

Ainderby Steeple Church of England Primary School

Station Lane, Morton-on-Swale, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 9QR

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

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

- Leaders have established a warm sense of community in the school which values inclusion and equality highly. As a result, pupils show consideration and respect for one another and for staff members.
- Professional development for staff has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils currently in the school are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- Phonics is taught well and this ensures that pupils have appropriate decoding skills and can read fluently. Pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are challenged to develop their comprehension skills through teachers' skilful questioning.
- Pupils develop a firm knowledge of mathematical concepts. However, opportunities for them to deepen their understanding by applying their skills to problem-solving and reasoning contexts are too infrequent.
- Governors know the school well and are effective in both challenging and supporting the headteacher.
- Teaching assistants make a vital contribution to ensuring that provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities results in strong progress.
- Pupils are enthused by teaching in lessons in the wider curriculum and have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects. In other subjects, teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not always high enough. Consequently, the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects is sometimes not their best.
- Pupils learn about different religious beliefs, cultures and lifestyle choices. This supports them in developing tolerant views and in preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders do not consistently check the impact that their actions have on pupils' outcomes. Therefore, on occasion, the difference they make to their areas of responsibility is not maximised.
- Children in Reception make strong progress because adults provide activities which are well matched to children's needs and interests.
- Expectations of pupils' conduct are suitably high. As a result, pupils behave well and the atmosphere in school is calm.
- Following a dip in pupils' attendance in 2016, leaders took swift action and have been successful in ensuring that attendance rates are now above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or outstanding so that pupils make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - teaching staff have high expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects so that basic skills, including handwriting, spelling and punctuation, consistently reflect what pupils can achieve
 - pupils have regular opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders take responsibility for improvements in teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects by monitoring and evaluating them effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have prioritised the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report and have been particularly successful in strengthening provision in the early years. The headteacher provides effective leadership and has improved the quality of teaching through supporting and challenging teaching staff.
- A culture of 'togetherness' and of looking after one another is embedded in the school. One pupil represented the views of many when he commented that the best aspect of the school was 'the way everyone cares for each other'. This is also reflected in lessons across the school, where pupils were observed supporting each other and collaborating well when extending their own learning.
- Through partnerships with the local authority, the diocese and a teaching school alliance, leaders ensure that their evaluations of the school's effectiveness are accurate and that priorities for improvement are identified correctly. Leaders have also used these links to provide professional development for staff, which has strengthened the quality of teaching of English and mathematics.
- Staff appreciate the professional development they have received in relation to teaching reading comprehension skills. This has honed teachers' questioning practice and, in turn, has ensured that pupils are challenged to think deeply about their responses to texts. Professional development has also ensured that pupils now have regular opportunities to edit and improve their writing in English lessons. However, this practice has not been extended to include the writing that pupils complete in their topic and science books.
- Middle leaders have benefited from development opportunities provided by the diocese. As a result of this, they are clear about the strengths and priorities for improvement in their subject areas. Some middle leaders are at an early stage in their development and do not check on the difference they make to pupils' outcomes. Therefore, their effectiveness is not as rapid as in other areas.
- The organisation of wider curriculum subjects ensures that pupils acquire appropriate knowledge and skills. Leaders place heavy emphasis on pupils broadening their vocabulary in relation to wider curriculum subjects. As a result, pupils are able to understand and use technical vocabulary and are articulate in doing so.
- The school's inclusive ethos is reflected in the effective provision to which the large proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have access. Teaching assistants provide high-quality support for this group of pupils and are often instrumental in giving them access to mainstream education. Additional funding for this group is spent effectively. The value placed on inclusion and equality is strengthened further through a strong relationship with the neighbouring special school. Regular visits for pupils between both schools ensure that they have a deeper understanding of diversity.
- Leaders make sure that the small number of disadvantaged pupils are supported through targeted interventions and access to valuable experiences such as extra-curricular clubs and educational trips. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make strong progress. Leaders, including governors, check on the outcomes for this group carefully and ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively.

