

Amotherby Community Primary School

Meadowfield, Amotherby, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 6TG

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong, focused leadership for the school. She has created a robust staff team that shares the commitment and determination to provide the best possible learning and experiences for the pupils.
- The school has improved rapidly since its last inspection because leaders have ensured that teaching has strongly improved.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English and mathematics. They achieve particularly well in mathematics and by the end of Year 6 standards are significantly above average.
- The early years provision is good. Children in Reception are taught well and receive good care and support from staff. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. An exciting and relevant curriculum engages pupils and equips them with the skills and knowledge for life in modern Britain.
- Disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their varied starting points. The extra support they receive is well matched to their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. They get on well with each other and are kind and thoughtful towards each other and to adults.
- The school is a welcoming community and pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school. They say that bullying is rare and that adults are always there to help should a problem arise.
- The governing body knows the school well and is active in ensuring it continues to improve. The governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing is not as strong as in mathematics and reading.
- Too few pupils reached the required standard in 2014 in the Key Stage 1 national screening checks for phonics (using letters and their sounds).
- The quality of teaching is not typically outstanding. The very best practice is not evident in every class to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, observing all the classes in the school and all the teachers at least once. Three of these observations took place jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and activities.
- Inspectors attended an assembly, examined samples of pupils' written work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met groups of pupils, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, as well as with staff, and with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also held informal discussions with some parents and carers.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; the school's checks on its own performance; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; documentation on behaviour and safeguarding; the school website; information on attendance; work in pupils' books and displays of pupils' work around school.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 36 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. They also considered 17 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Lindsay Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- It has one class per year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Reception children attend full time.
- The school has a wide catchment area, drawing pupils from 17 villages.
- About one in 13 pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium (5%) is below average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since September 2014, there has been movement of teachers to different classes and two new teachers have joined the school. One is newly qualified.
- A review of governance has been completed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that all teaching matches that of the best and a higher proportion of pupils make more rapid progress
 - supporting and extending pupils' writing skills so that a greater proportion, particularly middle-ability pupils, reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2
 - ensuring that the new approach to teaching phonics results in pupils attaining the required standard in the Year 1 national screening check.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear leadership and her high expectations are shared by all the staff and governors. There is an extremely strong team spirit and drive for improvement. Actions taken since the previous inspection, when the school required improvement, have been effective.
- The school's detailed self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and is used well to inform realistic targets in the school improvement plan. These practical targets are regularly evaluated by senior leaders and the governors and as a result the school is continuing to improve and move forward.
- Middle leaders work alongside senior leaders, carrying out scrutiny of work, observing teaching and analysing assessment information to make sure pupils achieve well.
- The systems for managing the performance of teachers are effective. Staff are held to account for their quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Half-termly assessments are analysed by teachers and leaders who then provide appropriate support for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Progress meetings are held for teachers to account for pupils' performance. This provides opportunities to identify any additional support individual staff members might need to improve and assist them in their career progression.
- Leaders are effective in helping to improve the quality of teaching and have made use of the best practice in the school, but there is room for this to make an even greater contribution to raising standards.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the school's values. The recently re-modelled curriculum is well planned to provide a wide range of topics covering all subjects. It incorporates a broad range of memorable experiences so that pupils are very well prepared for the future. A good range of day and residential visits to places of interest, visitors to the school, sporting and musical activities, and after-school clubs contribute well to pupils' achievement.
- Religious studies, personal and social education and daily assemblies all support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These give pupils a good understanding of other cultures and faiths, promoting fundamental British values of tolerance and respect of others.
- The school has developed and implemented its preferred approach to assessment in English but is still developing a new approach to assessment in mathematics.
