

Ayresome Primary School

Worcester Street, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, TS1 4NT

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress that pupils make across the school is not consistently good.
- Pupils' attainment is below average in mathematics.
- Too few pupils achieve standards that are above the expectations for age in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is variable. It has not been good enough over time to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- There is a shortfall in teachers' confidence and knowledge about teaching mathematics in general, and calculation in particular.
- Pupils are given too few chances to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Pupils are not required to complete sufficient work in individual lessons and over time.
- Some teachers are still adapting to the school's new approach to grouping pupils and to classes which are new to them.
- Work is not always well planned to offer appropriate pace, challenge or engagement, or to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able.
- Pupils feel safe but some pupils find it difficult to settle quickly to their work, and attendance is below average.
- Not all senior and middle leaders are skilled enough in analysing the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils are making good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Much good teaching was seen during the inspection, with a small proportion outstanding.
- In the last three years, attainment in Year 6 has risen more rapidly than the national average in writing and mathematics. Attainment is average in reading and writing.
- Key Stage 1 pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, have attainment which is higher than other pupils in the school.
- The school offers pupils many exciting opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school offers highly effective care and support to pupils and their families. The headteacher and the governing body are committed to improving the school and have tackled weak teaching. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done further based on a clear understanding of data.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority.
- They looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons taught by 26 teachers. They listened to groups of pupils in Year 2 read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The lead inspector conducted one joint observation with the headteacher. The lead inspector also observed the headteacher reporting back to the teacher on his findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in the lesson.
- Too few parents had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for their opinions to be published. However, inspectors spoke informally to parents to take their views about the school and analysed the school's own survey of parents.
- Forty six staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
Derek Sleightholme	Additional Inspector
Zoe Westley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is very much larger than the average sized primary school.
- About one-third of the pupils are White British. Two-thirds of pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, for most of whom English is not believed to be their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There are breakfast, lunch-time and after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- More pupils than is the case across the country leave or join the school at other than the usual times. A large proportion of these pupils speak little or no English when they arrive.
- The school has a nurture unit, Acorns, for pupils who have significant learning difficulties.
- Pupils are taught across the school in small groups within their year groups by teams of teachers and support teachers. There is one mixed-age class for some pupils in Years 4 and 5. Some teachers were new to their classes at the time of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and for the most able pupils, by:
 - using data about pupils' attainment to plan work which is more closely matched to their individual skills and abilities and offers appropriate pace, challenge and engagement
 - providing high quality training which will develop the skills and confidence of teachers in the teaching of mathematics and fill gaps in their knowledge
 - reviewing the school's policy on the teaching of calculation so that teachers are clear about the best calculation strategies for pupils to learn, know how to build on pupils' prior learning and ensure that pupils make step-by-step gains in their understanding
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the school's policy for the grouping of pupils and teachers' skills and confidence in working in these new arrangements
 - offering pupils even more opportunities to write imaginatively and at length in English and other subjects
 - ensuring pupils complete more work in their lessons.
- Further improve the behaviour of those few pupils who find it difficult to settle quickly to their work, by consistently applying the school's strategies for managing pupils' behaviour.
- Improve attendance by continuing to work closely with those pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly, and with their families.

