

# The Harlaxton Church of England Primary School

Swinehill, Harlaxton, Grantham, NG32 1HT

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because they are taught well in all classes. By the end of Year 6 they reach standards which are above average and they excel in reading.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. In the majority of lessons, teachers show that they expect pupils to do their best and behave well.
- Pupils from different groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress. Their needs are understood and they are supported well.
- Provision in the Reception class is good. From starting points that are in line with those typical for their age, children make good progress.
- Pupils receive good advice on how to improve their work. Teachers' spoken feedback and written comments are acted upon by pupils and this secures their good progress.
- Behaviour is good, in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe, have positive attitudes towards school and genuinely enjoy learning.
- The executive headteacher provides inspirational leadership, and is ably supported by the school's team of leaders and managers. They share a common vision and determination to continually improve the school. The management of teaching is outstanding.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the school and provide consistently high levels of challenge to ensure that the school keeps on improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils, particularly the most able, reach the higher National Curriculum levels in tests in English and mathematics because work set is not always challenging enough for them.
- Teachers do not always give pupils opportunities to find things out for themselves and use their initiative. This occasionally limits progress because pupils are too dependent on teachers' instructions.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to observe one-to-one support and small-group booster sessions.
- Inspectors also watched two school assemblies.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with two different groups of pupils. They spoke with five school governors, a local authority representative and school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the on-line Parent View survey when carrying out the inspection, and also spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school. Responses to 14 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documents, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sara Storer

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Harlaxton is smaller than the average primary school and is part of a federation in partnership with an outstanding primary school in the area. The two schools share one governing body and are led by an executive headteacher.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions who speak English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic groups, are well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school uses its own facilities to teach pupils and does not use any alternative provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement so that it becomes outstanding by:
  - making sure that the work set in lessons is always hard enough for all of the pupils, particularly the most able
  - creating more opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and show initiative, so that they can make even more rapid progress without always being dependent on their teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children joining the school in the Reception class have skills which are expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers and adults plan together and encourage them to develop confidence and independence in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress through the school and by the end of Year 6 are reaching standards which are above average overall. In previous years the attainment at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average because teaching was satisfactory. School data shows that all pupils in Key Stage 2 have made good progress since teaching improved and the current Year 6 are on track to reach much improved standards. Occasionally, a few of the most-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because the work set is not always challenging enough.
- Parents, carers, and pupils say that progress is now good. Gaps in attainment between girls and boys are closing. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve well. Their average points score is ahead of others' nationally for all subjects. In school the difference in points between those eligible and other pupils is reducing and is getting closer to that seen nationally. Extra funding through the pupil premium is used very effectively to provide targeted support in school.
- Standards of reading overall are above average for their age. The more-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with good expression, demonstrating skill levels above those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years show that they understand the principles of reading and have successfully been taught to cope with unfamiliar words. Pupils speak happily about their enjoyment of reading. Year 1 pupils achieve higher than average results in the 2012 national phonics screening test. This test checks whether pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make are at the expected level at the end of Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good quality support and achieve well as a result. Additional funding to provide adult support for smaller groups has been effective in promoting pupils' success in learning.
- All pupils make at least good progress in lessons. In a few of the lessons observed, progress was outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally keen learners and relish opportunities to be actively involved in lessons. In a typical mathematics lesson, pupils worked hard to find solutions to high level shape rotations, carrying out their own investigations and sharing ideas to explain what happens. They enjoyed the chance to be independent and think for themselves, quickly developing essential problem-solving skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations, work seen in pupils' books and the school's own records show that good teaching over time enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. In the majority of lessons, teaching is consistently good. This evidence also shows that teaching has improved over time, and is now outstanding in a few lessons.
- Teachers in school and within the partnership plan together, carefully taking account of what pupils already know, understand and can do. This ensures that activities are usually suitably demanding for most pupils and engage the interest of both boys and girls, motivating them well. Occasionally the most-able pupils are given work that is not demanding enough for them, and this can limit their progress.

