

The Utterby Primary School

Utterby, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 0TN

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly and make good progress.
- Standards are rising because good teaching ensures that most pupils make at least the expected amount of progress, but some do considerably better.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs make greater gains than similar pupils in other schools.
- Pupils' attendance rates are above average.
- In the best lessons, high expectations, tasks at the right level of difficulty for pupils of all abilities and teachers who respond to their changing needs promote sustained progress.
- Pupils greatly enjoy school and feel safe. They behave well and treat each other and adults with respect. Their enthusiasm for learning adds to the progress that they make.
- The executive headteacher leads the school well. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Even though standards are rising because of accelerating progress, pupils' overall attainment in English and mathematics is currently no better than average.
- Some inconsistencies remain in teaching and in the quality of marking.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills through work in other subjects.
- Subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in checking the progress of, and seeing through, actions taken to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governors do not make enough independent checks on key aspects of the school's work to fully inform the support and challenge that they provide.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes covering Reception to Year 6. In doing so, he visited seven lessons and group-teaching sessions.
- The inspector had discussions with parents and carers, pupils, teachers, the executive headteacher, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- The inspector examined information on pupils' attainment and progress, and the work in pupils' books.
- He also examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- The views of nine parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey were analysed and taken into account. The views of other parents and carers received during the inspection were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Glynn Storer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Utterby Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra support through pupil premium funding is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who join partway through their primary school education is above average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- The school is a partner in the Utterby and North Thoresby Federation. The executive headteacher directs the work of both schools.
- The school is due to convert to academy status in the early part of 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics by tackling inconsistencies in teaching and, in particular, by ensuring that:
 - all lessons proceed at a brisk pace
 - work for all pupils is set at levels that are not easy or too hard
 - all marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and that pupils follow up such guidance conscientiously
 - pupils have good, regular opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills through work in different subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - giving subject leaders a more prominent role in improving their subject areas
 - extending the checks carried out by governors, so that they are more able to question leaders and call them to account for how well the school is doing, and to evaluate the impact of the decisions they take.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are settled and happily integrated with older pupils in the class. A good range of activities, taught sensitively by adults, and lots of outdoor learning and play help children to make good progress from the start.
- Children's attainment on entry varies considerably in this small school and is often below the level typically seen for their age. Nevertheless, most children make good gains during their Reception Year and enter Year 1 with skills that are broadly average.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, once well below average, have risen steadily over the last four years as pupils' progress has improved. Historic underperformance has been eliminated and standards are now broadly average by the end of Year 2, as are overall standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The results of the Year 6 national tests in the last two years and the information that the school keeps about each pupil's progress show that standards in Key Stage 2 are also rising year on year. The Year 6 results in 2012 improved on below-average outcomes in 2011. Information on the progress of the pupils now in Year 6 shows that an overall trend of improvement is continuing. They are on course to attain above-average standards by the end of the year, as improved levels at the end of Year 2 feed through to Key Stage 2.
- Attainment in reading is average. By the time they leave school, virtually all pupils read competently and some read well. Improved approaches to the teaching of letters and the sounds they make are improving the progress of younger pupils and helping those who are less confident to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils say that they enjoy reading and are developing clear preferences in their choice of reading matter.
- Almost all pupils make good progress over time. The proportion of pupils making progress at or above the expected rate compares favourably to the national picture. Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds, including those who face barriers to learning, make good gains from their various starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often exceed the performance of similar pupils nationally. Over time, they make similar gains to those made by all other pupils in school.
- The school makes good use of the additional funding it receives through the pupil premium. This provides extra teaching and support staff so that the class for pupils in Years 3 to 6 can be split into two smaller teaching groups for English and mathematics. It is also used to provide extra help and guidance for eligible pupils, who do well because this support closely matches their needs. As a result they are making better progress than that of similar pupils nationally. There is no appreciable gap between the progress made by these pupils and that of all other groups.
- The school receives a relatively high proportion of pupils who have moved from other schools or from other parts of the country. Their attainment levels sometimes have a disproportionate impact on standards data because the year groups are so small. Importantly, however, as these pupils settle in, their progress accelerates and they achieve well during their time in this school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Parents and carers are unanimous in the view that their children are taught well. Inspection evidence is consistent with their positive views.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. Successful recruitment means that recently appointed teachers have brought new strengths that have added to the overall quality of teaching. These are reflected in rising standards and a strong picture of pupils' progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The phase leader has established a good level of consistency of approach across the team that benefits the children at this early point in their school life. Additional adult support is good, for example in the effective teaching of letters and the sounds that they make. Children's evident enjoyment ensures that they get off to a good start in this important area of learning.
- In the best lessons, tasks are pitched at exactly the right level for all pupils. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject engages pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. Teachers have high expectations. Tasks for pupils of all abilities are challenging but attainable.
- Teachers throughout the school manage pupils' behaviour effectively and instil positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils are confident and readily rise to the challenge of work that makes them think hard. Their perseverance and good work rate contribute to the progress that they make.
- Teachers plan lessons conscientiously and modify their daily plans in the light of pupils' performance at each stage. This is good practice, but there are times when planning does not result in good learning. Occasionally, tasks are pitched at the wrong levels; when work is too hard for pupils to cope with, they make little progress.
- At other times, lesson introductions are not always as clear and succinct. On these occasions, pupils are unsure about what they are expected to do and have too little time to apply and reinforce their learning independently. This results in a slower rate of learning, or in skills not being properly understood and practised.
- Good support for pupils who are at risk of underperforming, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, makes sure they achieve well. The role of additional adults in the classroom is carefully planned, as is the purpose of any extra teaching or guidance that these pupils receive.
- Comments in pupils' writing and mathematics books often strike a good balance between praise and constructive feedback on how to improve. Pupils are beginning to act on such feedback and, in doing so, reinforce learning. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking, and a lack of rigour in follow-up with pupils, diminish the impact of this aspect of teaching as a tool for raising attainment.
- Through its federation arrangement, the school has a deliberate policy of 'spreading' the expertise of its teachers. Teachers with particular skills or abilities teach in both schools and this arrangement enhances teaching and learning across a range of subjects, including physical education, art and design.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. In class, pupils are attentive and respond well to teachers' expectations. They take part enthusiastically in all activities and make an effort to succeed. They have positive attitudes to school that add to the quality of their