- Additional funds are managed carefully. The extra money provided for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used well. It is focused on the needs of these pupils, providing additional staff and specific intervention resources and is effective in accelerating their progress and access to the curriculum.
- The school fosters good relations with parents and there is no discrimination. When asked about Amotherby Primary, a parent commented, 'It's a nurturing caring environment, where each child is treated as an individual'. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire and all those spoken to were extremely supportive of the school
- The primary school sport funding provides more sporting opportunities for pupils through the use of a professional sports coach, a sports partnership with Malton Secondary School and additional resources. These are ensuring that pupils are taught skills more effectively and are building up stamina. They have more opportunities to participate in sporting events and tournaments involving other schools, where they have been very successful. As a consequence, pupils are developing healthy lifestyles.
- All safeguarding requirements are met and pupils are kept safe.
- The local authority provided effective support following the school's previous inspection, but now provides light-touch support to this strongly improved school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of relevant skills which they use effectively to support and strengthen the school's leadership. They fully support the vision for the school and improving outcomes for pupils is central to all they do. Following a review of governance, they have an improved knowledge and understanding of pupils' performance. They know how well the school is doing when compared to similar schools nationally. They have a good grasp of how the performance of staff is managed and how teaching is monitored by leaders. They understand what is done to tackle underperformance and how this links to salary progression. The governors manage the school's finances carefully, including checking that the additional pupil premium funding and the primary sports funding are used effectively, benefiting pupils. Governors make sure safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There are very few recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Movement in and around the school is orderly. For example they were calm and sensible when going in to assembly. During lunchtime the dining hall is typically calm. Pupils are very welcoming and talk confidently to visitors. They are kind and thoughtful towards each other. Pupils of all ages get on extremely well together. Inspectors observed delightful play at playtime with older pupils helping younger ones make snowmen.
- Pupils say they value taking on responsibilities around the school and feel fully included by their teachers. Some pupils act as sports ambassadors at playtimes organising outside activities whilst others run a dance club for the youngest pupils in the school hall.
- They have a strong sense of right and wrong and are happy to talk about issues involving making right choices and the importance of British values such as democracy, tolerance and respect. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most pupils display good attitudes to learning when they are working in class or in small groups. They listen attentively and are keen to answer teachers' questions and contribute towards discussions. They take great pride in their work and persevere when tasks become difficult. They respond well to teachers' requests to be resilient and resourceful. On occasions, some pupils do not settle as quickly as they should to tasks they are asked to complete. They do not disturb other pupils but their own progress is slowed.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school because teachers make learning interesting. Parents too are positive and the overwhelming majority who responded to the online questionnaire say their children are happy and behave well in school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires feel that the pupils are safe in school. Pupils feel safe and are confident about keeping themselves safe, including when using the internet. They also learn about road safety and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. In 2014 all Year 6 completed first aid training and achieved their basic first aid certificate.
- Staff make certain that pupils have a good awareness of different kinds of bullying, including the use of derogatory or discriminatory language. Pupils do not consider there is an issue with bullying at school but if they have a problem they know who to turn to.
- A group of older pupils were congratulated recently for making a positive, well-reasoned argument on a local radio programme, sharing their views about the safety aspects and importance of wearing seat belts in cars.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are well thought through. Policies are up to date and audited by governors and senior staff. Staff training and governor safeguarding training is up to date.
- Risk assessments for the school site and for trips out of school are very thorough and the school has organised visitors and visits to specialist centres to help the pupils understand how to stay safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils achieve well and are highly motivated. Observations of teaching by leaders and evidence of the high quality work in books show that all groups of pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding over time and that teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, whatever their abilities. They manage behaviour effectively and plan work that is at the right level of difficulty for different groups. Work reinforces previous learning and deepens pupils' understanding of new ideas.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask challenging questions to check pupils' understanding and develop new ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils had discussed and produced some thought-provoking work on the similarities and differences of living in a multi-cultural community to one where everyone is similar. This work helped to prepare them for life in modern Britain and promoted their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The teaching of writing is a focus across the school. Teachers work hard to enthuse the pupils with interesting ideas which stimulate their imagination. Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and they really enjoy the cross-curricular topic work. The visit of a Fair-trade banana farmer from Columbia and of