- Increase the impact that leaders at all levels have on pupils' attainment and progress, by:
 - improving the skills of leaders in observing lessons so that they are clear about what constitutes good and outstanding teaching and are rigorous in their judgements
 - using the evidence from lesson observations so that teachers are given clear advice about how to improve their teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. While there is some good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, its quality is variable, especially in the planning of work for the most able pupils. Therefore, while pupils make good progress to attain standards that are typically in line with national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, the most able pupils make only the progress expected of them.
- Too few pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age. However, those pupils who were known to be eligible for the pupil premium and free school meals were half a year ahead of other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading and two terms ahead in writing.
- In 2013, standards at the end of Year 6 in reading and writing were average. Standards in writing have risen more quickly than standards nationally in the past three years and many more pupils than in the recent past have the skills and abilities appropriate for their age at the end of Year 6. However, too few pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age in writing because there are too few opportunities for them to write at length and to develop their own creativity and imagination.
- While standards in mathematics have also risen more quickly than standards nationally in the past three years, they remain below average, particularly in pupils' ability to calculate accurately. This is because standards were too low before 2011, and the improvement in attainment at the end of Year 2 has not yet had time to have an impact on standards in Year 6 and progress in Key Stage 2 is variable and requires improvement.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good and more pupils are achieving the standards expected of them by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 than has been the case in the recent past. There is a consistent focus on reading across the school. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how letters are linked to sounds and this helps them to read unfamiliar words. Pupils say that improvements in the teaching of reading and more exciting books have encouraged them to read more often and with greater enjoyment, in school and at home.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils who left the school in 2013 made rapid progress while in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. This helped them to make up for some shortfalls in their learning in previous years.
- While the school has tackled weak teaching and no inadequate teaching was seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and pupils' work is not sufficiently challenging to help them to make good progress. As a result, pupils typically only make the progress expected of them nationally in Key Stage 2, rather than making the best possible progress.
- The school has had too few high achieving pupils in recent years. It is now identifying its most able pupils and evidence seen during the inspection indicates that more pupils currently in Year 6 than has been the case in the past are working above the expectations for their age. While these pupils in Year 6 are making good progress, progress for the most able pupils across school is not yet fast enough.
- In 2013, those pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium, including those pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals, made the similar expected progress as other pupils in the school in English and mathematics and achieved standards which were in line with other pupils. This is a significant improvement on 2012 when attainment for those pupils was four terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, one year behind in writing and a half year behind in reading.
- While this shows the school is committed to the well-being of all groups of pupils and has a clear desire to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination, it is well aware that it needs to raise standards for all groups of pupils. It is not yet sufficiently focused on ensuring pupils make the best possible progress and attain the highest standards.

- Likewise, those pupils who have special educational needs make the progress expected of them. Those pupils who have significant learning needs and who spend some of their time in the Acorns class, make good progress as a result of clear identification of their needs and good teaching.
- Those pupils for whom English is not believed to be their first language make good progress when they are first taught in English because their needs are clearly identified and teaching is good. They make the progress expected of them when they became competent in English because teaching in English and mathematics requires improvement.
- Pupils who enter school at other than the normal times make the progress expected of them. In 2013, pupils who had been in the Year 6 class throughout Years 5 and 6 made the progress expected of them and achieved average standards in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable. This is partly because some teachers, including those who had a significant impact on the progress of Year 6 in 2013, are still getting to know pupils they have very recently started to teach; others are adapting to the new approach to classroom organisation and the focus on teaching groups within large classes.
- Some teaching is consistently good, especially currently, in Years 3 and 5, and for some pupils in Year 4. While all teachers are capable of good teaching, as evidenced by the impact they have on pupils' reading, teaching over time has not enabled pupils to make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics. It is not yet strong or inspiring enough.
- While the school has introduced initiatives to tackle weaknesses in pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics, teachers lack confidence and expertise in teaching mathematics, especially calculation. The mathematics curriculum is not structured well enough to allow pupils to make consistent, rapid progress.
- The pace of learning is sometimes too slow and work not well matched to the learning needs of individual pupils. Work is often too hard for some and too easy for others, but teachers do not all act upon this and adapt work accordingly, either in their planning or as lessons progress.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers make lessons interesting, plan work to meet the learning needs of all pupils and use other adults in the classroom to question and challenge all pupils to make good progress. These approaches were evident in outstanding teaching of mathematics for pupils in Year 3, where all pupils made excellent progress.
- Where the teaching of writing is good, teachers use a range of engaging topics, for example, from history or about fair trade, to stimulate pupils' ideas for writing. Teachers use clear explanations and examples so that pupils are clear about the skills they are developing. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- However, even here, pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their own ideas in their own way and this limits the creativity and imagination of the most able pupils. In some lessons, teachers do the writing for the least-able pupils who, therefore, have too few opportunities to develop their early writing skills and subsequently fall further behind. All pupils do not write at length often enough to make consistently good progress.
- Likewise in mathematics, pupils are not required to do a good amount of work, both in individual lessons and over time.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers give helpful advice about how to improve. Pupils are clear about the level of their work, and have targets to help them reach the next level, although these targets are too detailed for younger pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In most lessons, behaviour is good. Pupils work well and are keen to get on with their work, which they present very neatly and with clear, well-formed handwriting. There are clear expectations and a system of rewards and sanctions which have helped pupils have a clear understanding of how to behave well. However, these practices are not consistently applied

across school and some pupils are concerned that there are a few pupils who continue to find it difficult to behave well.

