

Middleham Church of England Aided Primary School

Park Lane, Middleham, North Yorkshire DL8 4QX

Inspection dates

21–22 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not improved the quality of teaching and learning fast enough because actions to improve are not precise enough.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are not focused on the amount pupils are learning. This results in teachers not being given clear advice about how to improve.
- Governors are not challenging leaders robustly and are not holding them to account for pupils' slow progress.
- The quality of teaching across the school is variable. Too often, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Low-level disruption during lessons is disturbing the learning of pupils in the class. This is not being dealt with rapidly enough by the staff.
- Most-able pupils are not being challenged enough. Frequently, they are not being stretched to develop their skills and knowledge. Consequently, they are not attaining the higher levels they should.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to think deeply in mathematics. Their progress is being hindered because they are not developing their reasoning and justification skills.
- Progress in pupils' writing is variable because pupils are not using strategies to develop their spelling skills, and are not applying more complex grammar and punctuation concepts.
- Marking of pupils' work is not helping them to know how to improve and edit their own work.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics has improved, and this has resulted in more pupils starting to develop their reading skills at a younger age.
- Creative opportunities through the curriculum for pupils to share their learning and successes with the global online community are motivating pupils to write more often and develop their awareness of the world around them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given the highest priority. Opportunities for pupils to develop their responsibilities and service to the local, wider and global community are vast. This is preparing them well to be good citizens.
- Pupils feel safe at school and have many opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school improvement planning is precisely focused on what needs to improve and the actions necessary to achieve it
 - leaders remain firmly focused on pupils' learning and progress when carrying out checks on the quality of teaching
 - governors access training and support to develop their strategic leadership roles
 - subject leaders access relevant training to develop their leadership skills
 - the spending of the pupil premium funding is closing the gaps for disadvantaged pupils
 - the school's marking policy will help pupils to know how to improve their work.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils by making sure that:
 - most-able pupils are stretched and challenged
 - teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - pupils have opportunities to deepen and develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding through activities which encourage the use of reasoning and justification skills
 - pupils have developed their skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation and they are applying them in their writing.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because leaders' work over time to improve the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes has lacked the necessary precision to drive change at a fast pace. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should, and teachers' assessments of pupils' work are not always accurate.
- School development plans do not include actions which are clearly focused enough on the impact on the learning and progress of pupils. Leaders do not regularly analyse, monitor and evaluate the impact of their work, which is resulting in too many pupils not making better progress.
- The headteacher and other leaders carry out checks on the quality of teaching. However, the focus of the visits to classrooms and looking at books is not centred sufficiently on the strategies teachers use to improve learning and the progress that all groups of pupils are making. Furthermore, teachers are not always given clear direction about how to improve their practice.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for a very low number of pupils who are disadvantaged. Despite this, it is not being spent effectively, as there are gaps in attainment and progress for those pupils right across the school, in subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. These gaps are not closing.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements as some key information is missing, particularly around the content of the curriculum and the functions of the governing body.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects, and they are often being taught in a creative and interesting manner. Pupils have opportunities to enjoy the outdoor environments and have enjoyed activities which they may not normally have access to, for example 'sleeping under the stars'. Pupils share their curriculum activities through a regular blog called 'A Room with a View', and have made links to communities and schools right across the world.
- Educational visits and visitors, after-school clubs, collective worship and theme days are contributing well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school actively promotes tolerance, respect and understanding of other people with different backgrounds and beliefs. Pupils have opportunities to help their own community and the wider international community. Pupils participated in an enterprise project called 'bistro banquet', where they worked with a local restaurant to learn about science and nutrition. Fundraising for 'Mary's meals' enabled pupils to contribute to children in Malawi enjoying a hot meal every day. Designing and selling Christmas cards annually provides much needed funds for a school in India.
- Additional government funding to promote physical education and sport is being used successfully to promote pupils' well-being. A sports coach is being used effectively to demonstrate high-quality provision, and 'play leaders' have been trained to encourage pupils to participate in physical activity during break and lunchtime. Pupils are now more able and willing to participate in a range of competitions and festivals, and talk of their successes with gusto!
- The local authority and the diocese have ensured that leaders have received effective support for some key areas of improvement by brokering it with key partners. The Swaledale Teaching School Alliance has facilitated an improvement in the teaching of phonics and a local Church of England headteacher has provided advice and support about the amount of progress pupils can make.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The quality of governors' work requires improvement, as they are not holding leaders to account for low standards and lack of progress from some pupils.
 - There has been a period of turbulence in the governing body, and this has meant that as a whole, they do not have the correct skills and knowledge to effect rapid improvement. However, there is a willingness and determination from a core group of governors to upskill themselves and to recruit new members so that they can carry out their duties more effectively.
 - Governors have successfully tackled weaknesses in teaching in the past, and they appraise the headteacher's performance against agreed targets. They understand that teachers are subject to performance management and that teachers only receive financial reward if they meet their targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's checks on adults' suitability to work with children are thorough. Staff have recently taken part in safeguarding training along with awareness of extremism and radicalisation, and are aware of their responsibilities. Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe both online and in the community, including highlighting the dangers of cyber bullying. Parents and staff are unanimous in their agreement that the school keeps pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. Teachers do not always take into account what pupils are capable of and, as a result, their expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The school's marking policy is not being used effectively to help pupils move their learning on at the pace which is necessary. Pupils are asked to improve and edit their work without the correct guidance about how to do it.
- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent across all year groups. Too often, pupils are expected to carry out the same tasks repeatedly, despite demonstrating that they already have a good understanding. They are not given enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding in mathematics, and are not accessing activities which help them develop their reasoning and justification skills.
