

Hawthorn Tree School

Toot Lane, Boston, PE21 0PT

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- There are inconsistencies in the progress pupils make from one year group to another, and between different groups. For example, boys do not do as well as girls, especially in writing.
- There is not enough good or better teaching, and work is not consistently set at the right level for the individual abilities of learners.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve their work, because at times learning targets are not made clear, particularly in writing.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have not focused enough in the past on the impact of teaching on the progress that pupils make. Consequently, they have not supported teachers to develop their teaching to have a greater influence on learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The progress that children make in Reception is good because activities are well organised and interesting. Pupils in Year 6 also make good progress because of good teaching.
- The teaching of early reading and writing to the youngest pupils is good.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics is improving across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Behaviour is good, and the school promotes a culture of respect amongst pupils.
- Pupils feel safe, they enjoy coming to school, and have good relationships with their teachers.
- Pupils benefit from a broad range of activities when at school.
- Leaders have responded well to the increasing number of pupils wishing to attend the school, creating a new high quality learning space.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear picture of how the school needs to improve and are now identifying the right priorities for development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils of different ages read and examined display work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the current and previous Chairs of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), analysed the responses from other parent questionnaires recently undertaken by the school, and talked to parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Hibbert

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school, with a roll that has risen significantly in the last year. The majority of pupils are White British.
- Out-of-hours provision for children aged 4-11 is provided on the school site, but it is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is slightly above average as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are educated onsite. There is no alternative provision elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' understanding is checked regularly in lessons and books, so that teaching can be adapted as required based on the feedback teachers receive on how well pupils are learning
 - providing enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, particularly those of boys.
- Improve the usefulness of information recorded by teachers regarding the progress that pupils are making by:
 - ensuring data on progress and attainment is used consistently by class teachers to set work at the right level of difficulty for different groups and individuals in their classes
 - making sure that the learning levels and advice for improvement recorded in the front of exercise books enable pupils to understand their next steps in learning, particularly in English.
- Further strengthen the capacity of leaders to implement improvements by:
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus sharply on the quality of pupils' learning and use information about the learning to challenge and support teachers to make improvements to their teaching
 - making sure that the governing body uses information on pupils' progress, alongside a summary of the lessons observed by senior leaders, to monitor and challenge whole school performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils consistently make good progress in Reception. Most begin school with skills and knowledge that are below expected levels of development for their ages, with some well below. By the end of Reception, their levels of development are close to national averages. Children make particularly good progress in early language and writing, given their starting points.
- Overall, pupils' progress from the start of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 is rarely better than adequate. When compared to schools nationally, attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly average in reading and mathematics. It is below average in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and slightly below average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Progress varies across year groups, with the best progress in Reception and Year 6. There is some evidence that standards in reading and mathematics are beginning to improve in Years 1 to 5, however, in the last three years, progress has consistently been no better than adequate, with some pupils making insufficient progress.
- The quality of the teaching of reading skills has recently improved, and, throughout the school, more time has been made available for pupils to use such skills in other subjects as well as in English. Pupils are, thus, increasingly able to read well. Similarly pupils have good opportunities to use their number skills for problem solving. Less time, however, is made available for pupils to practise their writing skills in English or other subjects, or to develop different styles of writing. Progress in writing is thus slower, especially for boys.
- Low, middle and high ability pupils all make similar progress, with few pupils making better than adequate progress. For example, when compared to similar schools nationally, very few high ability pupils achieve a top level of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly similar to that of other pupils in the school. Whilst their attainment is higher than the below average attainment of similar pupils nationally, they mirror their school peers in not making better than adequate progress when compared to all pupils nationally. The gap in the performance of these pupils when compared to other pupils has, however, improved over recent years because they have received effective tuition on an individual or group basis.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make a strong start in Reception. They maintain steady rates of progress across both key stages, making better progress when learning in small groups or receiving individual tuition.
- Pupils with additional requirements such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make slower progress when taught within a whole class, since work is not often planned to take account of their learning difficulties.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough good or better teaching in Years 1 to 5, and, although during the inspection the teaching seen in Reception and Year 6 was consistently good, none was outstanding. This results in progress being no better than adequate across the school.
- Provision in Reception is consistently good. Learning is very well matched to children's current

levels of development, and they, thus, make good progress. The balance between input from adults and children making their own choices about the activities they would like to do is good.

