

Towngate Primary School

Whitley Spring Road, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 0QA

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement. The school's overall effectiveness has declined since the last inspection. Previous good-quality teaching and good achievement have not been consistently maintained across Key Stage 2.
- The monitoring of teaching has not been robust. As a result, improvements to teaching in Key Stage 2 have been too slow.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. In Key Stage 2, too few pupils make rapid progress or build well on the standards they reach by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Since the last inspection, teaching across Key Stage 2 has not been consistently good.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils complete corrections or follow the advice they have been given to improve their work.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well to challenge the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers have not been consistent in their approach to supporting pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation across Key Stage 2.
- The role of subject leaders is not well developed. These staff have not been effective enough in ensuring teaching and learning are consistently good in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors' understanding of teaching and achievement are not based on first-hand information gathered in school. This has hindered their ability to challenge the pace of school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision in the early years is good. Children achieve well and are ready to learn in Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of Year 1 pupils exceed the national standard in phonics (matching letters with the sounds that they make).
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well in reading and writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils work hard in lessons, mix well with each other and contribute to the school community.
- The work of leaders to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example when using the internet.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all classes at least once. Inspectors also observed pupils in smaller groups. Four classes were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, five members of the governing body, teachers who hold additional responsibilities and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, listened to them read and observed them during playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 30 replies to the inspection questionnaire for staff and 23 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors asked for the views of parents at the start of the day as they brought their children to school.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, safeguarding policies, minutes of meetings, information about pupils' attainment and progress and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Mark Colley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Melvyn Hemmings	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Towngate Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes and part-time places for children in the Nursery class.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2014. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Of pupils in Year 6 in 2014, one in five joined the school in Years 5 or 6. Around one in 10 of these was both disadvantaged and had special educational needs.
- In the past two years, the school has experienced significant staff absence across Key Stage 2 linked to illness.
- The school is an active member of the Education Ossett Community Trust. This is a partnership of 13 local schools and organisations.
- Leaders have already undertaken an external review of governance and have organised an external review of pupil premium spending for this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 by making sure that all teaching staff:
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, particularly in mathematics, so a greater proportion of pupils makes more than expected progress and reaches higher standards of attainment
 - respond more rapidly to the progress pupils are making in class, particularly the most able pupils, to ensure work is always challenging
 - enable pupils to use the written guidance they receive from their teachers to inform and improve their next pieces of work
 - use a consistent approach to supporting pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation and respond swiftly to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - continuing to improve the monitoring of teaching, ensuring it is robust at Key Stage 2 and so tackles weaknesses in teaching more rapidly
 - ensuring subject leaders use the analysis of their evidence from monitoring to have a greater impact on improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body in holding leaders to account by visiting school more often and gathering their own information on the pace of improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not been effective in ensuring all teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not achieve as well as those in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher, very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, has worked to lessen the impact of significant staff absence and the mobility of pupils in recent years, particularly in Years 5 and 6. These issues have hindered the speed at which leaders identify and address ineffective teaching. As a result, too many pupils do not reach their potential in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Subject leaders lack impact in important aspects of their work. They carry out some useful work to evaluate the quality of teaching in school; however, they do not use this information to bring about rapid improvements in their areas of responsibility. This is because they do not consistently use this information to challenge weak practice.
- The school collects accurate data on pupils' progress. These data show that progress across Key Stage 2 is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because, now, teachers and leaders are more effective at identifying pupils who fall behind and put in place appropriate additional support. Additional staff have been employed and support is more regular. This shows that the school has the capacity to secure further improvement.
- The school's use of the pupil premium requires improvement. This funding to support disadvantaged pupils pays for additional staff and extra resources targeted at improving these pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. Disadvantaged pupils' current work and progress in lessons show the gaps in attainment and progress are closing. However, over time, the strategies to accelerate progress and close the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school and others nationally have not been effective, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively. Pupils now have more opportunities to take part in a range of sports that they might not previously have considered, for example fencing and tri-golf. This is having a positive impact on pupils' general well-being and health. Staff work alongside gymnastic and other coaches to improve their skills in order to teach to a higher standard.
- The school has taken good account of the new National Curriculum in planning how and what pupils are taught. Leaders are embedding new systems to record and track pupils' progress following the removal of assessment levels. The way in which topics are taught helps to promote further pupils' skills in English and mathematics. The appointment of specialist teachers to deliver computing and music greatly extends pupils' other skills and abilities. Pupils benefit greatly through partnerships within the Educational Ossett Community Trust, as these broaden and enrich their opportunities to learn.
- Leaders ensure the good-quality curriculum makes the most of opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of British values and social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues. Visitors to school, such as the local magistrate, help pupils to understand the legal process and the importance of law and order. Leaders promote an effective ethos and culture in which good behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders foster good relations, they take effective steps to tackle discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity. Their arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective in ensuring pupils are safe. The arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders and governors have made good use of external support. They have been pro-active in seeking an external view of areas of past weakness. This is informing increasingly accurate self-evaluation and effective school improvement planning.
- The local authority responded effectively to the decline in attainment at Key Stage 2. The school improvement advisor visits the school frequently and the resulting reports accurately acknowledge where improvements are required. The advisor has provided effective support through her work with middle and senior leaders and this is contributing to recent improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are now highly skilled. Many are newly appointed since the last inspection. They show great determination to get the school back on track after a period of instability. However, governance is not fully effective and still requires improvement.
 - During the spring term 2015, governors instigated an externally led review of the governing body to improve its effectiveness. This has given governors clearer direction and understanding in both challenging and supporting the school's leadership.
 - Governors are still too reliant on the information given to them by the headteacher and other school leaders. Governors accept they need to spend more time in school gathering their own information