- Pupils' attendance dipped significantly in 2016. Since then, leaders have been checking on pupils' attendance meticulously. They have also introduced a number of incentives for regular attendance and they follow up any absences thoroughly. Consequently, pupils understand the importance of attending school and absence rates are now below average.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding to very good effect. They find creative ways to increase pupils' participation in sport and are focused on checking on the difference this makes to their physical development and well-being. Pupils' preferences in relation to extra-curricular clubs are gathered and clubs are then introduced to match their interests. Pupils of all stages of physical development take part in competitions with other schools and this is effective in building their confidence and enjoyment of sport.
- Pupils learn about issues such as the migration of refugees and protecting the environment, which gives them an insight into global concerns. They give thoughtful consideration to these matters and this supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is promoted further through assemblies and lessons where they have opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others, identifying both similarities and differences. As a result, pupils show respect for people from all backgrounds and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors demonstrate their commitment to the school through regular, focused visits to check on leaders' progress towards identified priorities. They also receive clear, accurate information from the headteacher at governing body meetings. As a result, they know the school very well. As such, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the resultant outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have a suitable range of expertise and are keen to undergo further training where necessary. This ensures that they have appropriate knowledge, which they use to good effect in challenging and supporting the headteacher.
- Governors understand their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and are involved fully in checking that different aspects of safeguarding are effective.
- Governors have been instrumental in ensuring the financial stability of the school in the face of changing budgets linked to the relatively small and fluctuating number of pupils on roll. They also ensure that additional funding makes a positive difference to the pupils it is intended to support.
- Governors are passionate about providing the best possible education for pupils. They understand the responsibility they carry and are clear in their desire to 'give children the best possible start in life'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils, parents and carers and staff all feel that the school is a safe place for pupils.

Secure relationships exist between pupils and members of staff. Because of this, pupils trust that the adults in the school will support them if they have any concerns. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe.

- Pupils are taught well about how to stay safe in a range of contexts, such as road and rail. They also understand the risks they may face online and how to avoid these.
- Appropriate checks are in place to ensure that all members of staff are suitable to work with children. Safer recruitment records are accurate and well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are effective in stimulating pupils' motivation to learn through making powerful links between different subjects. Pupils' enthusiasm is reinforced further through access to an extensive range of curriculum enhancements and practical experiences which bring their learning to life. For example, key stage 2 pupils visited RAF Leeming to extend their learning about the First World War and key stage 1 pupils deepened their understanding of life cycles through hatching chicks in an incubator. Consequently, pupils develop their knowledge and skills well in a range of subjects.
- The teaching of reading is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and this enables them to challenge pupils appropriately through skilful questioning which deepens their understanding of what they have read. The books and texts which pupils read are well matched to their needs. This ensures that they acquire a broad vocabulary and develop a secure understanding of a range of key stylistic features. Phonics is taught effectively. This, along with targeted support for pupils who need it, ensures that pupils are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to decode words. As a result, pupils read with accuracy and fluency.
- Pupils mostly enjoy writing because they are often asked to write about topics they have learned about in other subjects. For example, in lesson observations, key stage 2 boys were eager to write about their Vikings history topic. Teachers provide pupils with strategies to edit and improve the work they produce in writing lessons. For most pupils, this results in them making good progress.
- Teachers plan sequences of mathematics lessons effectively to build up pupils' knowledge and skills systematically. Consequently, pupils have a firm understanding of mathematical concepts, including number, and are able to calculate efficiently. They have access to work which challenges them. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding to problem-solving contexts and to develop their reasoning skills are too infrequent.
- Through the wider curriculum subjects, pupils develop appropriate subject-specific knowledge and skills. For example, they regularly use investigative skills in science lessons and enquiry skills in history. Key words linked to each topic are shared with parents through class newsletters to reinforce this emphasis. As a result of this focus, pupils are articulate and knowledgeable when discussing their topics.
- Pupils also have opportunities to practise their English and mathematical skills in a range of subjects. However, teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work are not consistent. Therefore, when pupils write in their topic and science books, their

work often shows that skills, such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation, are not executed to the best of pupils' abilities.

- Teaching assistants are highly skilled in giving pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities access to the curriculum. By focusing on specific learning targets, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to collaborate with different partners and groups. As a result, they show strong cooperation skills and are effective in supporting and extending their peers' learning.
- Teaching in religious education (RE) lessons provides pupils with valuable opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. They receive work which is suitably challenging and can recognise similarities and differences between faiths. Pupils know the importance of this learning and say that it is crucial in enabling them to understand others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from taking on a range of leadership roles. For example, newsletter writers, play leaders, librarians and lunchtime helpers all make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. Positions such as school-council representative, 'head boy' and 'head girl' give pupils status to act as role models. These opportunities effectively foster responsible, mature attitudes in pupils.
- The 'buddy' system the school has in place, where Year 6 pupils are paired with children new to Reception class, is particularly successful in developing pupils' compassionate, caring attitudes. Older pupils establish firm relationships with the younger ones and this benefits the well-being of both.
- Pupils demonstrate tolerant attitudes and respect for others. Through RE lessons, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and assemblies, pupils develop a firm understanding of local, national and global issues.
- Pupils gain confidence and develop a solid understanding of healthy lifestyles through PE lessons led by specialist coaches, as well as through participation in sports clubs and competitions. Their learning about the importance of healthy choices is consolidated further through science and PSHE lessons.
- Pupils are happy and confident learners. However, their books do not consistently demonstrate that they have taken suitable care or that they have pride in their work. This is linked to teachers' expectations of pupils not being high enough in all subjects.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around school is calm and orderly. Disruption to learning in lessons is rare because pupils follow the instructions given by adults promptly.

