

Swainby and Potto CofE Primary School

Claver Close, Swainby, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 3DH

Inspection dates 30 June 2015–1 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Rates of progress and levels of attainment for all groups of pupils are not consistently good, especially in Key Stage 1. As a result, not enough pupils exceed what is expected of them.
- Teachers' marking does not always reflect the school's marking policy. Pupils are not always asked to carry out corrections or challenged in their learning further by the guidance given.
- Over time, work has not always been well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers' questioning does not always probe, check and test pupils' thinking.
- Children's progress in the Reception Year is not fast enough. Children do not make enough progress in acquiring early skills in phonics (blending letters and sounds together) and early reading and writing.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides high ambition, clear vision and a drive for improvement. Together with other leaders and governors he has ensured the dip in performance since the previous inspection has been reversed.
- Staff skills and talents are now effectively nurtured, because the headteacher has a sharp focus upon improving the effectiveness of teaching and classroom support.
- The strong school ethos, 'Small school, big family' is firmly bolstered by the extremely good promotion of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Pupils' relationships with staff are excellent.
- High-quality care and support provided by staff ensure that pupils feel safe and are looked after well.
- Behaviour in classrooms and at social times is good. Older pupils demonstrate caring and considerate attitudes towards younger pupils.
- The strong, insightful and increasingly confident governing body provides robust challenge and hold staff firmly to account for the school's performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and five paired observations were carried out with the headteacher. A detailed work scrutiny was carried out with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, middle leaders including the special needs coordinator, staff, governors, and the local authority educational development adviser.
- He also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the five responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The school is currently in a soft federation with another primary school. Each school is subject to a separate inspection report, published and viewed on the Ofsted website. In September 2015, the school will form part of a hard federation with another voluntary aided school and a community primary school. They will share the same headteacher and a single governing body.
- Almost all pupils are White British with none who speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is low compared with the national average.
- The pupil premium is additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. Currently, there are no pupils eligible for free school meals in the school and there are very few pupils who are looked after by the local authority. There are no pupils eligible for the funding in the current Year 6.
- Provision in the early years consists of Reception children who attend full time who learn in a mixed-aged class with pupils from Years 1 and 2.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day for pupils.
- In this very small school, the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, do not apply.
- The current headteacher was appointed full-time in September 2013. In addition, the school has experienced important changes in the middle leadership and governance since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good to ensure a sustained pattern of rapid progress and high achievement by:
 - ensuring that the work set consistently meets pupils' needs
 - questions are more effectively used to check for any misconceptions pupils may have before moving on to new learning
 - in line with the school's marking policy, teachers provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their work and insist they correct their mistakes and present their work accurately and neatly.
- Improve the quality of learning in the early years by ensuring that:
 - teaching and classroom support sustain a focus on continually extending children's skills, experience, knowledge and understanding
 - there are plenty of opportunities, both indoors and outside, for children to practise their phonics, early reading, writing and number skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, effectively supported by the governing body, is successfully improving the quality of teaching and classroom support. There is an increased focus on developing the skills of teachers and classroom support staff so that expectations of what all groups of pupils should achieve have already risen. Leaders at all levels are committed to improving still further the impact of this vision. Following the previous inspection, unsettled leadership resulted in a decline in the school's performance and pupils' achievement. The decline has been halted and senior leaders and governors are clear on how to improve the school further.
- The determined drive to raise the achievement levels of all pupils is resulting in meaningful improvements in the rate of pupils' progress and, as a result, standards are rising. The pace of improvement is quickening and leaders are making better use of the good information available to pinpoint gaps in pupils' skills, raise expectations higher, and to tailor tasks to present the right level of challenge. Rigorous systems to check pupils' progress is accurately assessed are now in place. Any gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are identified and intervention and support provided where it is needed. Consequently, any gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils are being successfully addressed.
- The recent strengthening of middle leadership is resulting in more robust approaches to checking pupils' progress. As a result, inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' learning are being systematically addressed.
- The stimulating curriculum takes increasing account of the range of pupils' abilities and interests. Effective use of themes and topics successfully link subjects together in interesting ways. For example, older pupils' knowledge of Ancient Egypt was significantly enhanced as a result of a visit of an expert from nearby Bowes Museum. The principles of justice, friendship, tolerance and respect are well embedded in all learning, reinforcing British values successfully.
- A wide range of visits and visitors adds successfully to the level of pupils' experience and interest. Close links with partner schools, in places as diverse as Middlesbrough and Ghana, broaden pupils' experience and helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain and the increasingly global community. There is an increasingly sharp focus on promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all areas of learning. However, improvements in pupils' skills, especially in their writing accuracy, are not happening at a fast enough pace.
- The pupil premium for the very few disadvantaged pupils is used well to enrich their learning. Attainment gaps between them and other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to close, albeit not as quickly as they might.
- Although as yet, some pupils are not achieving their full potential, staff and governors are committed to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance of being successful. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Even though there are clear strengths in the quality of care that the school provides, there are inconsistencies in pupils' achievement.
- The strong relationships fostered with parents and established with the village communities served by the school, effectively enrich the pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, the local church was used to role play a wedding ceremony, thus reinforcing the value and benefits of marriage.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to provide skilled coaching and at the same time enhancing the coaching skills of existing staff. This successfully promotes the value of a healthy lifestyle that regular participation in sport brings. Joining with federation partners, pupils experience a wider range of competitive and team sport. Opportunities are also provided, including the helpful links with local clubs, to encourage more advanced skills in a variety of sports, such as hockey, rugby and triathlon. Pupils' enhanced health and well-being are evident as a result of the good use of the funding.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Procedures are securely established and much effective practice ensures the good care and protection and safety of pupils and adults.
- The local authority has an accurate and perceptive view of the school's performance. It reacted promptly to the dip in performance, challenging and supporting in equal measure, and working to ensure that leadership at all levels was strengthened. The local authority provides strong support in the drive to enhance the quality of pupils' learning by promoting the successful collaborative working across local village schools. For example, there are opportunities for the same age and ability groups to work together for part of the week.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. The recently strengthened governing body has demonstrated a great deal of vision and commitment in its push to enhance the quality of learning in local village schools. Governors recognise their past shortcomings and are now well aware of the importance of ensuring that pupils' achievement is as high as it possibly can be. Consequently, they hold staff to account, regularly checking performance information and the quality of teaching and learning, and make sure performance management of staff is rigorous. Governors know that the improving skills of teachers are now starting to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment. They are alert to the need to check the impact of pupil premium funding when it is provided. The rejuvenated governing body have established high ambitions for the school. This is evident in the positive steps they have taken to share expertise and skills across local schools in order to ensure successful middle leadership.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships in classrooms, at social times and between staff and pupils, are excellent. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other. As a result, pupils' good-natured, friendly and considerate attitudes permeate the whole school, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Clear boundaries are set for pupils' conduct and the effective use of meaningful praise and reward add much to the harmonious school atmosphere. Disruption in any form is infrequent. Occasionally, pupils' concentration drifts a little when work is not matched well to their interests, but learning remains uninterrupted.
- Pupils are proud of the school's achievements and although proud of their own success and achievements, they do not always take sufficient care and pride in the presentation of their work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are well informed about how to recognise a wide range of risk and danger, such as cyber-bullying. In their responses to the online questionnaire, all parents expressed the view that their children were happy, well looked after and kept safe. Pupils thrive on responsibility, particularly older pupils when playing, socialising and working alongside younger pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils thoughtfully and sensitively involve younger pupils in the weekly assembly they manage and present.
- In discussions, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the various forms that bullying can take. They report that mean, selfish or unkind behaviour is infrequent. They add that staff are always on hand to share a worry or concern and act promptly and decisively resolving any inappropriate behaviour.
- A strong sense of belonging pervades the whole school. Pupils who require specialist help are well looked after and supported to acquire more self-confidence and self-control.
- Attendance is above average. This reflects pupils' considerable enjoyment of school life.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, because pupils' rate of progress is too variable over time. Consequently, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is not rising quickly enough as pupils move through the school.
- There is a busy, purposeful and happy atmosphere in classrooms, which is contributing to pupils' improving rates of progress. However, information on pupils' progress is not always well used to shape and adapt activities to match pupils' abilities, interests and needs. This is especially the case in the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar, which means that pupils' writing lacks accuracy.
- When pupils' progress is not good:
 - activities do not always challenge pupils to make the best possible
 - staff do not consistently probe pupils' thinking closely by asking questions that rigorously test their knowledge and understanding
 - opportunities are occasionally missed for pupils to practise their reading, writing and number skills in a range of subjects
 - the layout of pupils' work in books is not of the highest standard.
- In learning, when progress is more rapid and thus achievement is higher:

- methods used spark pupils' interest, ensuring their full commitment and deeper thinking
 - staff consistently test pupils' knowledge and understanding to check for any misconceptions or misunderstandings
 - pupils are provided with opportunities to reason critically, make deductions and clearly explain their thinking
 - there is a firm focus on ensuring that pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are presented in an orderly way and are accurate.
- When teachers' expectations of what each pupil can achieve are high, they set motivating tasks, inspire pupils' thinking and encourage them to persevere and work things out for themselves. This can be seen, at times, in the teaching of mathematics. In Year 6, a small group of pupils were totally engrossed in exchanging information and ideas as they interrogated a graph showing the month-by-month sales figures from two stores. Pupils confidently analysed the information, arrived at conclusions and justified their deductions.
 - Teachers encourage pupils to develop an increasing enjoyment in reading as they move through the school. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to read during the school week and develop an appreciation of a wide range of both author and genre.
 - Although positive action has been taken to establish a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work, its quality is too variable because the school's marking policy is not followed consistently. This results in some pupils learning less from their mistakes and having less guidance about how to improve than other pupils.
 - There are individual examples of good care and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Staff have worked well to ensure pupils quickly acquire the crucial social and emotional skills that will enable them to play a full part in all activities. For example, younger pupils were helped to work as a team engaged in the building outdoors of a model of the Titanic using plastic milk crates, to the enjoyment of all involved. However, support for these pupils' academic development is less effective because teachers do not always ensure that the tasks set help these pupils to achieve as well as they might.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In spite of the recent effective action taken to quicken pupils' progress and raise their attainment, especially in Key Stage 2, there remains more work to be done to ensure pupils' good achievement overall. Even so, current school data show that, in Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved year on year. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is now higher in reading, writing and mathematics than last year. Over time, most pupils have made expected progress but too few have done better than that.
- Positive action has been taken by the headteacher to address some pupils' underachievement in all year groups. As a result, the level of challenge and pace in pupils' learning are increasing, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is because activities are now more often closely tailored to match pupils' abilities and needs.
- A more even pattern of good progress is emerging in Key Stage 2, including in pupils' writing where inaccuracies are being systematically addressed. Nevertheless, pupils' progress remains too variable in the early years and in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The achievement of the most able pupils requires improvement. Currently, more demands are being made of this group of pupils. Tasks are now set increasingly to inspire and challenge these pupils' thinking. Thoughtfully constructed intervention programmes in mathematics utilise the subject expertise of staff from a local secondary school. Consequently, the most able pupils currently in Year 6 are working at Level 5 in writing and Level 6 in mathematics. This more consistent pattern of attainment that is emerging is confirmed both by the school's own records and by inspection evidence.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. Staff are conscientious and, increasingly, they now provide the right kind of challenge and support. However, individual support programmes are not always sharply enough focused upon these pupils' specific, individual learning needs and interests, which means their achievement requires improvement rather than being good.
- The progress and achievement of those disadvantaged younger pupils require improvement. The attainment gaps that exist on children's arrival in the early years in reading, writing and mathematics, between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged, are being increasingly methodically tackled, using pupils' performance information to ensure that they are catching-up with other pupils.
- Good progress is being made in nurturing pupils' love and enjoyment of reading. For example, pupils have

