

Middleham Church of England Aided School

Park Lane, Middleham, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 4QX

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

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	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 and governors have not successfully addressed all areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Significant instability in staffing and governance has hampered the pace of improvement.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are imprecise. They lack the detail and information needed to improve the quality of teaching and to bring about better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have not secured consistency in the quality of teaching. Although improving, pupils' outcomes, particularly in key stage 1 and the early years, remain too variable over time.
- Some leaders do not have an accurate picture of children's capabilities in the early years. Too few children reach and exceed the early learning goals. Children do not have enough opportunity to practise and apply their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and number.
- Leaders have not embedded a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Too few pupils read regularly with adults in school. Across key stages, expectations, practices and procedures vary greatly.
- The quality of teaching and learning in phonics is too variable. Currently, pupils are making inconsistent progress in their phonics development.
- Some teachers do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently in their learning and tasks. Across year groups, too few pupils reach the higher standards that should be expected of them.
- Middle leaders' actions have not brought about good outcomes for pupils across subjects and key stages. The extent to which middle leaders are making a difference to pupils' outcomes and to the quality of teaching and learning is currently inconsistent.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher is committed to improving pupils' outcomes. Her drive and enthusiasm to enrich the curriculum is evident.
- Pupils' good attendance demonstrates their positive attitudes and enjoyment of school life. Their conduct in and around school is good.
- Leaders have developed an ethos where pupils are respectful of each other and adults. A delightfully warm, family-feel ethos is evident.
- Leaders' and teachers' actions are successfully improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics in key stage 2.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in each key stage so that pupils make better progress in their learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers, especially in key stage 1, use accurate assessment information to plan tasks and learning that closely match pupils' needs
 - teachers plan sufficiently challenging activities for all pupils, and the most able in particular, in reading, writing and mathematics
 - all staff are knowledgeable, skilful and consistent in their teaching of phonics
 - all pupils read regularly with adults in school.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching, learning and monitoring of reading across key stages
 - equipping middle leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - offering rigorous challenge, as well as support, to all leaders through effective governance.
- Improve the quality of the early years by:
 - ensuring that opportunities for children to learn and practise their basic skills in reading, writing and number are frequent and of high quality
 - providing suitable challenge for all children, and the most able in particular, in their work and learning
 - securing suitably high expectations of what children can do and achieve among all adults.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The pace of school improvement since the previous inspection has been hampered by the significant changes in staffing and in governance. Most staff have been appointed since the previous inspection. This has hindered leaders' progress in addressing the previous inspection report's recommendations. Teaching, learning and assessment still require improvement and pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are not making consistently good progress across the school.
- While leaders' improvement plans appropriately identify reading as an area for development, the plans lack detail and are not sharp enough to bring about the necessary improvements. Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading and phonics across the key stages. For example, there is no consistent system for checking pupils' reading choices or records. Teaching remains too variable in quality and pupils are not making good progress as a result.
- Middle leaders in English and mathematics are beginning to take more responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Actions to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics, particularly in key stage 2, are paying off and pupils are making better progress as a result. Outcomes in English, however, are not improving at the same good rate. Not all middle leaders are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to raise standards in their subjects and areas of responsibility.
- The new executive headteacher is ambitious for the school. Although only in post for a relatively short amount of time, she is already having a positive impact on bringing about the required improvements. For example, she has developed the wider curriculum, including in science, so that pupils are more engaged in their learning. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils want to be at school. Relationships with parents and carers have been strengthened. As a result, parents are better equipped to support their children's learning.
- Leaders are committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that engages pupils. History is brought to life by exciting themed days where pupils dress up and learn in role. In science, pupils are enthused by regular teaching that is practical and investigative. Leaders plan educational visits and invite visitors in to school each half term. This enriches the curriculum and adds invaluable real-life experiences to pupils' learning in the classroom and beyond. Pupils often have first-hand interesting and engaging experiences to write about, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils speak enthusiastically about residential visits to Edinburgh and Cote Ghyll.
- The high quality of displays evident around school, such as in art, reflects leaders' efforts to create a very positive and welcoming environment. Displays also evidence the school's commitment to teach a wide range of subjects and the importance placed on pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders have begun to work with leaders from Spennithorne Church of England Primary School in order to bring about school improvement. This is strengthening the school's leadership and management capacity. Staff feel supported by this recent