- Pupils attend the school regularly. They value their education and, as a result, very few pupils are frequently absent.
- Because expectations of pupils' behaviour are high, and because pupils care for each other, instances of bullying and derogatory language are very rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The very small number of pupils in some year groups means that each pupil's performance has a marked impact on the school's overall assessment information. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 improved dramatically from 2016 to 2017, bringing results in line with or just above average for almost all subjects.
- Pupils currently in the school make good progress in a range of subjects. In writing, they demonstrate this progress through their increasingly ambitious word choices, their accurate use of a variety of punctuation and their growing ability to manipulate sentence structures. However, as pupils do not consistently apply their writing skills when working outside of writing lessons, their progress is not maximised fully.
- Pupils enjoy reading and this is encouraged through their exposure to a range of high-quality books and extracts. They benefit from weekly visits to the school library, from reading to adults regularly and from listening to stories.
- The effective teaching of phonics in Reception class and Year 1 has resulted in an increasing proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics screening check was just above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is due to the targeted provision in place, which is well matched to their needs.
- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils are now making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are clear in their view that this rapid progress will need to be sustained over time to enable disadvantaged pupils to catch up with other pupils nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision is a strength of the school because leadership is highly effective and this has ensured that the quality of teaching is now consistently strong.
- Children start the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment have ensured that the current cohort has made good progress. As a result, almost all children have reached a good level of development and some have exceeded this. Therefore, they are well prepared for further learning as they move to Year 1.
- Assessment practices are well developed in Reception class and this means that adults have an in-depth knowledge of what each child can do. They use this information to plan activities which meet the needs of the children and which appeal to their interests. Children have regular opportunities to consolidate their learning by taking part in child-

initiated activities which replicate the ones they have experienced in adult-led learning. This results in them making strong progress across the areas of learning.

- In September 2017, the school took over the leadership and management of an on-site pre-school. The early years leader accurately identified the need for the pre-school staff to undergo professional development to improve the accuracy of their assessments and the effectiveness of their phonics teaching. This work has started but it is too early for leaders to measure the impact of their actions on outcomes for children.
- Adults are adept at moving children's learning on through skilful, well-timed questioning. Their interactions with children are effective in stimulating children's thinking and language development.
- Phonics teaching is particularly effective in Reception class and has children highly engaged. The content of sessions is suitably challenging and extends children's early reading skills effectively.
- In both the indoor and outdoor provision, children learn together cooperatively. Because activities are matched to their needs, they develop independence in their approach to learning. They also show high levels of focus because activities are enticing and engaging.
- Transitions between the pre-school, Reception class and Year 1 are well developed to ensure that pupils settle quickly into routines. The early years staff have firm relationships with parents and this enables effective communication between home and the school. Parents have a range of opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. For example, many take up the invitation to participate in reading activities in the classroom at the start of each day.
- Adults ensure that all children are safe and well cared for. Leaders have made sure that welfare requirements are met. As a result, the early years is a place where children thrive.

School details

Unique reference number	121471
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10024053

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Haydn Rees Jones
Headteacher	Fiona Sharp
Telephone number	01609 773519
Website	www.ainderbysteepleschool.org
Email address	office@ainderbysteepleschool.org
Date of previous inspection	20–21 June 2012

Information about this school

- Ainderby Steeple Church of England Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school has an on-site pre-school which offers morning sessions for children from the age of two years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and provides after-school childcare for its pupils.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2017 for the school to be eligible to meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of lessons in all classes and in the pre-school. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and listened to them read. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including playtimes and lunchtimes, was observed. The inspector spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to gather their opinions about the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, middle leaders, a local authority partner and a representative of the diocese.
- A range of documentation was viewed, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and monitoring records of the quality of teaching and learning. Information relating to pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance was also studied.
- The inspector considered parents' comments during the inspection, as well as taking into account the views of 36 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 24 free-text responses.
- The 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also taken into account

Inspection team

Karine Hendley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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