around the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

- Other aspects of the governing body are more effective. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's data on achievement and the quality of teaching. They have more recently developed an effective understanding of how underperformance among teachers is tackled. This information is used well to ensure there is a strong link between teachers' performance and how teachers are rewarded. Governors work effectively with school leaders to ensure pupils at the school are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils like school. They show this by attending regularly, being punctual to lessons and bringing the necessary equipment to do their work. Pupils are well supervised and move around school very sensibly. They are polite and respectful.
- Pupils are keen to learn and rarely lose concentration in lessons, even when teaching is not effective. Their positive attitudes are reflected in their books, starting from the beginning of the early years where children pick up good habits and routines quickly.
- Pupils say that almost all behaviour is good. They acknowledge that one or two pupils find it difficult to maintain the high expectations set by school leaders. However, they say that all staff support these pupils to understand the consequences of their behaviour and this leads to them making better choices.
- Behaviour logs kept by leaders demonstrate that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. On the unusual occasions when there have been difficulties, the school's actions have been appropriate and effective. The large majority of parents and staff state behaviour is good.
- Pupils enjoy taking on various responsibilities around the school. School council members feel that they are able to pass on the ideas that pupils share with them to the headteacher and that she listens carefully to their suggestions. Pupils are effective at supporting one another in lessons and in ensuring classmates concentrate on their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All adults, including governors, demonstrate a strong awareness of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully and effectively applied. Any accidents are carefully recorded and regular site checks are carried out to make sure that the building and outside areas are safe and secure. Checks on all staff ensure they are safe to work with children. Safeguarding training for all staff is up to date.
- Bullying is infrequent and pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying. School records show leaders take positive action to address any concerns, including any racism or bullying, and are strongly committed to tackling any discrimination.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for instance when using the internet. Pupils are listened to and contribute to improving the school. They help to make the school a happy and safe learning community.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not effective in promoting good achievement over time in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers and other adults across Key Stage 2 do not always check effectively on the progress and understanding of pupils in lessons. Sometimes, teachers and other adults do not move work on quickly enough when pupils have grasped a concept and so they are not fully stretched to reach their potential. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils and explains why too few have the knowledge and skills to reach the higher standards of attainment in national tests, especially in mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Teachers are providing pupils with greater opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills across subjects. However, at times in Key Stage 2, teachers are inconsistent in their approach to teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation. This sometimes results in missed opportunities to develop spelling strategies or address any gaps in pupils' knowledge of grammar and punctuation.
- Teaching has a greater impact on the quality of learning and progress in the early years and Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics. Activities ensure challenge from the very start of lessons and teachers are far

more responsive to the progress pupils make during lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils move on to more difficult calculations and concepts as soon as they are ready. This is not always the case in Key Stage 2.

- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work in their English and mathematics books. Written feedback gives clear guidance for pupils to help them improve their work. In Key Stage 2, they are given too few opportunities or direction to act upon this advice and therefore do not always make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers have high expectations around pupils' engagement and contributions in class. These are shared quickly with new teachers to the school. The frequency of staffing changes to some classes has slowed pupils' progress because teachers have taken time to fully understand pupils' current skills and knowledge. Leaders are now managing this more effectively with more frequent monitoring of teaching and achievement. Consequently, progress is now accelerating.
- There are several strengths in the quality of teaching across all years. Positive relationships between adults and pupils promote a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils are not worried about 'having a go' and the opportunities given to pupils to share their ideas and discuss their learning are strong. This was seen in a Year 2 English lesson, for example, where the pupils shared their best work. They discussed and extended their understanding and use of adverbs.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and support pupils well in their learning. This is particularly so when they support pupils to tackle specific tasks with success. As a result, the needs of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs are usually met well, particularly in reading and writing.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has slowed in Key Stage 2. This is because leaders have not ensured teaching is consistently good.
- Building on a good start to learning in the early years, pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1. For the past two years, standards at the end of Year 2 have varied between broadly in line with or above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 reaching the higher Level 3 is above national levels in writing and is well above this in reading and mathematics. This is because of the good matching of mathematical activities and resources to pupils' ability and the very strong teaching of phonics. As a result of the effective phonics teaching, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 national screening check was above average in both 2013 and 2014. The most able pupils do not make the progress they should across Key Stage 2. Too few achieve the higher levels which they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the 2014 national tests, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was below national averages in reading and writing. It was significantly below the national average in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Most pupils made the progress expected of them in writing but too few pupils made expected progress in reading and, particularly, mathematics. Although the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading and writing was above national levels, this proportion was below average in mathematics.
- Assessment information and work seen in pupils' books show that the progress made by pupils in the current Year 6 is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. In response to focused teacher training and more rigorous monitoring, work in lessons and in pupils' books shows improved standards. Although progress is increasingly good, there are still remaining fluctuations between subjects and classes in Years 3 to 6, reflecting the remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement in mathematics. This is similar to other groups in school. Although progress is uneven, by the time they leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, these pupils have made good progress in reading and writing from their individual starting points. This is as a result of the good support these pupils receive, which meets their needs well in reading and writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement, in line with their classmates. Those who left Year 6 in 2014 were one year behind others in the school and other pupils nationally in writing and over one-and-a-half years behind their classmates in school and other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. The school's use of the pupil premium funding is now more effective and the gaps in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils in comparison with other pupils are closing quickly in Key Stage 2 in writing, mathematics and reading.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children achieve well in the early years. This is because good-quality teaching ensures that tasks are consistently closely matched to the children's different abilities, far more than it is for older pupils in Key Stage 2. Although ability on entry to Nursery varies, most children join the school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age in all areas of learning. Staff have an astute understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich range of activities to foster children's personal development and their academic learning.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The early years' leader checks on planning regularly and ensures that activities provide interesting learning opportunities across all areas of learning. She works with the teachers and other adults to check the use of each area in the classroom. Staff use this information to skilfully adapt and create new activities to inspire the children.
- Nursery and Reception children consistently demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and their behaviour is good. Routines are well established and children follow instructions very well. A caring staff, together with a stimulating and secure indoor and outdoor environment, keep children safe in school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers monitor children's development very carefully and make constant adjustments to the learning environment. Children have access to all the areas of learning, both inside and out. Currently, the resources and activities in the outdoor area, particularly in Reception, are not as stimulating and creative as those found inside. Leaders are taking effective steps to address this.
- Children make good progress in their time in the early years and are well prepared to start Year 1. In 2014, the proportion of children that achieved a good level of development was well above the national average.

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	108196
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	456108

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mandy Kay-Brook
Headteacher	Naoimh Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2012
Telephone number	01924 302865
Fax number	01924 302866
Email address	headteacher@towngate.wakefield.sch.uk

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