

Fountains Earth, Lofthouse CE Endowed Primary School

Fountains Earth, Lofthouse, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 5RZ

Inspection dates 25–26 March 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not consistently good over time and is not as strong as it is in reading.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems, both in mathematics lessons and across subjects.
- Teachers do not use information consistently about how well pupils have learnt to plan work that closely matches pupils' ages and abilities.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. More-able pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy and does not challenge them to work at a higher level.
- There is still some teaching that requires improvement and so pupils do not make good progress in all year groups and in all subjects.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong in mathematics as it is in reading and writing.
- Although teachers mark work regularly, they do not make sure that pupils correct their mistakes in mathematics. Opportunities for older pupils to re-draft their writing are limited and this reduces the quality of their written work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to plan their own learning and to work things out for themselves.

The school has the following strengths

- Fountains Earth is a happy place to learn. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and well behaved.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading are good. Reading is taught well. Pupils have many opportunities to read in lessons and at home.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The strong Christian ethos and small-school environment enable pupils to respect one another's differences, play fairly and older pupils to care for and support the younger children.
- Attendance and punctuality are high.
- Children in the early years make good progress.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. High expectations, a determined drive for improvement, and rigorous systems to check pupils' achievements regularly are speeding up their progress. However, new initiatives, although effective, have had too little time to make a full impact on pupils' attainment overall.
- The school takes excellent care of its pupils. Outstanding relationships at all levels support pupils well. Pupils say they feel very safe.
- The good curriculum and wide range of clubs provide much enjoyment and enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and considered a sample of pupils' writing and their work in mathematics, science and topic books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, two subject coordinators, a group of pupils and two members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a local authority officer.
- The inspector took account of eight staff questionnaires, the results of a recent school survey of parents' views and 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its current strengths and areas for development, information about pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with staff about their training and systems for checking on pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Brenda Clarke, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is very small compared to most primary schools. All pupils are of White British heritage.
- No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below that seen across the country. (Pupil premium funding is additional funding the school receives for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Children of Reception age attend the Reception/Key Stage 1 class on a full-time basis.
- There have been significant recent staff changes in this small Dales school. The previous headteacher retired in July 2014 and one full-time teacher also left at this time. A new headteacher was appointed for September 2014, together with two permanent teachers. Also in September 2014 the governors entered into a formal collaboration with St. Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School, Pateley Bridge. In this collaboration the two schools share a headteacher. The headteacher works two days each week at Fountains Earth and the remaining three days at St Cuthbert's.
- The school is an active partner within the Dale Teaching Alliance. This comprises a group of nine primary schools and one secondary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up pupils' progress and raise standards further in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems in mathematics lessons and across subjects
 - providing work that challenges and extends the learning of more-able pupils in writing and mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to correct their answers in mathematics and to redraft and improve the quality of their written work.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use their information about how well pupils have learnt to plan tasks that closely match pupils' needs and help the more-able pupils to make progress at a faster rate
 - extending teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' marking and feedback help pupils to know how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities to encourage pupils to think for themselves and for pupils of all ages to plan some of their own steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment in September 2014 in the collaborative arrangement, the headteacher has quickly identified the areas that require development, having rigorously monitored the school's existing provision. The plan for improvement is detailed and addresses effectively the most pressing issues of speeding up pupils' progress and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher has introduced systems that carefully track how much progress each child is making and has ensured a range of effective interventions for those who are falling behind. This close watch is a key reason why most pupils' progress is beginning to improve.
- Challenging targets for improving pupils' progress in mathematics and writing are shared with teachers, making them accountable for the progress and standards of the pupils in their class.
- The headteacher's checking of learning in classrooms is frequent and gives teachers clear pointers for improvement. There is evidence that this has helped some teachers improve their teaching skills. Effective initiatives within the collaboration, together with strong partnerships in the Dale Alliance, are enabling teachers to observe other teachers at work and to benefit from a greater range of training initiatives. There is evidence that teachers are adapting their practice to meet the needs of pupils better, but this is at an early stage of development and has had too little time to impact fully on the quality of teaching and learning overall.
- The headteacher is giving a strong steer to the school and, in a very short time, has skilfully developed a whole-school team with staff firmly focused on raising standards further. All who completed the staff questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed and indicate that they are proud to be members of the school team.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and seek additional training and advice to develop their skills. For example, the early years leader has worked with others in the partnership of schools to develop new systems for checking on children's progress and now maintains a comprehensive record of their day-to-day learning.
- The school's provision for pupils' welfare and safeguarding is outstanding and encourages pupils to behave well. Systems and policies are upheld rigorously and monitored frequently. Staff and governors ensure a very safe school. All who completed the online questionnaire Parent View agree that the school keeps their children safe and happy.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is at the heart of the school's provision. The school fosters good relations and tackles discrimination of any kind. The headteacher goes the extra mile to ensure that all pupils can attend the exciting after-school activities by helping parents who live a distance away to apply for travel costs. Leaders acknowledge that there are not enough opportunities for the more-able to work at a higher level and have initiatives in place to address this.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils' cultural development is good. The school works hard to address the relative isolation of its pupils by planning many opportunities for them to be involved in cultural experiences in the wider area; for example, pupils recently visited a Hindu Temple. Through participating in sport and musical activities, pupils develop outstanding social skills and benefit from mixing with pupils of other cultures. In these ways the school helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Well-planned daily assemblies give importance to Christian values that permeate the life of the school.
- The school's curriculum is good overall. It is enriched by the many opportunities that pupils have, for example, taking part in an adventurous residential or, as seen during the inspection, playing musical instruments in a concert at Leeds Town Hall.
- Partnerships are strong and are especially beneficial for widening curricular opportunities for this small school, for example, enabling pupils to take part in a good range of competitive sports.
- Links with parents are good. The school has an open-door policy and regularly communicates with parents through newsletters and training sessions. The attractive school website provides parents with a wealth of information. All who completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school to others.
- The additional sport funding has been spent wisely. Pupils' well-being has been boosted by additional activities, such as swimming, exciting clubs using ball skills or additional training in athletics.
- Good use is made of the pupil premium to ensure that there is no gap in the learning of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who are not.

