

Osmotherley Primary School

School Lane, Osmotherley, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 3BW

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in writing and mathematics are too variable. This is particularly the case for pupils in key stage 2.
- Most able pupils are not challenged consistently to produce work that is of their best. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher standards at key stage 1 and 2.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. While they can identify the strengths seen in teaching, they are overtly focused upon the actions of teachers rather than on the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning. This means that feedback on their effectiveness is often too generous.
- Teaching is variable, particularly in key stage 2. Sometimes teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This means that pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the best possible progress.
- Subject leaders are developing their skills, but do not routinely evaluate the impact of their work on raising pupils' achievement.
- Plans to improve the work of the school accurately identify what needs to be done, but targets are not specific enough to bring about the improvements leaders would like.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors are actively involved in school life and know the school well. They undertake their duties with due diligence and demonstrate a determination and passion to ensure a bright future for Osmotherley Primary School.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They recognise the improvements that have taken place in a short space of time and acknowledge that the process is ongoing.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in their work and books are generally well presented.
- The acting headteacher knows the pupils well and is committed to raising pupils' achievement.
- Support received from the local authority and the consultant headteacher has ensured that effective systems for checking school effectiveness are in place.
- Early years provision has improved year on year and is good. Children make a good start to their learning, because strong and trusting relationships are forged quickly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the impact of leadership on sustaining improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - plans to improve the school include precise and ambitious targets to secure improvements in the outcomes achieved by pupils, particularly the most able
 - feedback from checks on teaching focuses upon the impact of teachers' actions to maximise learning
 - subject leaders take a more strategic view of the impact of their actions on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 2, so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - pupils receive regular opportunities to deepen their understanding of a range of writing styles and are able to practise and extend their skills accordingly.
 - there are increasing opportunities given to pupils to practise their mathematical reasoning skills and they are taught increasingly sophisticated mental strategies to solve problems
 - interventions made by teachers are timely, so pupils can move on swiftly in their learning.
- Sustain improvements to pupils' achievement, so that pupils routinely reach age-related expectations and increasing proportions, particularly of the most able pupils, achieve the highest possible standards, by ensuring that:
 - opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their subject-specific skills are increased
 - work set is consistently well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and challenges them to think hard about their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders know their school well and know what they need to do to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. However, the timescales outlined for improvement and the targets set are not sufficiently rigorous to secure the rapid improvements they seek.
- Subject leaders have been in post for some time, but are only recently beginning to fully and accurately evaluate the impact of their work on raising pupils' achievement. This is because of support received from local authority specialist advisory teachers and effective guidance from the consultant headteacher. Subject leaders have embraced this support and acknowledge that they now need to develop a greater strategic awareness of how well pupils are doing in their subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers choose topics as a means of engaging pupils in learning when they are taught within mixed-age classes. While activities planned are ensuring that pupils access the required knowledge, it is not fully developing pupils' subject-specific skills and deepening their levels of understanding. For example, in science, pupils receive many opportunities to discover lots of interesting facts, but are not routinely practising their skills of recording and enquiry. Leaders acknowledge that this is a work in progress.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and reviews of pupils' work and progress are undertaken regularly. However, leaders' feedback to teachers is overtly focused upon adherence to school policy and teachers' actions, rather than on the impact that these are having upon pupils' learning. This means that leaders' feedback to teachers is at times too generous and does not identify pupils' progress towards meeting lesson objectives.
- External support, from the local authority and the consultant headteacher, has been pivotal in securing the improvements seen in pupils' outcomes. Systems are now in place for leaders to review the effectiveness of teaching and to check on pupils' achievements on a regular basis. As a result of these checks, the progress of pupils currently in the school is strengthening.
- A more robust procedure for staff appraisal is now in place. Targets set are linked to pupils' outcomes. Training and professional development opportunities are used to support this process. It is too early to judge the impact of this as it was introduced by the consultant headteacher at the beginning of the academic year. However, staff value the quality of training they have received so far.
- The acting headteacher knows the pupils well and demonstrates great dedication and commitment to the school. She has embraced the support given to her, from the consultant headteacher, and is well placed to lead the school through the next phase of its development and secure the improvements needed.
- The special education needs coordinator has been recently appointed and her actions are already improving pupils' outcomes. The identification of pupils' individual needs is now more accurate as a result of the improving and strengthening links with specialist advisory teams. This is enabling teachers to put specific support in place, which is

reviewed regularly. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making rapid progress.