- The school provides good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. All pupils receive high-quality support from teachers and dedicated teaching assistants at the right level for them within lessons and in one-to-one or small-group activities. Their progress is carefully tracked so that they achieve well.
- Activities in lessons are varied and teachers use different methods and resources to bring topics to life. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT), visual aids and a range of paired and group activities so that pupils can be more actively involved in their learning. Their resulting motivation and enjoyment of learning contribute to their good progress.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching is outstanding, teachers are very effective in creating opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking, apply ideas and find things out for themselves. However, this is not widespread across the school and often pupils are overly dependent on the teacher for direction.
- Marking across the school is consistently good, and pupils say that they value this as it helps them to know how to improve and to reach their targets. Pupils' respond to teachers' comments which help them to make good progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are exceptionally polite and well-behaved around the school. They hold doors open and volunteer to help others without being asked to. They respond well in class, especially when teaching is good, and show positive attitudes to learning.
- The parents and carers who responded to Parent View, and staff who completed the school questionnaires, agree that behaviour in lessons and around school has improved.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the older ones speak positively about how the atmosphere has changed for the better. They treat each other with mutual respect and are tolerant of each other's differences. Year 6 pupils take on the roles of buddies and look after Reception children, helping them to settle in their first term.
- Pupils benefit greatly from being part of nurture groups which meet every half term. They mix with others from different years and are encouraged to help and support each other. Pupils offer others advice and this helps with their emotional and personal development.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well across the school and this has contributed directly to the calm and positive atmosphere in the school. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils do not manage their own behaviour to a high enough standard without the need for adult intervention.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand risk and know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. There are few racist incidents and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Attendance has improved and is now in-line with the national average. The school has been proactive in raising attendance and continues to work with parents discouraging holidays during term time to ensure that their children attend regularly.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The executive headteacher has been highly successful in helping to transform the school, and in establishing and sharing a clear vision of improvement. School leaders work together with a great sense of passion and commitment, and their high expectations are reflected throughout the school.
- Leadership roles have evolved and strengthened and several of the school's leaders have moved across from the outstanding partner school. The powerful working partnership between the two schools has played a key role in accelerating the improvements seen.
- Responses to staff questionnaires were unanimously positive and praising of the leadership team. Staff are clear about their roles and understand the school's priorities, stated in the development plan.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and acts quickly to address any gaps so that the pace of improvements is not hampered. School development plans are realistic and sharply focused. They illustrate well the school's ambition to seek ongoing improvement, and plans to raise standards are linked to close monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and progress.
- Leaders make sure that the way they check on teachers' performance links directly to whole-school priorities, the impact on pupils' progress and, in turn, staff salaries. This has raised the quality of teaching in the school, including the proportion of good and better teaching in lessons.
- Pupils are taught a broad and interesting range of subjects. These are enhanced by planned activities which provide memorable experiences and create opportunities for pupils to prepare for life beyond school. Recent visitors to the school included a snake, tarantula and a rat to enrich the Africa topic.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted. No pupil, regardless of background or need, is denied access to anything the school has to offer. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination against any pupil.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development well. It has strong links with the church, local community and with its partner school.
- The local authority has supported the school very well. It has contributed to improvements in teaching, and its assessment of teaching and learning has contributed to the overall rise in the quality of teaching. Support is now at a low level.
- Safeguarding meets current government requirements and is effective. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff have undergone training at the required levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors work exceptionally well in close partnership with the school and the local authority. Members of the governing body are highly skilled and have been instrumental in strengthening the partnership between the two schools and aligning their systems so that there is cohesion and clarity of vision. They ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, for example, in the way that pupil premium money is spent on providing additional tailored support for individual pupils such as a teaching assistant trained to deliver a specific intervention. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are checked

carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. Governors' monitoring is thorough and includes regular visits, governor open days and a weekly meeting between the chair and the headteacher to check directly on key areas of the school's work. This helps them to have an insightful working knowledge of the school's strengths and what still needs to improve, and is supported by training to improve their own.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120525
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405936

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	E Philips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheriden Edwards
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01476 561077
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