- The local authority has been quick to respond to the dip in pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014. Local authority leaders are now keeping a close watch on pupils' progress and are supporting the headteacher in bringing about rapid change.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Many governors are new to their roles but have quickly sought training and advice to develop their knowledge and understanding. Governors have a clear strategic view of the school's provision and know exactly where improvements are required. They check data about the school's performance and information about pupils' progress regularly. They hold the school rigorously to account. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching in the school and understand the links between performance and pay. They have a good grasp of the school's finances and ask pertinent questions about monies spent and their impact on pupils' achievement. Governors bring a range of skills that complement the school's provision. They have systems in place, for example, governor of the half term, to visit the school regularly and report back findings to the full governing body. Governors benefit from being members of the collaboration, seeking training and advice from their partner governors. Together with the headteacher, they demonstrate a good capacity to improve the school's provision further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Most take a full and active part in school life and relish the opportunities that additional clubs and sporting activities give.
- Almost all pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. However, when teaching lacks challenge, a small number of pupils sometimes lose interest and begin to chat.
- Pupils usually work hard in lessons and persevere to complete their activities. They have good attitudes to their learning and concentrate for good periods of time.
- Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and others. They share their ideas with partners willingly and contribute confidently to class discussions.
- Staff have excellent relationships with pupils and support them well, enabling pupils to be happy and confident learners.
- Pupils develop outstanding personal and social skills. They get on very well together. Older pupils support those who are younger, often including them in their playtime games. Pupils' moral development is outstanding. Pupils clearly understand the differences between right and wrong and demonstrate fairness and cooperation at work and play.
- Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities, for example, representing their classmates as members of the school council.
- Attendance is high and most pupils attend punctually each day. There have been no exclusions in recent times.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and speak knowledgeably about aspects such as road safety, cyber-bullying, stranger danger and the inappropriate use of drugs.
- Pupils play safely outdoors, taking care not to harm others while playing games.
- The school carries out rigorous checks when recruiting staff and has good systems in place to safeguard pupils.
- Pupils say there is no bullying. They know to tell an adult if they are unhappy and are confident that staff will help them to sort out their problems.
- Christian values are rehearsed frequently in school assemblies and have a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to behaviour and safety. One pupil mirrors the views of others when saying, 'We treat everyone as we would like to be treated ourselves.'
- The school keeps accurate records about pupils' well-being and behaviour. Scrutiny of the school behaviour log indicates that instances of poor behaviour are rare and that the headteacher works closely with parents to overcome any issues.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching over time is not consistently good because it is not fully effective in speeding up pupils' learning and promoting good achievement for all groups of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' progress well enough to ensure that the most able pupils receive work that stretches them in writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve are not always high enough. This goes some way to explaining why fewer pupils than is the case nationally attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics in assessments at the end of both key stages.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work over time indicates that pupils of differing abilities are frequently given the same work in mathematics. This results in a lack of challenge for the more-able, where almost none of the answers in their mathematics books are wrong, and in too few being correct for those who find learning difficult.
- Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are frequently taught according to age groups, rather than according to ability. This slows the learning for some pupils and has too much challenge for others.
- Teachers have good skills to manage the behaviour of pupils so that most pupils behave well and lessons run smoothly. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons indicates that pupils sometimes do not work at a fast enough pace when the activities lack challenge.
- Reading and phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are taught well across the school. Pupils have many opportunities to read to adults in school and most read regularly with their parents at home. Some pupils also choose to read the magazines and books that are available at playtime.
- Teachers say that their subject knowledge is not as strong in mathematics as it is in reading. They sometimes experience difficulty in finding ways to help pupils solve problems in interesting and exciting ways. They miss opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems in other subjects.
- Recent training in the teaching of writing is paying dividends. Teachers now explain what must be included before pupils begin writing. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt when writing in other subjects, for example, recording the diary of a Norman soldier in a history lesson. These initiatives are helping pupils to think more carefully about the content of their written work.
- Staff training on the marking of pupils' written work is speeding up pupils' progress in writing. Teachers now include the next steps that pupils should include in their work, for example, beginning to choose more powerful words. This is helping pupils to add flair to their writing. Opportunities for pupils to redraft their work are limited and this affects the overall quality of the finished work.
- In mathematics, teachers' marking is often a tick or cross. Time is not allocated for pupils to correct their work.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their learning and ask challenging questions that encourage them to explain their answers in more detail. Throughout the school pupils develop confidence as speakers and regularly contribute to class discussions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants sometimes give pupils too much support. Opportunities are missed for pupils to plan and take charge of their own learning, rather than following the teacher's instructions. This limits opportunities for pupils to follow their interest and experiment with different approaches.
- Knowledgeable teaching assistants work effectively to support small groups of pupils so that they can extend their skills and make progress similar to that of their classmates.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not consistently good because by the end of Year 6 pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not as good as it is in reading.
- It is difficult to compare pupils' standards with those seen across the country because this is a small school with only a few pupils in each year group. However, in 2014 standards at the end of Year 6 dipped significantly in writing and mathematics, but were good in reading. This group of pupils had standards similar to those seen nationally at the end of Year 2, but did not make enough progress in Key Stage 2.
- Across the school, achievement in mathematics is held back because pupils sometimes have difficulty in

