

Lovers Lane Primary and Nursery School

Warburton Street, Newark, NG24 1LT

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 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 | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics has not been good enough over recent years to enable all pupils to reach average standards.
- Teaching is not consistently good to ensure good progress and the work teachers set for pupils does not always match their ability closely enough, particularly for the most able.
- In mathematics, pupils' mental calculation skills are not good enough and this slows their learning.
- The governing body does not know enough about the quality of teaching or how well pupils are doing compared to national averages, to be able to challenge the school sufficiently and hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of the headteacher has resulted in improvements which are beginning to raise attainment in reading and writing.
- Most pupils, especially those in Years 2 to 6, have been making good progress in writing since the start of this academic year.
- Changes made to the teaching of reading are improving progress. Pupils enjoy reading and are developing a love of books.
- Teachers are provided with a good range of training, which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are polite and helpful, behave considerately around the school and have good attitudes to learning. Safeguarding procedures are robust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- General observations were undertaken across the school to observe pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the additional support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of Governing Body and a parent governor, the headteacher, the school's staff including senior and subject leaders. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative for the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents and carers.
- They observed the school's work, looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plans, information about pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated a large sample of their work.
- Staff views were taken into consideration through scrutiny of questionnaires completed by 17 members of staff.

Inspection team

Lindsay Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Maybank

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. It has one class for each year group in Years 1 to 6, plus a Reception and a Nursery class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number from minority ethnic groups.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is well above average but the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a breakfast club and tea-time club, both of which are managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to consistently good or better, so that pupils make at least good progress throughout the school, by:
 - matching activities in lessons more closely to the learning needs of all pupils and not setting work that is too easy
 - ask probing questions to check on pupils' learning and understanding.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills and write at length across all subjects
 - promoting the use of adventurous vocabulary in spoken and written language
 - consolidating basic number facts and calculation skills so pupils can use them confidently to solve mathematical problems.
 - increasing the opportunity for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects.
 - providing daily opportunity for pupils to practise early number and literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the skills of the governing body in understanding pupils' performance data so that they can better hold school leaders' to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The majority of children start the Nursery and Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those expected for their age. By the time they join Year 1, they have made good progress in communication and personal and social skills but early reading, writing and numeracy skills are not as well developed as they should be.
- Last year's test of phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) for Year 1 pupils showed that a below average proportion reached the required standard. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and insufficient activities are planned for pupils to practise these early literacy skills.
- Results for Year 6 pupils in 2012 show that the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was below average. Current school data and samples of work seen by inspectors indicate that a much higher proportion of pupils across Years 2 to 6 are working at the levels expected levels for their age.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils made the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics last year, but very few made faster progress. Although rates of progress have improved this year, they still remain variable, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- This academic year, standards in reading and writing are showing a marked improvement. This is due to the intensive reading recovery programme introduced last year. The recent improvement in writing in Years 2 to 6 is due to better teaching of writing skills, so that specific gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and worked upon. Pupils' knowledge and use of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure are now improved systematically. Presentation of work and handwriting are neater than they used to be in Key Stage 2.
- Progress in mathematics requires improvement as attainment remains below average in each year group. Younger pupils are not given enough opportunity to record practical mathematics using written calculation methods. Across the school, pupils' instant recall of basic number facts, such as multiplication tables and number bonds is weak, slowing the rate of learning. Although pupils do 'Big Maths' weekly to develop methods of mathematical problem solving, they still lack skills in applying written and mental calculation methods.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those supported through the pupil premium funding, pupils whose first language is not English and those who join the school partway through their primary education are making progress in line with their peers. They are benefiting from additional adult help individually, in groups and in class, which has had a particularly positive impact on their reading and writing skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- All parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel that teaching is good. Although the quality of teaching has improved, and much of it is good, it is too inconsistent across the school, and further improvement is required to enable pupils to reach national standards. As a result of this inconsistency, the progress pupils make is not consistently good over time.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have about how well pupils are doing to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. More-able pupils are sometimes given routine tasks to complete which lack challenge. On occasions, work is too hard for pupils and they are not given

enough guidance, for example on the spelling of key words or how to start sentences, to enable them to work independently.

