

Layfield Primary School

Everingham Road, Yarm, North Yorkshire TS15 9TF

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported effectively by other leaders and governors, shows ambition for pupils to achieve their best. Following a recent dip in the school's performance, the school is now improving quickly. There is a strong team ethic among staff. Morale is high.
- As a result of strong leadership and effective teaching and support, children's learning gets off to a good start in the early years. Children thrive and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Consistently good teaching in key stage 1 results in pupils continuing to make good progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, standards by the end of Year 6 dipped to below average. Pupils did not make good progress, especially in writing. However, leaders' actions to improve teaching and outcomes are paying off. Pupils are now making good progress overall in key stage 2. Achievement in writing current in Year 6, for example, shows marked improvement.
- Leaders and governors are yet to iron out some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 2 and in mathematics. Opportunities to share effective teaching practice widely among staff are sometimes overlooked.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics overall but are not provided with enough opportunities to 'master' key mathematical concepts, or to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills across the curriculum subjects.
- Some pupils do not reach their full potential because work lacks challenge. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment by Year 6 requires improvement. Teachers' questioning does not consistently deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They behave well, show good attitudes and take great pride in their school and their appearance.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and are kept safe. They know that if they have a worry, an adult will help them to resolve it quickly and effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further, especially in key stage 2, by making sure that:
 - pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to master key mathematical concepts and to use and apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in work across the curriculum subjects
 - activities consistently challenge pupils so that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 improves
 - teachers' questioning skills effectively extend and deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management and governance by:
 - identifying more swiftly where further improvements in teaching are needed and taking action to do so
 - widening the opportunities to share the most effective teaching seen in the school among staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other leaders' ambition for pupils to achieve their very best is an evident strength of the school. The strong staff team work well together so that current pupils' progress and attainment continues to improve. As a result of staff working well together, morale is high.
- Leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. Leaders know the school well, and this has enabled them to prepare a development plan that is clearly focused on what actions need to improve most. For example, leaders have focused on improving pupils' achievement throughout key stage 2 and especially in writing. Their efforts are bearing fruit. Progress in key stage 2 has already improved, although some inconsistencies remain.
- Newly appointed senior leaders, for example in English and mathematics, are determined to improve standards further. They are a force for improvement in the school. As a result of their actions, they are swiftly overturning a decline in some areas over the past two years. This is particularly noticeable in the improved quality of pupils' writing across key stage 2.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is strong. The SEN coordinator knows the pupils and their families well. Funding is used effectively to ensure that all staff access good-quality training, and so pupils are supported appropriately and well cared for. Individual needs are taken into account and decisions are made in the best interests of the child. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are achieving well over time.
- The early years and key stage 1 is very well led and managed. This leadership has ensured that the quality of teaching across both these phases is consistently strong.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium and primary school physical education and sports funding are used effectively to enhance pupils' education and experiences. This takes different forms; for example, some pupils are involved in additional interventions to ensure that their knowledge and skills accelerate, while others are actively involved in sporting activities and experiences to develop their physical health and well-being.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils across the school have access to a broad curriculum, that is enriched by extra-curricular activities, such as sports, visits and visitors. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about and understand the wider world, and it encourages them to be responsible citizens.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic. They work well together to ensure that their subject areas are effectively led. These leaders check carefully the impact of actions taken aimed at improving teaching and outcomes. They are given opportunities to share their expertise with other staff so that all pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for the next phase of their education.
- Staff access a range of professional development and training opportunities, for example working with other schools to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils and to share good teaching practice. This has contributed to the much-improved

achievement in pupils' writing. However, opportunities for the most effective teaching practice within the school to be shared widely among staff are not always taken.

- Leaders, at all levels, including governors, check the quality of teaching across the school. However, leaders' actions do not always swiftly identify where further improvements in teaching are needed. Consequently, some inconsistencies are not yet ironed out, especially in key stage 2.
- Parents and carers are generally supportive of the school. The headteacher, governors and staff are appreciative of all the support that parents give the school. They acknowledge the efforts parents go to in order to support their children in their learning at home.

