

Ripley Endowed Church of England School

Ripley, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 3AY

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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

- Since the previous inspection, changes in leadership have slowed the pace of school improvement. Pupils do not make good progress. Outcomes by Year 6 are too variable.
- Teaching is inconsistent across subjects. Assessment systems, although improved, do not pinpoint next steps in learning effectively. Tasks lack challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- The quality of pupils' written work is variable. Pupils do not achieve well. Errors in spelling are not corrected, systematically. Opportunities for pupils to apply grammar and punctuation skills in their independent writing are limited.
- Early years provision has declined in quality. Resources and activities do not engage, interest or challenge children well enough. Outdoor learning is not effective in developing children's language and number skills.
- Leaders have not checked the quality of pupils' written work rigorously enough. Teachers' expectations regarding the quality of pupils' presentation and writing vary.
- Plans for school improvement are not fully clear or measurable. It is unclear how leaders intend to communicate the impact of actions to the governing body.
- The management of teachers' performance has lacked rigour. Leaders have not provided staff with effective guidance or support.
- Over time, governors have not held leaders effectively to account for the school's performance. The work of the governing body is not fully aligned with checking key priorities.
- The quality of the learning environment in promoting the curriculum and celebrating pupils' achievement requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The few disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is much improved and pupils are achieving well in this subject.
- Learning attitudes are positive. Pupils attend regularly and enjoy their time at school.
- Pupils mix harmoniously and are settled and happy in this nurturing village school. Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is good.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe.
- The good support offered by the local authority and the diocese is driving school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in writing, by:
 - providing challenging work that builds well on what pupils already know and can do, especially for the most able pupils
 - further developing assessment systems, so that they accurately pinpoint next steps in learning
 - making sure that approaches to teaching handwriting and pupils' presentation of their work are consistent and expectations are high
 - improving pupils' spelling skills
 - providing pupils with plenty of opportunities to apply their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in their independent writing across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of provision in the early years by:
 - making sure resources and activities consistently engage, interest and challenge children
 - provide good opportunities for children to develop language and number skills, particularly when learning outdoors
 - further develop assessment systems so that the rates of progress for different groups of children are clearly identified.
- Improve the capacity and impact of leadership and governance by:
 - rigorously checking the quality of pupils' written work and providing clear direction to staff about the minimum expectations for pupils' writing and presentation
 - setting out clear and measurable plans for school improvement which make it clear how leaders intend to communicate the impact of actions to the governing body
 - making sure arrangements to manage and improve teachers' performance are rigorous
 - making sure governors carefully check how well the school is addressing key priorities
 - improving the quality of the learning environment to promote good achievement in a wide range of curriculum subjects and to celebrate pupils' work effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not been successful in improving the school's overall effectiveness since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils still require improvement. The early years provision, previously judged as good, now also requires improvement.
- Leaders had not, until recently, taken swift action to address inconsistencies in teaching and variable pupil progress, especially in reading. Governors had not checked sufficiently closely on the accuracy of information from leaders about the school's performance.
- Over the last year, changes of leadership have had a negative effect on the management and monitoring of teaching, and on communication within and beyond the school. Plans for school improvement, until intervention by the local authority, focused more on the completion of actions, rather than on effectiveness.
- Performance management arrangements for teachers have lacked rigour. The responses from the staff survey indicate a lack of confidence in leadership over time. Staff have not received consistent support and guidance to help them improve their practice. By contrast, the performance management of support staff, led by the senior teacher, has been of good quality.
- Although the quality of work in mathematics shows much improvement, insufficient checks have been undertaken to ensure consistency in the quality of written work across classes and subjects. There is a lack of direction about minimum expectations for pupils' writing and presentation.
- The quality of the learning environment in promoting a range of subjects and celebrating pupils' achievement is disappointing. Displays lack commentary about the stimulus behind the work, there is a lack of good examples of written work on show and some subjects, such as art, science and computing are under-represented.
- Lessons cover a range of subjects but some learning does not extend specific skills effectively. There are some examples of deeper work in books for older pupils, such as a series of pieces on coastal erosion, but this standard is not replicated in other classes. Leaders accept that work to develop key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage.
- Governors have recently worked hard to address issues so that there is now a secure platform to increase the pace of school improvement. The new interim headteacher and the governors have a realistic and accurate view of the school and are confident in moving the school forward at a better pace.
- Despite turbulence in leadership, current outcomes indicate that pupils are now starting to make better progress this year, especially in reading and mathematics. This is because subject leaders, working with the local authority school improvement adviser, have provided better guidance to staff about weaker areas of understanding.
- New systems to track pupils' attainment in core subject areas are helping to determine progress. As yet, these new systems are still in development and are not yet fully

effective in analysing the performance of different pupil groups, but staff are gaining confidence in their use.