- Although the school receives no additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders have ensured that appropriate pupil support is provided and their limited budget allocation is spent wisely. For example, additional reading sessions have been funded, which has led to improved reading outcomes and increased reading ages.
- Parents speak highly of the school, because leaders work hard to establish strong links with them. Parents recognise the difficulties that being part of the Mount Grace federation brought and are wholly supportive of governors' decision to de-federate in January of this year. Parents recognise there is much to do, but acknowledge the huge efforts already made by leaders to improve provision. Parents value the opportunities to be involved in the life of the school and are committed to the vision for the future.
- Leaders have ensured that sports premium funding provided to promote engagement in sport is used well. Pupils access a wide range of sporting clubs and competitions. Participation in sports has increased, so that pupils are more active and their fitness is improving. By using part of the funding to employ a specialist teacher, leaders have ensured that teachers are becoming more confident in delivering physical education (PE) lessons and pupils' skills have improved.
- The fundamental British values are promoted well by leaders. Leaders ensure that such values feature prominently in assemblies and are reinforced through activities planned within the wider curriculum. A focus on developing pupils' tolerance and respect of others runs as a 'golden thread' through the school ethos, aims and actions of staff and pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a driving force within the school. They actively seek advice and have addressed the actions for improvement identified in the review of their effectiveness following the last inspection. They have managed the difficult process of establishing a new governing body from January 2017, while securing the senior leadership arrangements for the school. This is testimony to their great resolve and professionalism. Governors are appointed according to skills they bring from their professional lives. This enables them to undertake their roles in developing the strategic direction of the school and ensuring financial security with due diligence.
- All governors are fully involved in the life of the school. A cycle of monitoring is securely in place which links the work of the sub-committees effectively. Visits into school are focused and purposeful and the subsequent reports are sufficiently detailed to keep all governors well informed.
- Minutes of governing body meetings reflect the degree of challenge provided by governors to school leaders. They reflect governors' accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. This places them in a strong position to secure the further improvements needed for the school to be a good school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A comprehensive review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures was undertaken by the local authority in January 2017. The issues raised were dealt with swiftly and the school's procedures are now fully compliant with statutory requirements.
- Checks are completed to ensure that staff are suitably vetted to work with children. Regular training ensures that all staff recognise the responsibility they have in keeping children safe.
- Records of any concerns are maintained. Following the review, records are now more detailed and factual.
- The curriculum is used effectively to ensure that pupils develop a growing understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching across the school is not yet consistently good. Teachers do not routinely ensure that the work they plan challenges pupils to think hard about their learning, particularly the most able pupils.
- The teaching of mathematics focuses upon securing a good understanding of number and of calculations. While this is important, it means that pupils' skills of reasoning and problem-solving are less efficient and pupils take longer than is needed to complete tasks. This is particularly the case for older pupils, where the teacher's interventions are not always timely enough or focused enough to overcome stumbling blocks or to refine methods.
- The teaching of writing is strengthening, with pupils receiving opportunities to write for a range of purposes and in a range of subjects. The recently introduced 'sequence of learning' is having the greatest impact in key stage 1, where it is well embedded and pupils are making strides in developing their early writing skills. However, it is less well embedded in key stage 2. As a result, pupils are slower to acquire advanced writing skills and their outcomes are more variable.
- Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning. Additional support and intervention is then put in place to ensure that pupils catch up quickly. However, it is not used as effectively to identify those pupils who could do more and achieve the higher standards. This means that sometimes teachers do not plan tasks that are sufficiently challenging to extend the most able pupils.
- Teaching assistants offer effective support to individuals and groups of pupils. They use questions effectively to gauge pupils' understanding of their learning. The interventions they complete have been particularly effective in reading.
- Homework is used to support learning in school. A new policy has recently been introduced and has yet to be evaluated for its effectiveness, but pupils who spoke to the inspector felt that they received 'just about enough!'
- Questioning is used effectively by most adults to check pupils' understanding of concept. Teachers mark work regularly according to the school's marking policy. In

many cases, teachers' comments are helping pupils to improve their work.