strategy but it too soon to see the effect of this joint working on the quality of teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- Records of governors' visits to school demonstrate how they have measured improvements in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Governors are making increasingly positive contributions to school improvement. However, governors do not routinely align their visits with the most pressing needs for improvement. Currently, this lessens the effectiveness of their work.
- Governors are ambitious for all pupils. They now visit regularly to see and feel for themselves what it is like to be a pupil here. This is beginning to help governors direct their challenge and support to leaders more purposefully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school and there is a high regard for pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders are able to identify risks to pupils and take effective action. Staff and pupils also demonstrate this through the way they work together and support each other at all times of the day.
- Leaders and governors are thorough when recruiting staff. Comprehensive checks are made to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Parents are confident in the school's commitment to securing their children's safety and well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across year groups and within subjects is variable. Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve from their different starting points.
- Teachers' use of assessment information is not effective in ensuring that pupils are provided with activities that are well suited to their abilities. The most able pupils in particular are not sufficiently challenged and, therefore, do not consistently achieve the higher standards they are capable of. Adults are often too quick to support pupils and, therefore, pupils are over-reliant and not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging activities for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the early years and in key stage 1. This hampers the progress of children, especially those who enter Reception with knowledge and skills typical for their age. Too few of these pupils reach the higher standards across subjects by the end of Year 2.
- The quality of teaching of phonics is too variable. Some adults lack the knowledge and skills needed to plan and teach phonics successfully. Pupils, therefore, do not receive consistently high-quality teaching.
- Leaders have recognised the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in reading. The executive headteacher has worked to raise the profile of reading across

the school. Leaders are beginning to instil a love of reading among pupils. Pupils thoroughly appreciate the new library. Some pupils read widely at home. However, not all pupils read regularly with an adult in school. Pupils' reading records and teachers' reading logs demonstrate that the approaches used to assess pupils' reading abilities and to monitor pupils' progress in reading are inconsistent.

- The teaching of mathematics is improving in key stage 2, where teachers' increasingly effective skills and knowledge are leading to much better outcomes. However, not all teaching staff, particularly in the early years and key stage 1, offer pupils enough challenge in problem solving and reasoning.
- The executive headteacher has developed the teaching of science. Pupils particularly enjoy learning in science. Pupils are taught to predict, investigate and question their findings through practical activities. A high proportion of pupils reach the expected standards.
- Leaders have established clear expectations about the presentation of pupils' work, which is demonstrated in their well-presented work. Cursive handwriting is taught across school. Pupils' books are neatly presented and pupils' handwriting is improving.
- Pupils and staff have secure and warm relationships. Pupils speak positively about their teachers and say that they enjoy learning. This contributes effectively to pupils' well-being and self-confidence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have developed a culture where pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils show respect to one another and have curiosity for cultures beyond their own.
- Staff effectively support pupils' emotional well-being. This is particularly evident in the way that older pupils care for, and look after, their younger friends. Pupils demonstrate respect by listening to each other in lessons and through positive play at breaktimes.
- Leaders have ensured that lunchtime is a positive learning experience. A real family-feel pervades the lunch hall. It begins with a prayer, which reinforces the school's Christian ethos. Pupils are encouraged to think about healthy eating and to drink water with their meal. Pupils engage readily with others from a range of year groups, which fosters friendships and care for one another.
- Pupils speak articulately and with confidence to adults and show pride in their school. The pupil council has had significant influence over improvements made to playtimes. Pupils have chosen equipment to buy for use on the yard. They have organised a rota to ensure that games are varied each day and that pupils play with a variety of equipment, practising different skills, such as throwing and catching and skipping. The council members have also played a key role in developing a new library area to encourage reading.
- Leaders plan thought-provoking activities to enhance the curriculum. Pupils speak with knowledge and enthusiasm about their understanding of Islam, gained through

working with a visitor to school. They speak confidently of their learning about Judaism and their planned visit to a synagogue.

- The school's behaviour records, as well as pupils' and parents' views, demonstrate that there are no incidents of bullying. Minor behaviour incidents are recorded and monitored by the executive headteacher. Parents and staff agree that pupils are kept safe. Pupils demonstrate that they have been taught to stay safe online.