Governance of the school

- Governors care passionately about the school, the children who attend it and the community that it serves. As a group, they show a great desire and determination to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Governors are well aware of their responsibilities, especially around safeguarding, and they take them very seriously. Governors engage with a variety of training opportunities to further develop their role. As a result, they are knowledgeable and use the detailed reports from the headteacher to get to grips with the school's strengths and areas that need further development.
- Governors are involved in various monitoring activities. For example, they talk to pupils regularly and complete 'walk through' activities where they see at first hand what the quality of teaching is like across the school. Despite the wide range of valuable skills and experience they bring to their roles, governors are not consistently holding leaders to account as thoroughly as they could. They acknowledge that there is work to be done around holding the headteacher and other leaders to account, so they fully understand what impact leaders' monitoring activities are having on improving the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is at the heart of the culture of this school. The pastoral welfare of pupils is excellent. Leaders, governors and all staff genuinely care about each individual child. There is a culture that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are complete and thorough. Training for staff is regular and staff are clear about how to report any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead checks all concerns carefully and makes referrals when necessary to outside agencies. All information about pupils is carefully stored and followed up to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils said that they feel safe at school. This is supported by the views of parents. Pupils speak confidently about how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online and when outside of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Productive relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils provide a purposeful foundation for learning. Teaching successfully engages pupils in their learning and captures their interests.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well across a range of subjects. They quickly tackle any misconceptions or misunderstandings that pupils have. Teachers' brisk movement around classrooms further supports and checks pupils' understanding and knowledge. This ensures that any pupil who may be struggling can catch up quickly.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. The teaching of phonics is very well structured in the early years and key stage 1. Teachers and support staff effectively gauge when pupils are ready to move on in their learning or when pupils need further support. Younger pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop, reinforce and consolidate their sounds and letter formations. Teaching ensures that pupils use their phonic skills to develop their independent writing. Pupils of all ages access a wide range of appropriate reading materials. They are enthused by the school library.
- Revised approaches to the teaching of writing, such as consolidating pupils' spelling skills, are now having a very positive impact on improving pupils' achievement in writing in key stage 2. There are now good opportunities for pupils to write at length, for different purposes and audiences, and to write across the various curriculum subjects. Achievement in writing in key stage 2 has improved considerably.
- In mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Activities in mathematics lessons develop pupils' basic mathematical skills well. However, opportunities for pupils to master key mathematical concepts and develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills are sometimes overlooked, especially in work across other curriculum subjects. Actions to address this are already under way, but are not yet embedded consistently in practice.
- Teachers plan and provide a variety of appropriate activities to meet pupils' varying needs and abilities. The level of challenge offered by activities in the early years and in key stage 1 is good. Although pupils in key stage 2 are now provided with greater challenge than in the past, this remains inconsistent. As a result, too few reach the higher standards by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers' questioning effectively checks pupils' knowledge and understanding. This, in turn, ensures that teachers quickly gauge where a pupil may need further support or guidance. Support staff are valued members of each classroom. They are deployed effectively to improve the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils identified as needing additional support. These pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making good progress. Occasionally, questioning is not always used effectively as a tool to extend and deepen pupils' thoughts and ideas. Some do not reach their full potential as a result.
- Homework set is designed to extend pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills. Pupils understand the importance of, and value, the homework that they receive.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well cared for and kept safe. Their welfare is a priority for all staff. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in school life, for example through parent meetings. The headteacher, governors and staff are all very grateful for their continued support.
- Pupils can articulate how to stay safe, for example when using the internet. They are aware of whom to speak to if they have a worry or a concern. They are confident that any member of staff will help them with a worry, quickly and effectively.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong and they make a valuable contribution to their learning, as they listen attentively and ask questions. They take pride in their work and in their appearance.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and patient. They show respect for others' views and ideas in class and during social times.
- The school has sought imaginative ways to encourage pupils to become responsible citizens, for example pupils take responsibility for the school's chickens. They clean them out and collect their eggs, which are then used to cook school dinners. Pupils grow their own vegetables, which they use as part of their food technology lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' smiles are welcoming and infectious. Pupils are courteous, respectful and they are proud to be part of the school's inclusive community.
- Pupils move about the school safely and calmly. They are well supervised by staff and established routines for pupils' conduct when returning to class are orderly and respectful.
- Pupils are confident that bullying is rare at school. Pupils are also confident that if any instances did occur, they would be dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Over time, attendance is typically higher than average. However, in 2017, attendance dipped slightly and was similar to average. The proportion of pupils that were regularly absent was higher than average. However, inspection evidence shows that this dip has been reversed. Systems to check pupils' attendance have been strengthened. Staff work hard to engage with families and adopt a wide range of strategies so that no pupil is disadvantaged by low attendance. Pupils are happy in school and are keen to attend regularly.
- Working relationships between staff and pupils are strong. A small minority of pupils, mainly boys, sometimes become restless in lesson when activities they are given do not challenge them enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From their starting points, currently pupils in all key stages are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Building on the good start to learning in the early years, pupils achieve well in key stage 1. This reflects consistently effective teaching. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 have risen. In 2017, a well above average proportion of pupils reached the standards expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, in writing and mathematics, the proportion reaching greater depth increased considerably on results in 2016 and was average. Pupils made good progress from their previous starting points. Inspection evidence demonstrates that good achievement in key stage 1 continues.
- In 2016 and 2017, published data of pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 6 indicated that, from their previous starting points, pupils did not make good progress. Standards of attainment dipped in 2017 to below average. Achievement in writing was weak, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with middle prior attainment. Leaders have taken action to arrest this decline, and to improve the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress throughout key stage 2, especially in writing. Their efforts are paying off. Inspection evidence shows that currently in key stage 2, pupils are making good progress overall. In the current Year 6, for example, pupils are showing marked improvement in achievement, especially in writing.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Effective teaching of phonics ensures that reading gets off to a good start in the early years and in key stage 1. By the end of Year 2 in 2017, an above-average proportion of pupils reached greater depth in reading. School data from assessing pupils shows that pupils currently in Year 1 are set to achieve well in the national phonics screening check. Older pupils are also making good progress. They enjoy reading, showing fluency and confidence. They speak gushingly of how much they enjoy reading to someone at home.
- The quality of pupils' writing in key stage 2 has improved considerably. Pupils practise their independent writing often in many subjects, confidently applying a range of techniques and features. Pupils take great pride in the quality of their written work. They speak confidently and assuredly about the decisions they take when crafting a piece of writing.
- Although pupils generally achieve well in mathematics, their problem-solving and mathematical reasoning skills require some further improvement. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills are sometimes overlooked, including when pupils complete work across the subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils of varying abilities now achieve well overall. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good gains, particularly in their social and emotional skills. They are taught and supported effectively.
- In some year groups, there are too few disadvantaged pupils to make direct and meaningful comparisons with others. However, school data and inspection evidence show that, generally, disadvantaged pupils are achieving well across the school. Their achievement in key stage 2 has markedly improved.