- All pupils have been given individual targets to improve their literacy but these are not referred to regularly in all classes. The use of longer-term targets, which set out what pupils need to learn to achieve a given level, is also inconsistent across the school. This limits pupils' understanding of what they are expected to learn over time, especially to reach the higher levels.
- Pupils are given effective feedback on their work. Marking is thorough and comprehensive with teachers giving clear guidance about the next steps in learning. Pupils say this helps them and, in many books, pupils had made comments responding to the marking. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' questioning and missed opportunities to use questioning as a means to assess the depth of pupils' understanding. Too often, although pupils are keen to share their knowledge and thoughts, teachers' questioning is not sufficiently probing. Answers are not challenged to extend pupils' thinking or to promote adventurous vocabulary.
- In the more effective lessons, relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of what pupils have to achieve by the end of the lesson. In these lessons, the pace of learning is brisk, there is a good level of challenge and pupils are fully engaged in the work. During a successful literacy lesson, pupils were writing a short adventure inspired by the book 'The Bear'. High-quality questioning sparked pupils' imagination, promoted adventurous vocabulary and pupils were highly motivated to get on with their work.
- The teaching of reading is now effective across the school, resulting in pupils' progress in reading being much stronger. There are a number of small-group activities to support reading including an early morning 'Read and feed' group before the start of school. Teachers and teaching assistants have received additional training in the teaching of reading over the last year. Additional books have been purchased to give pupils more choice and to support reading for pupils of different abilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, well mannered and friendly, showing respect and kindness towards each other, both in lessons and as they move around the school. They enjoy the responsibilities on offer to them such as being members of the Eco club and improving the school grounds, or as 'Playtime peacemakers' acting as buddies supporting positive play.
 - All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors say their child feels safe; the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and the school deals with bullying effectively.
 - Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and all agreed that bullying is rare. Pupils are aware of how to keep safe whilst using the internet and mobile technology.
 - School leaders have worked hard to promote the importance of school attendance, which has improved since the last inspection and is currently average, but there is still a small proportion of pupils whose absence is too high.
 - Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and school life. In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and motivated to succeed. Behaviour is good because staff expect good
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behaviour and manage behaviour well. The flow of learning is seldom interrupted by poor behaviour but, in a small minority of lessons where teaching is weaker, some off-task behaviour occurs.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither teaching nor achievement are consistently good. The local authority has recently provided effective support and guidance for the school and leaders have clear plans for improvement. However, some plans, such as developing the role of subject leaders, are still at an early stage. Members of staff are keen to move the school forward. Issues with behaviour have been tackled since the previous inspection, and the focus on reading is helping to improve pupils' work in other subjects. Changes made are having a positive impact and the school has demonstrated that it has the capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Checking of teaching and learning by senior leaders has become more rigorous over the last year. Salary increases are linked to teachers' performance, and all staff have agreed targets that will help them to improve their teaching. An extensive range of high-quality training has been provided for staff, including developing the role of subject leaders.
- Senior staff ensure that pupil premium funding is spent on a range of initiatives to support the learning of eligible pupils. This includes individual tuition for pupils, additional learning resources and funding that enables entitled pupils to attend school visits. The progress of these pupils is now starting to improve in line with the accelerated progress of their peer groups.
- The range of subjects the school teaches is broad and balanced, with a focus on key skills in literacy and numeracy. However, it does not fully meet the needs of all the pupils, particularly the higher-ability pupils. The range of activities, including enrichment through sport, music and visits to places of interest, promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Partnerships with parents and other agencies are good.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the level of care shown to their children and are confident that any concerns they may have will be dealt with effectively.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body has a number of new members and, partly due to limited training, have not challenged leaders rigorously enough about the school's performance. This is because they do not have sufficient understanding of information about pupils' achievement. They are supportive and are committed to the school. Several governors take an active part in school life, visiting classrooms and supporting pupils, but they do not have enough understanding of how they should monitor the school's success or support the drive for improved progress. They are at the early stages of understanding how performance management is being used to improve teaching, but are aware of initiatives which have been introduced, particularly to raise standards in reading and writing. The budget is being used appropriately to support areas requiring improvement, but governors have little awareness of how exactly pupil premium funding is being used to support those pupils who are in danger of underachieving. Governors pay good attention to attendance and safeguarding arrangements. These met current regulatory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 122595 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 406103 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 220 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Brenda Adlard |
| Headteacher | Sarah Holland |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 November 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01636 683353 |
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