- Teachers do not always provide a consistently good enough level of challenge for the most able pupils. Often, work is not set at the right level for pupils to be stretched and to develop their skills through open-ended activities. This is hindering their progress and is limiting the creativity for those pupils who are most-able.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) has improved recently. There is now a systematic approach to this, and pupils are accessing a range of activities to develop their phonological knowledge.
- A recent initiative to develop pupils' writing skills through having opportunities to talk is starting to have an impact on the progress pupils are making. Pupils demonstrate a better understanding of how to plan and order their writing. This is working most effectively in upper key stage 2. Furthermore, opportunities for pupils to write in different online formats, for example blogging and using Twitter, are motivating pupils to write more creatively.
- Pupils are having more opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum, and teachers are planning effectively to ensure that this is inspiring them to express themselves creatively. However, further work is needed to ensure that pupils are spelling correctly, and are using higher level grammar and punctuation to improve their writing further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **requires improvement**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a true strength of the school. There are opportunities for pupils to be reflective about how their actions impact on others, and the way in which they are proactive in helping others both locally, nationally and globally. These are not only embedded throughout the curriculum and acts of collective worship, but they also underpin the school's mission of 'creativity, compassion, community'.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of being responsible citizens. They have a passion for being involved in charitable work, such as 'The Shoebox Appeal', 'Fairtrade Fortnight', and the 'Paddington Bear Appeal' which enabled pupils to think about refugees in need and how the refugees could be feeling.
- Pupils who are new to the school are welcomed warmly, by fellow pupils and staff alike. Pupils demonstrate that they care about how these pupils feel and try their best to make them feel special. Older pupils relish opportunities to help younger children, and say that they feel proud when they can do that.
- Discussions with pupils highlighted that they are being prepared well for life in modern Britain. They are able to analyse and evaluate what both Christian and British values mean to them, and how this has an impact on their lives. They participate in democratic processes through the school council; for example, pupils voted about new school uniform and new tyre equipment in the playground. They talk confidently about the rule of law, and link this effectively to their class rules and to the Ten Commandments from the Bible.
- The majority of parents agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe. They appreciate that the pupils are well cared for by all staff, and feel that they can discuss any problems they have, and will always be listened to.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both in school, in the community and in the wider world. Pupils talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online and know who to go to if they need help or are worried. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate in 'crucial crew' every year, where they develop their understanding of a wide variety of safety issues, including those related to electricity and fire.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils say that behaviour is sometimes an issue. Discussions with pupils, along with an analysis of pupil questionnaires, shows that pupils are concerned that behaviour is not as good as it should be all of the time. They are aware name-calling is an issue for some pupils, and feel as though staff take too long to deal with it effectively.
- During lessons, low-level disruption is happening too often. This is directly linked to the quality of teaching. Some pupils are not engaged in their learning because they are not being challenged by the work they are given to do. In addition, staff are not quick enough to deal effectively with these interruptions and it is having an impact on the progress of others.
- Pupils' behaviour as they move around the school, during lunchtime and breaktimes is better than in lessons. Pupils play and cooperate well with each other, and are respectful and well-mannered to adults and their peers alike.
- Attendance of pupils is good. Pupils value their education because they do not miss school very often. There are robust systems in place to follow up any pupils who are absent from school, and school staff liaise with parents very closely during these times.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Progress is not consistently good across all year groups and in a range of different subjects. Therefore, outcomes for pupils still require improvement. Low standards by the end of the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, coupled with inconsistent progress, are not enabling pupils to catch up to the level they need to. Consequently, pupils are not fully ready for their next stages in education.
- Standards have fallen in some subjects since the previous inspection. In both key stages, albeit with cohorts of very small numbers, standards in mathematics have declined and are below the national averages. Writing has declined considerably in key stage 1, and standards fall short of what is expected in key stage 2 in English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- The most able pupils do not make the rapid progress they should due to expectations of their capabilities being too low during lessons. This means they are not attaining the higher levels they should be.
- Younger pupils join the school with skills and knowledge which is typical for children their age. They are making the same inconsistent progress as other pupils in the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with their peers. Gaps remain at the end of each key stage, but also for current pupils who are not attaining as well as others and are not making the same progress. Although this accounts for very few pupils, a strategy is needed to ensure that they not only catch up with their peers, but that they then make rapid progress to achieve what is expected of them.
- The proportion of pupils who attain the national phonics standard (letters and the sounds they make), has been very low over the last three years. The proportion expected to achieve it this year has significantly improved. This is because a more systematic way to teach phonics is improving the way pupils are starting to read.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making similar uneven progress as their peers. Interventions with a specific focus for their needs are ensuring that those pupils are making small steps of progress in the area of learning identified.

School details

Unique reference number	121614
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10012060

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David May
Headteacher	Joanna Dobbs
Telephone number	01969 623592
Website	www.middleham.n-yorks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@middleham.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2014

Information about this school

- Middleham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is much smaller than other primary schools, serving a wide, rural community.
- The number of children on roll is very low, and the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for children looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There are children attending full time in the early years. Due to very low numbers, provision in this area is not reported on separately.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements in relation to the content of the curriculum and the functions of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of lessons and also made some short visits to classrooms. The headteacher jointly observed lessons with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtime was observed.
- The inspector talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held a formal meeting with pupils from across key stage 2. In addition, 32 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire were taken into consideration.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders and class teachers, governors, and an officer from North Yorkshire local authority. Telephone discussions took place with the executive headteacher (designate) and two officers from the Church of England Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, school improvement planning, documents monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's own policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents at the start of the day as there were insufficient responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Suzanne Lithgow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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