- Throughout the early years and in key stage 1, pupils are effectively challenged to reach levels of greater depth in their learning. Although more pupils are also now working at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 than previously, pupils' achievement is still sometimes held back because of remaining inconsistencies in teaching. Work sometimes lacks challenge and does not extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong teaching and effective deployment of staff provide a purposeful, vibrant and stimulating environment and experience for children in the early years. In both Nursery and Reception, children's experiences are rich with opportunities to develop and learn.
- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are generally typical for their age. From their starting points, many children make good progress and are achieving well over time. The overall proportion of children achieving a good level of development has consistently been well above the national average for the last two years. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Those children that enter with skills and understanding below that typical for their age, for example in speech and communication, benefit from bespoke opportunities and experiences to rapidly catch up. All children get off to a flying start and no child is left behind in their learning and development.
- Teaching is highly effective in early years. Teachers and support staff use questioning systematically to develop children's knowledge and skills in both Nursery and Reception. This benefits children because it constantly reinforces and encourages language development. For example, children are actively encouraged to listen to letter sounds, repeat them and then form the letter in writing. As a result, children's fine-motor skills are developing and they make stronger gains in their ability to form letters and words.
- Some of the learning is led by adults and children have opportunities to choose activities to support their learning. All planned activities, when either adult-led or when children are in the continuous play area, enable children to develop their personal and social skills. Children have multiple opportunities to also solve problems independently and act responsibly, for example when using the counting area to develop their number skills.
- Leadership of early years is a strength, and teachers and support staff fully support leaders so that children are given the best opportunities possible to thrive. Leaders have an insightful knowledge of the provision and all of the children who attend. They are committed to putting the needs of children at the forefront of all they do.
- Engagement with parents is also a strength, particularly transition. Parents are invited to be involved in the learning and development of their child. Staff work with parents in order to ensure a smooth transition for all children into Nursery.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective and staff's meticulous ways have ensured that all welfare requirements are met.

- Leaders are currently redesigning the outdoor play area so that children have further opportunities to develop their physical development and learning.

School details

Unique reference number	111624
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10042211

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Hogg
Headteacher	Helen Owen
Telephone number	01642 786153
Website	www.sbcschools.org.uk/layfield
Email address	layfield.school@stockton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language or are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils that are disadvantaged is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is expected to join a multi-academy trust in the summer term of 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and in a range of lessons. They reviewed work in an extensive range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and at breaktime. They met formally with groups of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. They also spoke with children in Nursery and Reception.
- Inspectors listened to a wide range of pupils reading from different year groups.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders. Meetings also took place with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed a report from an external source.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including arrangements for safeguarding, behaviour logs and pupils' attendance information. Inspectors also looked at information about pupils' current progress and attainment and leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the 23 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one free-text response. They also considered the school's own parental survey responses.
- Inspectors received no pupil responses and no staff responses to Ofsted's questionnaires. Inspectors did consider the school's own staff survey responses.

Inspection team

Darren Stewart, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Dent

Ofsted Inspector

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