- Teaching in Years 1 to 5 is too often planned on a whole class basis, rather than designed to address the specific learning requirements of individuals or groups. For example, there is not enough time made available for pupils to undertake work on their own, such as practising, and hence improving, their writing skills. In addition, teachers do not always keep a close enough eye on how well pupils are getting on during a lesson and how well they understand the work they are doing.
- Where teaching is better it is planned around gaps in pupils' understanding. For example, following a recent assessment exercise in mathematics, pupils in Year 6 were observed undertaking tasks based on those areas where they had answered incorrectly.
- Whilst books are marked regularly and accurately, teachers do not always tell pupils how to improve their work, or inform them of their next steps in learning. For example, in discussion, pupils said that their understanding of how well they were doing in mathematics was better than in English, especially writing. This is because the learning targets recorded in the front of each pupil's mathematics book clearly states what they can, and cannot do.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are beginning to rise across the school, due to a new library, more accurate recording of learning needs, and improvements made to the teaching of reading and number skills. However, such improvement is yet to be seen in writing, where teachers do less to tailor work to individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium receive extra help from teachers and support staff, which enables them to make appropriate progress. The funding also gives them extra resources and trips to extend their learning opportunities.
- Support staff are effective when leading learning in small groups and when providing support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Learning is well planned for these pupils, who benefit from the good subject knowledge of those supporting them. However, in class they are less well supported, as teaching too often fails to focus on their individual requirements for learning.
- Teaching makes a reasonable contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all year groups. Pupils forge links with other schools and individuals from different cultural backgrounds, and benefit from teaching across a wide variety of artistic, musical and spiritual topics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes contribute to a secure and safe school environment. Pupils collaborate very well in lessons. For example, during the inspection Year 6 pupils were seen working in groups to create highly imaginative dance routines.
 - Disruption to lessons caused by poor behaviour is rare. Adults have very good relationship with pupils, who respond by treating teachers with a high level of respect.
 - Pupils play well together, helping and supporting each other. Bullying is rare and awareness of
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how to spot and report bullying is good at all age levels. Pupils unanimously feel that adults respond quickly and helpfully to any concerns raised.

- Pupils have good awareness of risk, and know what to do and who to tell if they feel unsafe. Their awareness of e-safety is good, and begins at a young age and covers a range of technology.
- The school is good at identifying individual pupils who may need additional and wider support. Some, where such needs have been identified, receive multi-agency support and all adults involved are well-informed about their individual circumstances and the nature of support required.
- Systems and procedures for recording incidents about behaviour and safety meet requirements. The contents of such records suggest that incidents are very rare, and that there are no patterns regarding the types of pupil involved.
- Attendance is above average, and the school works well with parents to ensure that pupils come to school. Any unexpected absence is quickly followed up, ensuring that pupils remain safe.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has led the school through a challenging period of growth, managing a significant expansion to the school buildings. The senior leadership team recognises that in recent times not enough attention has been given to the monitoring of pupil progress across year groups or subject areas.
 - Senior leaders observe teachers' work and make accurate judgements concerning the behavior of pupils in lessons. However, such observations do not always accurately record how well pupils are learning. For example, the school's own lesson observation data records good progress in most lessons, while the school's pupil assessment data shows that few pupils make good progress.
 - The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with outstanding features. All staff do their jobs very well, and high standards of care are provided.
 - Whilst subject leaders have good specialist knowledge, and collate assessment data accurately, variations in the rate of progress made by some learners have gone unchallenged. As a result, training for class teachers has not been appropriately focussed on the right areas of development, such as ensuring that pupils, especially boys, have enough opportunities to develop their own writing.
 - The school's own self evaluation recognises the development priorities identified on the inspection, and the local authority has recently put in place support to address some of the weaknesses. The school, thus, has capacity to improve, and has already started to raise the quality of learning in mathematics and reading.
 - Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is secure. Pupils make better progress when they are taught in groups or individually, with learning outcomes closely monitored by the special educational needs coordinator.
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- Safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations. Leaders and managers are equipped to ensure all staff recruited are closely checked and identify and respond to concerns regarding child welfare.

 - The range of subjects and topics taught is extensive, and matched to the requirements of different age groups. A wide variety of activities are available for pupils to participate in, including sports and dance clubs. In discussion, pupils express how much they value the range of learning opportunities available.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led by a new Chair who has an improving knowledge of the needs of the school. Whilst governors' roles and committee responsibilities are linked to priority areas, these have only recently been aligned to the improvement of pupil progress. The governors hold leaders to account for the school's performance, although, recently, performance indicators have been too focused on the delivery of the school's building extension. Governors know that this has distracted the school's senior leadership team away from the core business of delivering high quality learning. Earlier in the year, governors re-focused the school development priorities to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. This demonstrates a capacity to improve. Governors have recently undertaken training to ensure that they understand how to analyse pupil progress data and they use the data to monitor teaching. Consequently, they now have a good understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent, and that it is leading to improved levels of attainment for the pupils eligible for this funding. Governors are also ensuring that teachers' pay and promotion are linked to their performance in helping pupils to achieve better and attain higher standards.
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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	120424
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	401937

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	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Griffiths
Headteacher	Martin J Lister
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2009
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