- The work of the local authority and diocese has been instrumental in supporting the governing body, middle leaders and the new interim headteacher in addressing areas of weakness. Already, within days, the new headteacher has been able to provide an overview of progress across all classes.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum contributes well to personal development. Pupils remembered a visit from a representative of the Muslim faith and could talk about famous figures from other cultures. They were very knowledgeable about the general election, although they were less sure about British values beyond democracy.
- Leaders and governors have made effective use of additional funding for the few pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Funding has provided nurture support for new pupils with previous emotional or behavioural difficulties. These pupils have settled well and are making good progress. Support staff use tailored learning programmes, following the direction of the special educational needs leader, to help pupils achieve well.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well to provide additional specialist coaching and supplement extra-curricular opportunities that are popular with pupils and parents. Activities on offer include athletics, archery and biking. Sporting challenges over lunchtime provide a purposeful activity.
- The majority of parents are very supportive and appreciate the care and support offered by staff during a difficult period for the school. They have, understandably, been unsettled by the several leadership changes but acknowledge the difficulties faced by the governing body in resolving the situation.

Governance of the school

- The governing body, prior to 2017, had an over-optimistic view of the school. They did not systematically check on the accuracy of information supplied by leaders about the school's performance. Governors now realise that they had not challenged leaders robustly in order to hold them to account for school performance.
- Once it became clear that the school's progress had stalled, governors seized the nettle in addressing shortcomings and managing personnel issues. They are now providing effective support and challenge.
- Governors have analysed the makeup of the governing body to ensure that a range of knowledge and skills is represented. Minutes of meetings show very clearly that governors are asking searching questions and following up any issues with vigour. There is now a clear strategy for checking that leaders' actions are bringing about improvement.
- Governors have introduced new approaches into their work, such as the seven priority key actions and the annual review of governing body achievement. They have begun to incorporate these ideas, together with guidance around individual visits to school and training, into a governor development plan to link into the process of school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A great deal of work has been carried out over the last two terms to update systems and tighten up procedures. Governors, leaders and the administrator have worked closely with the local authority in carrying out extensive safety and safeguarding audits and addressing action points.
- Records of recruitment procedures meet statutory requirements. There are secure systems to ensure that new staff receive clear guidance about what to do if they have concerns over the welfare of pupils. Leaders know it is important to pass on clear information about pupils' medical needs when temporary staff are covering classes.
- Risk assessments have been thoroughly revised and shared with staff to promote a more safety-conscious culture. Appropriate site checks and emergency evacuations are carried out.
- Training on safeguarding matters has been wide-ranging and provided to all staff and governors. Concerns about pupils' safety and welfare are rare and issues are followed up thoroughly. However, sometimes documentation about such actions is not cross-referenced.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent across different classes and in different subjects. While the teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection, in English it is less effective. In other subjects, the level of challenge is variable and the progression in pupils' skills lacks cohesion.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils. Sometimes tasks do not build up and extend skills from previous learning or they are too easy. Occasionally, pupils do not move on to more complex and demanding work quickly enough.
- Assessment systems to sharply pinpoint areas of weakness and inform next teaching points are still developing. Leaders and teachers are starting to use assessment information more effectively to evaluate progress.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of their written work are not high enough. Teachers do not identify or prioritise common word misspellings rigorously enough, and so errors are repeated. Teaching does not ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of spelling rules.
- The teaching of grammar and punctuation does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply new skills across a range of independent writing. In some cases, pupils are not challenged to go beyond the completion of routine exercises. Not enough emphasis is placed on secure understanding of sentence construction.
- Handwriting guidance across the school lacks a coherent approach. Pupils of varying abilities struggle with correct letter size or joins so that their writing lacks consistency. Occasionally, teachers' poor-quality writing results in pupils making spelling errors. Teaching has not ensured that pupils have good handwriting grips or posture.