the author Michael Murpurgo provided memorable experiences and stimulated good creative writing. However, occasionally opportunities for pupils to check their own work and to extend their vocabulary choices are missed. The middle ability pupils, in particular, are not always challenged enough to enable them to achieve their best.

- The development of reading is given a high priority so that pupils become fluent readers. An inspector heard pupils in Year 1 using the skills of segmenting and blending letters confidently to read words. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are now taught well. The recently implemented and changed ways of organising and teaching phonics across the early years and Key Stage 1 has effectively arrested the decline in pupils' achievement in this skill.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and encourage pupils to use correct mathematical vocabulary in any explanations. There has been a focus on pupils securing a good understanding of basic mathematical facts which they can apply to challenging problem-solving activities.
- There are positive, warm relationships between adults and pupils, creating a safe learning environment where pupils know that their comments and work are valued. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support the learning of different groups and play an important role in the successful delivery of the phonics programme.
- The quality of marking is effective. Teachers give clear guidance and pupils respond well.
- As yet, the very best practice in teaching is not evident in every class, which is why teaching is not yet outstanding.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level by the end of Year 2 was above average in reading and mathematics and similar to the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard by the end of Year 6 was above average in mathematics and reading and in line with national averages in writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well equipped to succeed when they go on to secondary school.
- The proportion of most able pupils achieving the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2 was in line with national averages in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6 in the 2014 national tests, the proportion of most able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was significantly above average in mathematics, with two pupils reaching the highest Level 6. This was due to a whole-school focus on raising attainment and progress in mathematics by addressing the key issues from the previous inspection; developing teachers' subject knowledge; securing pupils' basic skills and increasing opportunities for problem-solving activities.
- The proportion reaching the higher level in reading was similar to the national average but in writing this was not the case. Fewer pupils than nationally reached the higher level in writing, although one Level 6 result was achieved. Current school data for attainment and progress and evidence of high quality work in pupils' books indicate that standards in writing have improved. The proportion on target to reach the expected level is above average and the proportion on target to reach the higher level is at least, similar to the national picture, demonstrating good progress overall.
- In 2014, the proportions reaching the required level in the national Year 1 and Year 2 phonics screening checks were below that found nationally. The school took this very seriously and looked carefully at reasons why. The new systematic approach to teaching phonics, additional training for staff and information shared with parents to involve them in their children's learning has led to a sharp rise in standards this year. Most are on track to reach the required standard in the national check this year. The impact of improved teaching is seen in the good phonics' skills of pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2. However, leaders appreciate that a careful eye needs to be kept on how well all pupils benefit from the new approach.
- By Year 6 pupils read well. They use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and have developed comprehension skills such as inference and prediction. They have daily guided reading sessions and have developed a love of reading. They enjoyed reading the class readers, such as 'Warhorse' and 'Private Peaceful' and are motivated to read for pleasure, borrowing high quality books from their class and using the newly refurbished library.
- Pupils' writing is often interesting and developed well, but it is sometimes spoilt by simple mistakes and a lack of adventurous vocabulary.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their varied starting points because their needs are well met. In the 2014 Year 6 national tests they achieved above similar

pupils nationally and attained national averages in reading but were about two terms behind in writing and three terms behind in mathematics.

- In 2014, overall at the end of Year 6, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils differed little from that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school, being the same in reading and mathematics and less than a term behind in writing. They made the same progress and attained in line with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. School records and pupils' work show that there are no gaps or very small gaps between disadvantaged and others in school in all year groups.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding typical for their age. However, with smaller cohorts this can vary significantly year on year. Adults skilfully match activities to the needs of the children and they make good progress.
- Children are happy, safe and secure and behave well. They readily cooperate and share with each other but are also confident to make decisions and play independently. Clear expectations that children understand and praise from adults are used effectively so that they are keen to follow rules. As a result, they settle quickly and make particularly good progress in personal and social development.
- Teaching is good. Adults extend children's knowledge and understanding while they are playing by effective questioning which also promotes new vocabulary and the use of language. Because adults listen to children and value what they say, children become confident learners who are keen to contribute ideas. There are many practical activities supporting early number work and children make good progress in this area of learning.
- Careful planning and good organisation provide a stimulating learning environment. The classroom and outdoor area are well resourced and good use is made of both areas. The curriculum is well planned across the different areas of learning so that children have a wide variety of experiences encouraging curiosity and experimentation. Making the most of the icy weather conditions during the inspection, children examined some ice that had formed in pots outside. They then set up an experiment to see if it would take different lengths of time to melt when put in different places.
- Phonics is taught well. Children rapidly build up a strong knowledge of sounds and then enthusiastically begin to build words, making good progress. Early years reading skills are also taught well.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff know the children well and check the children's progress carefully, planning for their next steps in learning. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are given additional support to enable them to catch up with other children. Comprehensive learning journals demonstrating each child's development throughout the year are regularly shared with parents who are invited to contribute to them. The children are well prepared to move on to Year 1.

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	121370
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	455476

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Hall
Headteacher	Sue Knowles
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2013
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