Behaviour

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' behaviour. A new 'sanction and reward' system, introduced by the executive headteacher, is now firmly in place. Good behaviour is rewarded, for example with special celebration events. This has resulted in a significant reduction in low-level disruption.
- Parents also acknowledge and welcome this improvement, recognising the positive impact it has had on the atmosphere across school. Parents say that the school is much more settled now after a period of significant change.
- Pupils are kind and respectful towards each other. They play and work with pupils from different year groups. Older pupils act as role models. Pupils are polite and courteous towards adults and peers, holding open doors and demonstrating very good manners.
- Pupils enjoy school and so they are keen to attend and arrive on time. This reflects in the school's consistently above average rates of attendance. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In all key stages, pupils do not make consistently good progress from their varying starting points. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of leadership, teaching and assessment. Across the school, the progress of the most able pupils is too slow.
- Children do not make a good start to learning in the early years or through key stage 1. While most pupils usually reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, too few pupils reach the higher standard. The tasks that pupils complete are not matched well enough to their varying needs. Work for the most able pupils lacks challenge. In mathematics, for example, no pupils have reached the higher standard over the past three years.
- Recently, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen and is now broadly in line with the national average. However, current pupils are not making consistently good progress in their phonics development. This is because of inconsistencies in the approaches to teaching phonics.
- In recent years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard overall in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, although increasing, has been below average. For the past three years, no pupils have reached the higher standards in these three subjects overall. This is because, over time, pupils have not made consistently good progress through key stage 2.
- Pupils' progress through key stage 2 varies considerably between subjects. Provisional outcomes in 2018 in mathematics, for example, indicate that pupils made substantial

progress. As a result, an above average proportion of pupils reached both the expected and higher standard. However, the same pupils did not make good progress from their previous starting points in reading and writing. In reading, for example, no pupils reached the higher standard. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of pupils currently in key stage 2 remains too variable. Achievement in mathematics for example, continues to strengthen, while achievement in English lags behind, particularly in reading.

- Outcomes in English grammar, punctuation and spelling have recently improved. In 2018, most pupils reached the expected standard. Furthermore, an above average proportion reached the high standard.
- There are too few pupils who are disadvantaged or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to report separately on their outcomes. However, inspection evidence shows that they are also making variable progress across the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In the early years, children do not make good progress from their individual starting points. The very small number of children in each year group means that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception class can vary considerably. Even so, over time, too few children reach and exceed the early learning goals in reading, writing and number.
- Teachers' planning does not provide sufficient opportunity, both indoors and outside, for children to learn and practise their basic skills in reading, writing and number. Adults' expectations of what children can do and achieve are too low. Too little challenge is offered to children in the tasks provided, particularly for the most able. Children sometimes drift off task, flit from area to area and so do not make good progress in their learning.
- The teaching of reading and writing in the early years requires improvement. In reading, teaching does not take sufficient account of children's existing skills and knowledge. The most able children, for example, do not make the progress they should. Children are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing. This hinders their progress.
- Leaders and early years staff ensure that the learning environment is vibrant and well-resourced, both indoors and outside. Displays are bright, attractive and create a language and number-rich resource. However, leaders do not have a fully accurate picture of children's starting points or of what they are capable of achieving. The information they gather to check how well children are learning is not used to good effect to ensure that children make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Parents told the inspector that they are happy with the provision in the early years and that relationships with the school are strong. This ensures that children settle quickly in Reception and are happy to be at school.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and welfare requirements are met. Positive relationships between children and adults create a warm and respectful environment in which to learn. Children feel safe and secure as a result.

School details

Unique reference number	121614
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10048221

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

Type of school	All-through primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Sweeting
Executive headteacher	Lindsay Evans
Telephone number	01969 623592
Website	www.middleham.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@middleham.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2016

Information about this school

- Following the previous inspection report, an interim executive headteacher led the school for one year. The current executive headteacher has been in position since September 2017. She is also executive headteacher of Spennithorne Church of England Primary School.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. All teaching staff are new to the school.
- Middleham Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly above average.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND and those supported by an education, health and care plan are below the national averages.

- The school has received support and training brokered by the local authority. This has included reviews of governance and the use of pupil premium funding.
- There are two classes. Children in the early years are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also taught together.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Several observations were undertaken jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read within classes and talked to several pupils about their experience of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, middle leaders and with governors, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting also took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions took place with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- The inspector examined a range of pupils' work in books and scrutinised the school's information about pupils' achievements.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, and records of information relating to the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector also looked at minutes from governing body meetings and outcomes from the governor and pupil premium reviews. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day to seek their views about the school. The 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were also taken into consideration, including 11 free-text responses.
- Twenty-four pupils from Years 1 to 4 responded to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Alexa O'Gara, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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