes and focusing well in lessons.
- Pupils' relationships with each other are positive and reflect the school's Christian values, with pupils commenting that any issues, including bullying, are promptly dealt with and resolved by staff. Pupils celebrate each other's differences. They told the inspector, 'We treat people how we want to be treated.'
- Leaders take every opportunity to promote the fundamental British values. Respect and equality are built into teaching and learning.
- All parents who made comments through the online survey or who spoke to the inspector said that their children are kept safe at the school and pupils agree with this.
- There is clear equality of opportunity for pupils, regardless of their starting points. Pupils and their families are provided with strong support to help overcome any difficulties that they may face. Pupils said they are pleased with how their physical health and mental health are looked after at school. Pupils shared several examples of how staff help and support them to discuss and overcome their anxieties.

- Pupils have good opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities. For example, they proudly become members of the school council, librarians, playtime leaders, house captains or school ambassadors. Some have recently visited a recycling plant and are planning a presentation to younger pupils to help them with their topic, based on the story 'Dinosaurs and all that Rubbish'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers have established clear classroom routines and expectations. Pupils are respectful and polite towards each other and the adults they work with. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted in the daily experiences planned for them. Through assemblies, lessons and leadership opportunities, pupils learn to care for each other and understand the importance of warm welcomes and respect.
- Lunchtime is well organised, and this results in pupils enjoying their free time. Staff make sure that pupils are well supervised on the playground. Pupils of all ages play well together. Pupils say that behaviour is largely good and this was demonstrated clearly during the inspection.
- Leaders promote pupils' regular attendance, which is currently higher than in other schools nationally. The social and emotional needs of some pupils who require additional support are managed well. Over time, pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult learn to change their responses to situations. This helps them to become increasingly successful learners.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupil numbers in each year group are too small to report on outcomes for individual years or groups of pupils. Pupils' progress varies year on year. However, individual pupils reach the standards of which they are capable from their starting points in reading and writing. The progress made by the most able pupils in mathematics is not yet consistent across year groups. Recent improvements in teaching are helping this group of pupils to achieve well and make more rapid progress.
- The high proportion of pupils with SEND are supported well by staff. Accurate assessment of pupils' work and a clear understanding of what these pupils should achieve, based on their prior attainment, result in their strong progress. The SENCo provides informative guidance to staff on how to support these pupils in their work, which staff act on consistently.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is too small to make comparisons with other pupils nationally. The support provided for this small group of pupils, however, is effective and these pupils receive targeted help to enable them to catch up with other pupils.
- The current teaching of phonics is very effective and pupils make strong progress. Pupils' application of phonics to their writing is improving. This is enabling more pupils in key stage 1 to write and spell accurately.

- As a result of targeted teaching, pupils are currently making strong progress in writing. They write fluently, typically with well-formed handwriting and increasing confidence in using expressive vocabulary. They have many opportunities across the curriculum to write at length and they work hard to use accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Progress is weaker in reading in key stage 1 than in key stage 2. Younger pupils who read to the inspector can use phonic strategies to sound out unfamiliar words when prompted to do so, but some are reading below their chronological age. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to in school and teachers inspire a love of reading.
- The school's focus on mathematics has seen an improvement over time in what pupils can do. There is consistency in the approach to teaching mathematics and pupils are confident at recalling number facts. However, pupils are not always given opportunities to apply their skills to problem-solving and reasoning. This slows their progress, particularly that of the most able pupils, as they do not always reach the higher standards in mathematics.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and learning over time indicates that current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are on track to make strong progress in a range of subjects. A range of well-designed and interesting topics enthuse pupils and enable them to develop a good understanding of subjects such as science, art, history and geography. Pupils have many opportunities to consolidate their learning through writing tasks and can talk confidently about what they have learned.

Early years provision

Good

- The very small number of children in Reception enter the early years with skills that are below those typically found in children of their age. Although it varies year on year, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development almost matched the national average figure in 2018. Careful nurturing combined with effective teaching ensures that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader, who is also the SENCo, has a firm focus on improvement. She knows what is working well and what could be better. For example, the leader is aware that the constraints in staffing make access to the outdoor area difficult. This limits opportunities for children to regularly develop their dexterity and motor skills outdoors.
- The teacher and teaching assistant work well together, forming an effective team. Staff plan appropriate activities for the children, including both adult-led tasks and activities that children can choose for themselves. They have found that this balance works well.
- Assessments of children are accurate; however, the recorded observations sometimes lack depth and they are not always precise enough to identify specific areas which children need to improve more quickly.
- Children are happy and they behave well in the early years. They are independent and have a sense of curiosity. Children are clear about what adults want them to do and good practice is firmly embedded in daily routines. Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective and statutory requirements are met.
- All children, including those with SEND, make strong progress from their starting points because teaching is closely matched to their needs. Skilful awareness of pupils'

personalities ensures that each individual child makes a strong contribution during the well-designed activities.

- Adults provide strong support for children's early phonics and reading. Opportunities for children to write are used often. Children are beginning to write short sentences. They use phonics prompts to help them write independently. The inspector saw enthusiastic teaching and children enjoying imaginative activities, such as Geraldine the giraffe puppet, which was used imaginatively to successfully introduce children to unfamiliar words and objects.

School details

Unique reference number	121524
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10082019

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Brown
Executive Headteacher	Andrea Peacock
Telephone number	01677 470 329
Website	www.west-tanfield.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@west-tanfield.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British or Other White background.
- 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 proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. None of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes. There is no nursery provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Children are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- An increasing number of pupils join classes during the school year.

- The school has undergone considerable change in staffing since the previous inspection.
- The governing body has also undergone change in membership, including a new chair of the governing body.
- The school is in a collaborative partnership with Kirkby Malzeard Church of England Primary School and they share an executive headteacher.
- The school receives support from the local authority, the Ripon Rural Cluster of Schools and the Harrogate and Rural Teaching Schools Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, governors, middle leaders and staff from the school.
- The inspector had discussions with two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector visited lessons across year groups to observe pupils during learning. A number of visits were undertaken jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils formally and informally.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour took place during lessons, in an assembly, at playtime and lunchtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- The inspector jointly reviewed a range of pupils' work in English, mathematics and other subjects with the executive headteacher. They discussed pupils' work and monitored their progress. The inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- A range of documentation provided by the school was examined. This included the leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, their development plan, attendance and behaviour information, assessment information and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the eight responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector took account of the six free-text responses of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector also spoke with several parents as they collected their children from school.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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