- Some pupils find it difficult to settle to their work, including some older pupils who are slow to get involved in tasks. There can be some distractions when the pace of learning drops in lessons and occasionally this disrupts learning for all pupils. As a result, behaviour requires improvement.
- While the school attempts to keep exclusions to a minimum, there have been a very few pupils in the past three years who have offered great challenges to the school. As a result, there have been permanent, as well as fixed-term exclusions.
- Despite robust initiatives introduced by the school to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, attendance remains below average because some families still do not recognise the benefits of their children attending regularly.
- Around the school, pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds play and work well together. They show great respect, tolerance and care for one another. Pupils feel safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including name-calling, racist and cyber-bullying.
- They are very clear that incidents of bullying are rare. When it does happen, they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with by adults who offer excellent and sensitive care. There are excellent systems in place to ensure that any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are acted upon, followed up and recorded.
- Pupils develop social skills well in the well-organised and safe breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs and through responsibilities they have around the school, such as playground helpers and 'buddies'. Pupils in Year 6 are proud of the school uniform they designed for themselves.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher is committed to improving the school and has high aspirations and expectations for his staff and pupils. He is willing to try new ideas and strategies to drive school improvement. He has great skill in using data to measure pupils' progress and produced a detailed, rigorous and accurate analysis of the school's latest test data. The headteacher clearly understands what constitutes good teaching. Where teaching is good it has led to good improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. Although the quality of teaching has improved overall, it is not yet consistently good or better.
- However, other leaders are less skilled in analysing the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress. Analysis of the school's records of lesson observations indicates that while leaders can recognise strengths and weaknesses in teaching, they are reluctant to make a rigorous enough judgement. As a result, there is too little teaching that is inspiring or outstanding across the school. Teachers who are eager to improve their skills are, therefore, not enabled to do so.
- The reorganised senior leadership team has shared responsibilities, but this has resulted in no leader having clear accountability for curriculum areas. As a result, there is no clear leadership of mathematics and teachers lack confidence and skills in teaching the subject. There has been insufficient training to help teachers gain a clear understanding of how to teach mathematics.
- The current school improvement plan is clearly focused on the key areas of raising pupils' attainment and improving teaching and has appropriate priorities to reach these goals. The criteria used to enable leaders to know successful they have been are easily measurable. However, new, rigorous targets for pupils' progress have not been in place long enough to ensure good progress.
- Likewise, targets for teachers and leaders as part of their performance management have only recently become rigorous enough to ensure that pupils make better progress. While staff are now clear that they will only be rewarded by moving up the pay scale when pupils have done as well as they should have done, this has not always been the case.
- Funding to support the learning of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has been used to increase teaching staff in order to offer greater support to develop their basic skills and

to broaden their experiences of cultural activities. As a result, the gap between these pupils and other pupils has closed at the end of Year 6 and they achieve more highly than other pupils in Key Stage 2.

- Allied to the already good teaching of physical education, the new Primary School Sport funding has been used effectively to develop competitive sports, new sports such as mini-tennis, and to broaden the school's curriculum to include street dance and martial arts. These are contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- The curriculum includes many activities, such as visits and work with artists and musicians, which pupils enjoy. At its best, it helps them to see how subjects link together. It helps to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including an interest in history and knowledge of the many faiths and cultures that exist in the school. It fosters an enjoyment of art, drama and music. However, there remain weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum and recent changes have not yet had time to improve the impact of mathematics teaching on pupils' progress.
- The school has worked independently of the local authority in the past two years. This is because the school wants to be responsible for its own development and because the local authority has reduced in size.
- However, the school works in partnership with the local teaching school, which itself has drawn on the expertise of advisers who worked for the local authority. The school also employs an ex-local authority adviser to assist with school improvement. Leaders recognise that there is a need to accept advice from outside experts in order to develop the skills of the leadership team and individual teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body offers strong support to the school and governors are regularly involved in school activities. It is led very well by the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and is committed to making the school better. All governors have been eager to improve their expertise and their understanding of how well the school is performing. Accordingly, they have introduced systems to monitor the curriculum, teaching and the impact of the breakfast club. They use data effectively so they are very aware of the areas which require improvement. They have rigorously supported the headteacher in tackling weak teaching. However, they remain over reliant on the headteacher's view of the school's effectiveness, including the curriculum and the quality of teaching.
 - Governors receive clear information about how the new Primary School Sport funding and pupil premium funding are allocated and are knowledgeable about their impact on pupils. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. The budget is well managed and has been successfully used to improve the school environment, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to increase the number of staff.

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	133659
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	427342

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	638
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Holland
Headteacher	Trevor Hutchinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2011
Telephone number	01642 244961
Fax number	01642 261959
Email address	ayresomeprimaryschool@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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