- Poor results in Year 6 in 2016 in reading assessments prompted an increased focus on teaching comprehension skills. This is helping pupils to gain more confidence in understanding texts and to develop a wider vocabulary.
- In mathematics, teaching is stronger. Pupils receive an increased level of challenge through a range of varied reasoning activities. Pupils enjoy these tasks. They are able to talk about problem-solving strategies. In Year 5/6, a group of the most able pupils took delight in explaining a tricky investigation involving decreasing fractions of chocolate.
- Teachers set homework weekly to help pupils consolidate key skills, and pupils are conscientious in completing this. It is rare for homework to cover subjects other than English and mathematics. Older pupils reported that homework was often quite easy.
- Teaching assistants provide good additional support to both individual pupils and small groups. They relate well to pupils and encourage them to focus attention. In Year 1/2 sensitive guidance, in a kindly manner, was given to a pupil struggling with pencil control.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a strong emphasis on Christian values and pupils show empathy and care for other people. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibility for leading worship and the school has close links with the local church. Pupils conducted a thought-provoking assembly about missing people that encouraged empathy and reflection.
- Pupils are friendly and very polite to visitors. They mix well together and the close-knit family atmosphere in school helps them to feel secure and happy. They say there has been occasional bullying but this now a rarity and when it occurs senior leaders have dealt with it promptly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety matters, especially in respect of online issues. They know to exercise caution when using the internet because there are 'some people who may not be who they pretend to be', and that they should protect personal information.
- Pupils were very interested in the general election and had a good understanding of democracy. They are confident in explaining the school's Christian values and how they help them to live harmoniously with one another.
- Pupils like to take on responsibilities, such as worship committee duties, sports leader roles or school and eco-councillors. Some of these roles could be extended and deepened to have a greater impact on the life of the school.
- Pupils know why good diet is important and warned the inspector that too much sugar or fat can be harmful. 'It will clog up your arteries and could lead to diabetes', one pupil advised. Pupils enjoy keeping fit and taking part in a variety of sporting activities. Organised games with the sports leader at lunchtime were action-packed.

- Pupils enjoy their learning, and show positive attitudes to school. They say they especially like mathematics, which makes them think hard.
- Pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well cared for by adults and pupils. Those pupils who have previously displayed challenging behaviour in other schools are supported well through well-planned nurture arrangements. This enables them to settle down to learning and interact more sociably.
- There are good links with a number of external agencies that provide timely guidance to staff who support pupils who have additional needs. The local special school also provides useful advice.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They respond well to adults, settle down quickly in lessons and display good manners. Little learning time is wasted because pupils like to get on with their work. Pupils swiftly move to different activities.
- Pupils are generally able to sustain concentration when completing tasks and only occasionally does attention wander, usually when the teaching is less engaging or when activities go on too long.
- Despite rather cramped play areas, pupils exercise restraint, even when playing ball games, so that playtimes are peaceful and positive occasions. There is calm and orderly movement around school and at lunchtime across to the village hall. Pupils try to keep cloakrooms tidy.
- Behaviour records indicate that instances of serious poor behaviour are rare and isolated. Actions to address these instances are appropriate. There is little need for complex behaviour reward systems because pupils display responsible attitudes.
- Whole-school attendance is in line with the national average and the administrator keeps a watchful eye on any absence. There are very few pupils who are away for a disproportionate amount of time and in the vast majority of cases there are sound medical and health-related reasons as to why they miss school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last two years in both key stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress and the standards they have reached in reading, writing and mathematics have been variable. Pupils have not made consistently good progress from their starting points and, as a result, have not reached the standards they are capable of. The progress of current pupils, especially between subjects, also remains inconsistent and, therefore, requires improvement.
- Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are variable. In 2015, overall standards were below average. These pupils did not make good progress from their starting points. In 2016, although an above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in writing and mathematics, from their previously higher starting points, this did not represent good progress. Furthermore, in reading, standards were low and pupils made too little progress in this subject.

- By the end of Year 2, typically, an above-average proportion of pupils reach the expected standards for their age. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in writing, however, was much lower than in reading and mathematics and was below average. Pupils did not achieve well in writing.
- Achievement in reading is improving. In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved significantly from the much lower levels achieved in 2015 and was just above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy choosing from the new selection of reading books and using the school library. The least able readers receive good support for reading at school. Home-school records show that many read frequently at home. Pupils' books are pitched at the right level and pupils read with increasing fluency. Older most-able pupils were able to talk confidently about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils do not make good progress in writing. Pupils make too many basic errors in spelling. They have an insecure understanding of spelling rules and of sentence construction. Pupils do not use and apply their grammar and punctuation skills in their independent writing. Their handwriting is sometimes of poor quality, especially their written work in subjects other than English. These weaknesses hamper their progress.
- In contrast, in mathematics, pupils are now doing well. Pupils' workbooks across all year groups show that work is of good quality. Pupils' number skills have been sharpened by targeted practice via the mental arithmetic 'passport' checks. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills.
- The most able pupils do not achieve well. In Year 6 in 2016, no pupils reached the higher attainment levels in reading and writing, although an above-average proportion did so in mathematics. Their work lacks the necessary challenge to reach their full potential.
- The progress of the few pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Where pupils have significant barriers to learning, for example, they are strongly supported by experienced and skilful teaching assistants to make small but steady steps forward.
- Older pupils display a strong commitment to their learning. They contribute well to school and community life. These positive attitudes are likely to support their learning and development when they move on to the next phase of their education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision in the early years requires improvement because leaders have not ensured consistently good teaching over time across the provision. Changes in staffing have also affected continuity. As a result, children's progress and development has been uneven.
- By the end of Reception in 2016, the proportions of children attaining a good level of development were broadly similar to the national average, having been below average in the previous year. Assessment of starting points has not been wholly reliable and, therefore, the progress of different groups of children and individuals has been unclear.