the opportunity to read three mornings each week. However, pupils' reading skills, particularly those of younger pupils, still require improvement. Older pupils read widely and often and speak enthusiastically about their reading and their choice of authors and themes.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start the Reception Year with a wide and varied range of skills and experience. Over time, the small cohorts vary greatly, but children's skills are broadly typical for their age. However, in individual cases, children arrive with no pre-school experiences and have basic skills below those typical for their age.
- Children settle happily and quickly in the busy and friendly atmosphere. This includes those children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result, children make good progress in their personal development. Acquiring the essential skills to enable them to follow classroom routines, acquire independence and be able to work collaboratively alongside their friends.
- Despite good progress in their personal development, over time a below average proportion of children fails to reach a good level of development. This is particularly the case in reading, writing, number and shape, space and measure. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year, they are not prepared as well as they could be for Year 1.
- Teaching and the quality of classroom support requires improvement. Despite the high quality of care and support for children's social and emotional development, there is not enough focus on systematically building upon children's speaking, listening, early reading and writing and number skills. Children's skill in blending letters and sounds together to make sense of new and 'tricky' words is weak. Teaching does not systematically, nor frequently enough, develop these skills either in small group sessions nor through the activities on offer in the various areas of learning, including those planned for outdoors.
- Children's behaviour is good. This is because there is a firm focus on building early confidence, fostering good self-control and nurturing independence. The caring atmosphere, reinforced by the excellent quality relationships with staff, helps to foster children's positive attitudes to learning.
- Regular observations and assessments of children's learning, development and well-being are well established in daily routines. Constructive partnerships with parents make certain they are involved in their children's learning in helpful and constructive ways.
- In spite of the quality of care that the school provides in the early years, leadership and management require improvement. This is because there is not a sharp enough focus on making certain that children progress quickly acquiring essential skills to enable them to achieve as well as they can. Extremely good day-to-day management ensures that all children are safe, secure and well protected.

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	121617
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449655

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Fraser
Headteacher	David Sims
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
Telephone number	01642 700518
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@swainbyandpotto.n-yorks.sch.uk

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