

Heage Primary School

School Lane, Heage, Belper, DE56 2AL

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Standards in mathematics require further improvement as pupils make slower progress in this subject than in reading and writing.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching so pupils' progress is uneven in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers' planning does not always meet the needs of pupils, particularly the more-able, because activities are not hard enough.
- In some lessons, pupils do not learn quickly enough because teachers talk for too long. As a result, pupils lose interest and become distracted too easily.
- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy school, but are not always given enough chances to show what they know and can do. They do not always produce neat work.
- Teachers' questions do not always encourage pupils to explain their reasons for the answers they give, or to reflect on their learning.
- When leaders check the quality of teaching, they do not give teachers sharply focused action points to improve their teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders are developing their roles and do not yet fully understand their responsibilities for improving the school.
- The governing body does not collect enough first-hand evidence of the school's performance so it can take swift action to improve it.
- Not all parents and carers are fully confident about the quality of education provided by the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children make good progress and are set up well for their learning across the rest of the school.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and writing has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved. Attendance rates are now above average. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- Some creative and innovative teaching practices are beginning to make learning more fun and enjoyable.
- Music tuition is a strength of the school. Every pupil learns to play an instrument.
- The teaching of early reading skills is good. Pupils develop into confident readers and enjoy a range of interesting and stimulating books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and observed teaching assistants working with small groups. They looked at a wide sample of work completed by pupils. They also heard pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils, including the school council, members of the governing body, the local authority's improvement advisor, middle and senior leaders, and the coordinator of support for pupils who have special educational needs. They also took account of 15 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, monitoring and evaluation documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school's own analysis of pupils' progress since they started the school, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 66 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as letters received from parents. They also spoke with some parents and carers.

Inspection team

Paul Delbridge-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sue Tabberer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Heage is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils come from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportions supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved the Activemark, Eco Schools Award, Artsmark, and Healthy School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 by making sure pupils take every opportunity to develop, use and apply their problem-solving skills in other subjects and activities.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure all lessons are hard enough for all pupils, especially the more-able, so that they make more rapid progress and achieve at the higher levels they are capable of
 - making sure no lesson time is wasted by teachers talking too much and stopping pupils from learning more quickly
 - checking that pupils know what they need to do and how to improve their work, by asking them searching questions and getting them to think about their work and explain what they have done
 - making sure pupils present their work neatly all of the time
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to play an active role in lessons and to work in teams.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring:
 - subject leaders and governors thoroughly check the quality and impact of teaching on pupils' learning, especially in mathematics, and share best practice with colleagues
 - leaders and managers fully understand their roles and how they are contributing to school improvement, by being held responsible for this through improved appraisal procedures
 - the governing body is fully involved in checking the quality and impact of leadership and management in raising pupils' attainment
 - systems and processes for communicating with parents and carers are improved so that all parents and carers are confident about the quality of education provided by the school
 - pupils learn about and experience people from different faiths and communities in a multi-cultural Britain.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress requires improvement in Key Stage 2. Attainment in reading and writing is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2 but below average in mathematics. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in all classes and the more-able pupils are not yet achieving at the higher levels of which they are capable. Targets set by teachers have been too low, but are now more aspirational because tracking systems that are used to check pupils' progress have been improved recently.
- Children begin school in Reception with differing levels of knowledge and skills which are below those expected for their age, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Thanks to good leadership, teaching and support, children make good progress so they are well set up for their learning in Key Stage 1. The strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' social and emotional skills means they settle quickly and develop good communication, language, literacy, and numeracy skills.
- Standards have improved and pupils make good progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. Pupils are not yet doing as well in mathematics. Pupils understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is improving, and this is contributing to improvements in pupils' reading skills. Pupils are confident readers, and they are able to work out words they do not know by themselves.
- Pupils are keen to show and produce work that reflects their good efforts, especially in their writing. They show they can write interesting and imaginative sentences and paragraphs, and they use accurate comprehension and punctuation skills. However, teachers do not always insist on the highest standards in all subjects. For example, mathematical graphs, charts, shapes and calculations are not always presented neatly and accurately in their books, and occasional spelling errors are not corrected.
- Pupils learn to solve problems in mathematics lessons but they do not have enough chances to develop, use and apply their problem-solving skills in other subjects or other activities around the school. For example, the school council regularly raises money for charities but does not have a budget to develop its understanding and ability to manage a budget.
- Gaps in the achievement between different groups of pupils are narrowing because senior leaders use additional resources and income better than in the past, so all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. This is helping pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, as well as those with special educational needs, to make good progress. However, these pupils do not yet all do as well as other pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the teaching is improving, there is not enough good teaching to ensure pupils make at least good progress in all lessons and classes. Some teachers are starting to use more imaginative and innovative methods to make their lessons lively and fun.
- Good teaching in the Reception class provides all children with a wide range and choice of stimulating activities. This helps them to make good progress, as does the emphasis placed on children learning how to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions about their learning and behaviours.

