

Amington Heath Primary School and Nursery

Quince, Amington, Tamworth, B77 4EN

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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		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

- Absence rates are high, which means that pupils miss too much school.
- Teachers often provide work that is too easy for more-able pupils. As a result they do not do as well as they should.
- Teachers sometimes spend too much time directing pupils. Consequently, they do not develop the skills to learn independently.
- In some classes, pupils' targets are not specific enough.
- The school development plan sets out a detailed programme of actions without considering how these will make an impact on pupils' learning.
- Whilst leaders check the quality of the school's work, they do not always follow up their findings to ensure that improvements have been made.
- Additional adults are not always used effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and treat others with respect. They are happy and feel safe at school. Their relationships with teachers are positive and this creates a good working atmosphere in a large majority of lessons.
- Pupils' writing has improved since the last inspection. By the time they reach Year 6, they write well and enjoy discussing the features of good writing.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to school. Children settle well and the staff establish good relationships with parents.
- Teachers mark pupils work well. This gives pupils good information about how well they have done the work and what could be better.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed ten lessons taught by seven teachers, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Shorter visits were made to see small-group work and the inspector observed one assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body, school leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector talked to pupils during lessons, on the playground and at lunchtime. The inspector also heard pupils read.
- The inspector analysed six responses to the online questionnaire (Parent view) and took into consideration the school's own parent survey and pupil surveys on behaviour. She also spoke directly with three parents who asked to meet with her.
- The inspector analysed responses from seven questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance data, improvement plans, the school's own monitoring and evaluation documents, and documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Merrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with only a few learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. In the last two years almost half of these children have had behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders.
- Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in a mixed-age class and there is one mixed-age class made up of pupils in Year 3 and Year 4.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that work matches the abilities of all pupils, especially the more-able, so that all do as well as they can
 - building on existing good practice in marking by making sure that pupils in all classes are given time to follow up on the feedback given
 - ensuring that pupils' targets are very specific and reviewed regularly
 - giving pupils tasks that allow them to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - the school development plan is clearly focused on measurable improvements in pupils' attainment and progress
 - the advice given after lesson observations always results in improved teaching
 - the investment in additional adults accelerates pupils' learning.
- Improve attendance so that it is in line with national averages by building on their work with parents and external organisations so that pupils attend regularly and do not miss school unnecessarily.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not all make the progress they should, particularly the more-able pupils. This is because tasks set are often similar for all pupils and so are often too easy for the more-able pupils.
- Children start school in the Nursery with attainment levels well below those expected of their age. Their lack of language skills is particularly noticeable. They make good progress as a result of good teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, they are still below but closer to expectations.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are happy and secure. They develop confidence well and are able to share resources effectively. They are enthusiastic about their learning. For instance, they showed great joy and wonder at the frozen sand and watching the ice melt.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to close the gap and, by the end of Key Stage 2, results are in line with national averages. Boys lag behind girls throughout the school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good use of the story mat, story telling chair and book areas. Although teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is not always as carefully targeted as it could be, pupils begin to gain these reading skills and, by the end of Year 2, the majority read at the level expected. Most pupils in Year 6 read well and talk enthusiastically about their reading choices and their favourite authors.
- Children have many opportunities for making marks in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they make a good start on writing. They then make good progress throughout school using many different forms of writing, including recounts of visits, descriptions of characters, letters and leaflets.
- In 2012, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs did not do as well as expected because behaviour issues affected learning for some pupils. However, in most classes and in most subjects, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now make the progress they should.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional funding (pupil premium) make better progress than their peers nationally but their attainment is still below that of pupils who are not known to be eligible for free school meals.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it requires further improvement. Whilst the majority of teaching is good there is still too much which is not. In weaker lessons, pupils lose interest, become distracted and make less progress than in lessons where teaching is good.
- Some teachers do not provide tasks that challenge the thinking of the most able or allow pupils to think for themselves, for instance when undertaking investigations in science. As a result, pupils do not develop the problem-solving skills that allow them to become independent learners.