solving problems. Scrutiny of work in books indicates that pupils often learn how to do new calculations, but do not have enough opportunities to apply their learning in mathematics lessons.

- More-able pupils have too few opportunities to work at a higher level and frequently undertake the same work as their classmates. This limits the progress they make.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is inconsistent. More-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable because they have few opportunities to consider what they have written and ways in which their writing may be improved. Opportunities are missed to re-draft their work to add quality and flair. At Key Stage 1 more-able pupils have limited opportunities to write at length to develop flow and structure to their writing.
- Pupils' progress in reading is much stronger because pupils have good opportunities to read at school and at home. The majority of pupils are making better than expected progress. Those who are falling behind are given additional support, either individually or in a small group.
- In 2014 results of the Year 1 screen check in phonics were similar to those seen nationally. Pupils are taught phonics in small groups according to their needs. This is effective and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are confidently using their knowledge of letter sounds when writing and that their progress in writing is speeding up because of this.
- Inspection findings indicate an improving picture. The headteacher regularly and rigorously checks on pupils' progress and ensures that there are effective interventions in place for those who are falling behind.
- There is evidence that pupils' progress is beginning to speed up across the school in writing, because the marking of pupils' written work is now thorough and pupils regularly receive guidance on how to improve their next piece of writing. This is not the case in mathematics, where pupils are unsure of how to improve their work.
- The small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, make similar progress to that of their classmates. They receive good, small-group support from well-trained teaching assistants. There is no gap between their attainment and that of others in their age group.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve similarly to others in the class. Good support in lessons and carefully planned additional activities address their differing needs.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the early years section of the Key Stage 1 class with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those typical for their age in all areas of learning. By the time they move into their Year 1 education, more children than the national average have reached a good level of development. This represents good progress.
- Children in the early years are making better progress overall than other pupils in the school. Much has been done to sharpen the staff's understanding about the provision that young children require. In September staff received training on how to check on children's progress carefully. This is providing the class teacher with detailed information about children's achievement on a regular basis. The class teacher uses this information well to plan carefully structured activities that meet children's individual needs. This is a key reason why children in the early years are making consistently good progress.
- Daily well-planned teaching sessions are building children's skills in a systematic way. Most children count and recognise numbers to 20 and beyond and most are using letter sounds in their early reading and writing.
- Children in the early years are mostly taught separately in a small group for writing, reading and mathematics and so receive a good amount of effective adult support. However, this sometimes results in limited opportunities for children to practise working independently and to follow their own interest.
- There is an appropriate mix of opportunities to learn both within the classroom and outdoors. The outdoor learning is planned effectively for children to develop and consolidate their skills in interesting ways.
- Adults ensure that there are good opportunities for children to answer questions and contribute to class discussions. As a result, children's speaking skills are developing strongly. They talk confidently with adults and their friends.
- Adults are good role models for young children, who in turn learn to be polite and caring towards others.
- Children's personal and social skills are outstanding. They listen attentively, sit and concentrate for good

periods of time and really enjoy their learning. Children get on well together, play fairly, take turns and share.

- Leadership and management are good. The early years coordinator plans good opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning at home. Communication between home and school is good. Parents receive detailed information about the planned learning activities for the term ahead and willingly provide additional resources to complement the school's resources.

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	121561
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	448840

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Fry
Headteacher	June Brown
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2010
Telephone number	01423 755289
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