- Parents are very happy with provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but are not all confident about the quality of teaching in the rest of the school and about the progress their children are making.
- In good lessons, activities grab pupils' attention and spark their interest and engagement because they can take an active role and it is clear what they are going to learn. Pupils enjoy taking an active role in lessons. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson pupils in the role of trainee wizards had to help the class teacher, who was in the role of wizard, to measure different volumes and colours of liquid for a magic potion.
- Learning is at times hindered by teachers taking too long to introduce the lessons. They sometimes assume all pupils need to listen to the same instructions at the same time. This means pupils make slow progress and pupils can become too dependent on the teacher's instructions and guidance.
- A whole-school focus on improving the teaching of phonics, has led to significant improvement in pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils produce some impressive and imaginative pieces of extended writing. They particularly enjoy doing this when they are reflecting on some stimulating learning. For example, in Year 4 pupils had just enjoyed being at the 'Mad Hatter's tea party' and busily wrote imaginatively about their experiences while listening to music which promoted fascination and wonder, particularly for the boys.
- Staff have caring relationships with their pupils which helps pupils grow in confidence. As a result, pupils are willing to learn and are eager to show what they can do. However, they are not always active in lessons and do not have enough opportunity to work in teams to discuss and explore each other's ideas. Pupils are sometimes set homework which is too easy and which does not take account of their abilities.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently show a good enough range of activities and tasks for pupils of different abilities so that each pupil is given the right level of challenge. This means that pupils often have to do the same activities at the same time and pace as each other, and sometimes they are too easy for more-able pupils.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support to pupils, and they confidently and competently lead small groups of pupils in the development of their communication skills. They make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils often use information and communication technology in lessons, and have good skills for researching and presenting information, particularly when developing their imaginative writing.
- Teachers regularly mark and assess pupils' work, and sometimes pupils mark their own work. However, pupils do not work together to share their work and learn from each other. Pupils do not always know how to improve their work because they do not know by what criteria the quality of their work is assessed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Parents and carers who responded on Parent View and talked with inspectors had mixed views about pupils' behaviour and about bullying. They are not always clear or confident about the way in which school leaders manage pupils' misbehaviour, and say the leaders do not always

listen to their concerns.

- Pupils are typically polite and courteous to each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. Most have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to get on with their work, but they do not always produce their best-quality work.
- Pupils are keen to demonstrate their good learning and leadership skills, as shown in an assembly about Persephone and Greek mythology. The assembly was organised, led and managed completely by the pupils in Year 6 for their parents. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities in lessons to demonstrate these skills, and so when teaching is not good they become disinterested and lose focus too quickly.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for at all times, and say they enjoy school. This is reflected in the way they learn and play well with each other. Attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils know and understand about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and they know how to deal with the dangers of the internet. They demonstrate a good understanding of what good behaviour is and what is not, including extremist behaviour. Pupils have a well-developed sense of what is right and what is wrong.
- Pupils are not well informed about and experienced in socialising with people from a diverse range of backgrounds, religions and cultures. This means their cultural development requires further improvements so they develop their roles and identities as members of a multi-cultural society.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. Improvement in the teaching of reading and writing has clearly shown leaders' capacity to make continued improvements in the school, and senior leaders are very well aware of the need to improve pupils' progress in mathematics.
- The improved systems which track pupils' learning give a clear overview of pupils' progress term by term. Leaders and teachers know what needs to be done to improve individual pupils' progress. Any underachievement is addressed rapidly.
- The whole-school focus on improving pupils' literacy skills has meant that pupils' mathematical and problem-solving skills have not been given sufficient attention to ensure they make as good a level of progress in mathematics as they now do in English.
- Appraisal processes need further improvement. Teachers and leaders have not, in the past, been set improvement targets that allow them to demonstrate their impact on raising pupils' attainment, so they have not always been held accountable for their pupils' achievement. They have, however, contributed to wider school improvement priorities and been paid appropriately for this.
- Subject leaders are developing their roles as a result of recent re-organisation of responsibilities and priorities, and are now beginning to work more cohesively to demonstrate a greater impact and contribution to school improvement priorities. They have not been given enough opportunities to check the impact of their work in relation to their responsibilities on a regular basis, or had enough opportunities to share and develop good practice with colleagues.

- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities and creative learning activities to promote good literacy. Insufficiently developed are opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical and financial understanding using real-life scenarios and in other subjects. Pupils show they have good social, moral, and spiritual understanding.
- Parents and carers do not all feel confident about the leadership and management of the school, because they are not always fully kept informed about their children's progress and development, or leaders' and teachers' decisions about their children's education.
- The school makes good use of the expert advice provided by the local authority. This has helped to improve standards and renewed the school's focus on ensuring pupils are making consistently good progress.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the key strengths of the school and areas which need to be improved. They are poised to assist school leaders and managers more centrally in moving the school forward, as a result of recently reviewing their roles in light of the increased expectations of the local authority. Governors are receiving additional training and support from external organisations so they can provide stronger governance. They demonstrate a good understanding of the use of additional income, such as the pupil premium, and the positive impact this is having on pupils who attract the funding. Governors are clear that teachers and leaders are paid appropriately for their roles and responsibilities. However, they agree that they have not always held leaders and managers responsible for pupils' achievement. They recognise they need more training to strengthen their roles and the impact they make as a leadership group. The parent governors are particularly strong and motivated to become more active and involved in improving the school's partnership with parents and carers.

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	112773
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	405422

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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Wickham
Headteacher	Karen Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2011
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