learning. One pupil commented: '(Our school) is entertaining and friendly.'

- Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and teachers generally use them well. As a result, most lessons proceed at a good pace and are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour.
- All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire felt that behaviour is good and praised the school's approach to ensuring their children's safety.
- A very small minority of responses expressed concern about how well the school deals with bullying. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand the nature of bullying of many kinds, and say that in this school bullying is rare. They have confidence in teachers and other adults to deal with any such incidents that occur.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They know how to keep themselves and others safe. While play is often boisterous, pupils cope sensibly with the restricted play area. Older pupils act responsibly and show consideration for younger friends. They include them in their games and play in a way that is unlikely to cause harm or upset.
- The school has a strong 'family' atmosphere. As one pupil said: 'It's good that we are a small school because nobody gets left out.' This, along with pupils' enthusiasm for all aspects of school life, is reflected in consistently above-average attendance in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has provided strong leadership. She has rebuilt the teaching team and ensured that all staff across the federation have leadership roles. This makes everybody play a part and generates high levels of commitment to identified areas for improvement.
- Leaders' awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate, and they are uncompromising in identifying what needs to be improved. The executive headteacher communicates high expectations that are shared by all staff. Consequently, there is a very strong sense of teamwork.
- Effective procedures for managing teachers' performance and good-quality, ongoing training have improved teaching. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and an increasing amount of teaching is good or better.
- The criteria used for evaluating teaching are based on challenging targets for improving pupils' progress. Teachers are held to account rigorously for meeting such targets, which are also at the heart of the matter when the governing body considers salary enhancements.
- The executive headteacher has managed her wider role within the federation with great skill. She has tackled new challenges boldly and, in doing so, has ensured that nothing impinged on the drive for improvement in this school.
- The forming of the federation has already yielded numerous benefits. These include shared expertise in the classroom, a better distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities, access to a wider range of resources and facilities, economies of scale in organising events for pupils and joint training initiatives. All of these add to the school's capacity to sustain improvement in the future.
- The introduction of an improved plan for teaching the full range of primary subjects is another emerging area of success. It is firmly based on the teaching of skills and is enriched well by a

wide variety of special events and visits out of school. Pupils have had a big say in the content, which helps ensure that it has added relevance, and promotes both engagement and enjoyment. This is reflected in a pupil's comment that 'teachers make learning fun'.

- The work of the wider leadership group is still developing. All have contributed ideas and launched measures aimed at bringing about improvement. However, as yet they have had limited opportunities to check in an organised, in-depth way on the progress of such measures and, where necessary, to see them through to a successful conclusion.
 - Although school leaders have rightly given priority to improving pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, pupils do not get enough opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
 - Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is nurtured well through art, design, drama and music. Social and moral development is fostered well through regular opportunities to learn about local history and global issues, and through clearly defined boundaries of what is right or wrong. Pupils are self-disciplined and readily take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors, and they respond with compassion and generosity to charitable events.
 - The local authority's support for the school over recent years has been effective and proportionate to need. At present, the school receives relatively 'light-touch' support. This is appropriate because the school has shown that it has a good capacity for sustained improvement, largely through its own resources.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body benefits from a good range of professional and community expertise that contributes effectively to aspects of its oversight of the school. Governors arrange regular training in order to keep abreast of the increasing responsibilities that they must fulfil. They check regularly to make sure that the premises are safe, that health and safety requirements are met and that other safeguarding procedures meet all current national requirements. Under the leadership of the recently appointed Chair, the governing body is striving to bring greater rigour to the ways in which it evaluates the work of the school. Governors have a clear 'big picture' of the school's performance and how it compares to other schools. They can talk about some of their specific decisions, such as how pupil premium funding has been spent. At present, they do not carry out enough independent checks to be able to fully evaluate how this and other decisions affect the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress.

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	120484
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	403743

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	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Wells
Headteacher	Sarah Hall (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2010
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