- Scrutiny of children's development through their learning journey records shows a changing approach to assessment. Observations are becoming sharper and covering more areas of learning. Even so, next learning steps are not identified as a matter of course. There is no system currently for involving parents in contributing to the profile of achievement out of school. Assessment systems do not, therefore, clearly demonstrate rates of progress for different groups of children. This requires further improvement therefore.
- Indoor activities offer a range of opportunities but some children lose their interest and drift between areas with little purpose. Occasionally, some children use loud voices and disturb other activities. Adult intervention is not of consistently high quality to extend language skills and deepen children's thinking.
- There is very limited use of the outdoor area for learning and this area is poorly organised to promote language and number skills. Opportunities for children to work collaboratively on investigations or constructional challenges are lacking. Children's curiosity is not sufficiently stimulated.
- Children enter Reception with skills that reflect those typically found for their age. Their social skills are sufficiently well developed so that they can access learning resources and manage their own snack times independently. They mix well with each other and adults encourage good manners when playing with each other.
- Induction arrangements for children joining the Reception class are well organised and children settle in quickly. Staff visit local Nursery settings and there are productive links with the local village group. 'It's an easy transition. He settled well. The provision that the school made was good,' said one parent.
- Teaching varies in quality. It is more effective when adults are working purposefully with children in small groups and when they respond to children's interest. For example, the teacher drew children's attention to a swallow's nest by the classroom door. Children then made their own nests and looked in a book to try to identify the bird. The discussion was most productive. One child said, 'There are four chicks in our nest. They're cracking out!'
- Children are well looked after and welfare requirements are in place. Effective links with external agencies ensure that any additional needs are met.

School details

Unique reference number	121580
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10031961

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rose Gosling
Headteacher	Amanda Townson
Telephone number	01423 770160
Website	http://www.ripley.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@ripley.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 June 2015

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average primary school. There is one single-age Reception class and three mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The other pupils are of 'other White' backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- There are slightly fewer girls than boys in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or education, health and care plan is higher than average.

- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the DALE National Teaching School Alliance. The school has also worked in collaboration with Burnt Yates CE Primary School since 2015.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing since the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher left in October 2016 and governors appointed an interim headteacher to lead the school. She left in May 2017. The local authority immediately secured the services of an experienced headteacher to act as interim headteacher until September. She took up her post in the week of this inspection. A longer-term interim headteacher is due to start at the school in September.
- There have been three changes of class teacher since the previous inspection. At the time of inspection, a temporary teacher was covering a long-term absence.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons or part-lessons across all classes to assess teaching and learning. The local authority school improvement officer and the headteacher viewed some lessons jointly.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils reading from Years 1, 3 and 6.
- The inspector sampled work from all year groups in English, mathematics and a range of subjects, including science.
- The inspector conducted meetings with the local authority school improvement officer, the interim headteacher, middle leaders, subject leaders, the administrator and the chair of the governing body. He also met with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector analysed information from a scrutiny of school documentation. This included published data about pupils' progress and attainment, previous inspection reports, external reports by the local authority and the school's latest assessment information. The local authority supplied a brief overview of the school's effectiveness.
- The inspector viewed school monitoring information, including that about the performance management of teachers. He also looked extensively at safeguarding documentation.
- The inspector took the views of parents into account through informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day and by analysing responses from the 31 parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector took the views of pupils into account through planned meetings with pupils from Year 2, and from Years 4, and 5 and 6. The inspector met groups of pupils informally at playtime and lunchtime. The inspector also considered the views of 63 pupils expressed through the pupil online survey.
- The inspector took the views of staff into account by analysing responses from the online survey. The school had obtained responses from five staff.

Inspection team

James Reid, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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