- Improvements in the way that teachers check on how well pupils are learning mean that the quality of marking is much better than at the time of the last inspection. Marking provides pupils with an accurate picture of how well they are doing and how they might improve. However, not all teachers check that pupils have followed the advice given and effective ways of doing this, such as the 'green pen' system in Year 6, are not yet being shared across the school.
- Good use is made of learning objectives in lessons and pupils are given opportunities to assess their own work against set criteria. Targets are set for what children 'must', 'should' and 'could' achieve in each lesson but these sometimes limit what groups of children achieve. Individual targets are not referred to regularly or used effectively to focus pupils on improvement.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Teachers provide many opportunities for early writing experiences and children enjoy writing cards and messages for the Christmas elves. Role-play areas, such as the stable with masks and props, support children's language development well, and both inside and outside provision is used effectively.
- Pupils are motivated best when activities are interesting and exciting. The pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Leicester museum and then behaving like palaeontologists, finding and matching dinosaur bones to make a skeleton picture. They were happy to help each other and work together to make sure that they were as accurate as possible.
- Writing is taught well, particularly in Year 6. In this class, the most able are encouraged to analyse pieces of writing, identifying strengths and weaknesses and discussing how these might be applied to their own work. Throughout school, displays of different kinds of writing, annotated with comments and evaluations, promote effective writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In school, pupils' behaviour is good. At times, such as in assembly, it can be exceptional. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and to the adults who work in school. They understand the need for good behaviour and are able to explain both the sanctions and reward systems which have been implemented across school.
- Relationships with staff are good and disruption to lessons is rare. There is a positive atmosphere in the classrooms, and pupils settle quickly and quietly to their tasks. They work together well and support each other, as when a Year 6 pupil commented on how well another pupil was doing with their writing. Behaviour on the playground and in the dinner hall is generally good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and how to stay safe. They are aware of issues such as cyber-bullying and are able to give a detailed description of what should be done if this were to happen. They also understand issues around inappropriate use of language and feel that the 'worry box' is an effective way to have their concerns heard.
- Parents and staff are not unreservedly positive about behaviour and, in the past, there have been some pupils with serious behaviour issues in school. However, the school supports children who have behavioural and emotional difficulties effectively, for instance, through the 'Cherry Tree group' where pupils learn to understand themselves and others better.
- Attendance rates remain low. Although the school has worked extensively with external services, some parents do not ensure that pupils attend school regularly enough. This has an impact on

the progress these children make and the attainment levels they reach.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Systems for checking the quality of teaching give senior leaders an accurate picture of the school. However, leaders' lesson observations are not followed up with sufficient rigour to ensure that teachers make the necessary improvements and pupils' progress is maximized. As a result, both teaching and achievement require improvement.
- The additional funding (the pupil premium) is used to provide significant amounts of additional help for pupils through one-to-one and small-group support. Some of these strategies are more effective than others in promoting pupil progress and leaders at all levels, including governors, are not ensuring that the money being used is always resulting in improvements in results.
- The deputy headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader are currently taking on significant additional responsibilities until newly appointed staff take up positions in January 2013. They have a good understanding of what needs to be done in their subject areas and teachers appreciate the support that they provide.
- The range of subjects is broad, and themes are used well to link different subjects together. As a result, pupils are given plentiful opportunities to use their reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills across different subjects. For instance, pupils prepared a spreadsheet for the costs to take a group on a visit to Egypt. Visits such as the trip to the theatre to see *Alice in Wonderland* are eagerly anticipated. Leaders also ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of other cultures, and pupils talk knowledgeably about different religions.
- The local authority has provided the school with good support at all levels. Subject specialists have worked with individual members of staff and support for governance has ensured that the governing body is able to challenge and support the school effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been significant changes to the governing body this year. New members have brought an increased capacity to bring the school to account and a determination to increase the school's effectiveness. They have already developed a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the impact of performance management processes and their link to teachers' pay. They ask questions about the data generated in school and have provided good support to the headteacher in developing plans for improvement. However, they have not ensured that these plans are sufficiently focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress. Governors have benefited from well-focused training to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively, including ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	124176
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402236

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Legge
Headteacher	Oliver Fordham
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2009
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