- Handwriting is taught effectively and by the time pupils reach Year 6, almost all pupils are able to join their letters. This is supporting the good presentation of pupils' work.
- Reading is promoted increasingly well across the school. Pupils know the school's system for selecting reading books at the correct level. This is supporting older pupils' growing maturity as readers who can make choices based upon preference. The teaching of phonics is effective, because it is well structured and planned. This means the very youngest pupils are confident to read and are becoming increasingly fluent.
- Science teaching is effective and ensures that pupils gain sound understanding of scientific facts. They receive regular opportunities to have practical experiences and observe science in nature. However, pupils are not routinely encouraged to develop their wider skills of scientific enquiry to improve their recording skills and draw detailed conclusions.
- The teaching of PE is a strength of the school. It is well planned and well resourced. All pupils are encouraged to do their best and are challenged to improve their skills. As a result, pupils are making strong progress in this subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel very safe in school and know that their teachers will help them with any concerns. The overwhelming majority of staff, pupils and parents who completed online questionnaires during the inspection agreed that pupils are safe at the school.
- Pupils demonstrate good collaborative skills and are very supportive of each other. They demonstrate a great sense of belonging; as one pupil told the inspector, 'We all know everyone, so it's like a family.'
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning. Teachers have created a safe learning environment where it is acceptable to say 'I don't know' and encourage pupils to undertake the self-check procedures of 'brain, buddy, boss', with 'boss' being the teacher. Resilience in learning is encouraged from a very young age.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed through the curriculum. Strong links with the local community are encouraged and visits to city schools ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Older pupils demonstrate responsible attitudes and show a growing awareness of privilege and empathy for those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and taking regular exercise. They are encouraged to take part in a range of sporting activities. Participation in sport has increased and pupils enjoy taking part in competitive activities.
- On occasion, when work is not sufficiently challenging, pupils are off-task and learning slows.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and demonstrate pride in their work. They have good manners and are courteous and respectful to others. At lunchtime, the dining hall is an orderly place. Pupils enjoy socialising while eating their lunch sensibly.
- Playtimes are harmonious events, with all pupils engaged in purposeful play, imaginative games or practising their sporting skills. It is well supervised by adults and well resourced.
- The overall attendance for the school declined last academic year, as the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent increased. Leaders' actions have ensured that attendance is now improving. The school is proactive in working with parents where pupils' attendance is causing concern. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are eager to learn.
- Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in a sensitive way and considerate of pupils' needs. There have been no exclusions at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, outcomes at key stage 2 have fluctuated. In 2016, they were in the bottom 10% of schools nationally, with no pupils reaching the expected or high standard in reading or writing. Although this relates to a small cohort of pupils, this represented underachievement from the pupils' starting points.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was also significantly below that which is expected and meant that pupils leaving the school in 2016 were ill-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- While disappointing, these results were indicative of the declining outcomes noted across key stage 2 as a result of previous teaching arrangements trialled across the federation of schools.
- Since September 2016, leaders have worked robustly to improve outcomes for pupils across the school. A recently introduced system for checking pupils' progress every six weeks is ensuring that any underperformance is identified and addressed swiftly. This is most effective in reading, where almost all pupils in key stage 2 are currently on track to reach their age-related expectations. However, there remains variability in outcomes for both writing and mathematics, where pockets of historic underachievement have still to be addressed.
- There is greater consistency at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils on track to reach age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year is more consistent. This indicates that strengths seen in pupils' outcomes in 2016 will be sustained in 2017.
- The outcomes for most-able pupils are less consistent across the school, with too few pupils achieving the higher standards. This is because learning activities are not always challenging enough and so their progress slows. Leaders have already recognised this as an area for improvement and are taking action to tackle it.

- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strengthening. This is because the identification of individual needs is more accurate and improved relationships with external agencies are resulting in more detailed advice given to teachers. As a result, progress for this group of pupils is improving, particularly in reading.
- The weaker outcomes for middle-ability pupils evident in 2016 have been tackled. Pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of the academic year.

Early years provision

Good

- Adults know children well and assess their needs accurately and carefully. They record their assessments so that there is a clear picture of each child's progress across different areas of learning. Assessments are used to plan subsequent activities effectively and move the learning on. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of Reception Year is consistently above that found nationally.
- A good range of tasks are provided indoors and outdoors to promote learning. Children have opportunities to work independently and with an adult. Adults support learning well by asking questions and intervening in play to extend children's thinking. For example, children in the outdoor area were making an obstacle course and decided to time how quickly they could get round. Adults extended this play by leading children into using the timer on the iPad and recording results. This took children into thinking about minutes and seconds. Further questions were posed so the children improved the course to make it more difficult to complete.
- Adults have established good relationships with parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to assessments of their child's skills and progress, which is recoded in individual learning journals. At the end of the academic year, these provide a treasured memory of their child's achievements.
- Children are sociable and kind towards one another. Adults provide plentiful opportunities for children to share and to turn take. As a result, the children quickly develop effective behaviours for learning and are able to sustain interest.
- The leader for early years is effective. She has received extensive support from the local authority specialist teacher to ensure that provision is appropriate for Reception children taught alongside key stage 1 pupils. The provision is managed well. The early years leader makes regular checks on resources to ensure that they are appropriate for young children and plans effectively for further improvements. This means the classroom is well resourced and well organised and offers a vibrant learning environment for young children.
- Transition from the neighbouring pre-school provision is seamless. This is because of the very close links established between the two providers.
- Some most-able children are not provided with tasks that challenge them enough. As a result, some do not make the progress they are capable of.

School details

Unique reference number	121310
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10031948

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barrie Robinson
Acting Headteacher	Jane Bamber
Telephone number	01609 883329
Website	www.osmotherley.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@osmotherley.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- At the time of the previous inspection and subsequent monitoring visit, Osmotherley was part of the Mount Grace federation of schools. From January 2017, governors agreed to de-federate from the partnership and the school is now a stand-alone maintained primary school.
- Interim leadership arrangements are in place. The assistant headteacher is acting headteacher and is supported two days a week by an experienced consultant headteacher.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are currently no pupils in the school who are disadvantaged and known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant.

- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils supported by a statement or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in each class. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents were looked at during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with a local authority representative, four members of the governing body (including the chair of governors) and subject leaders.
- Pupils were spoken to informally in class and during playtime and lunchtime. A number of pupils were heard to read. Eleven responses to the pupil questionnaire were considered as part of the inspection.
- The school's website, documents, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents were scrutinised.
- The responses from the 20 parents who completed the inspection questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, alongside the free-text written responses. Five responses to the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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