

# Nythe Primary School

Nyland Road, Nythe, Swindon, SN3 3RD

## Inspection dates

20–21 February 2013

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | <b>Good</b>                 | <b>2</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress, especially in writing.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels by the end of Year 6 because of a lack of challenge, particularly in English.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to make sure that all pupils catch up when they have fallen behind and there are strong variations between year groups.
- Not all teachers make writing activities exciting enough and there are too few chances for pupils to write at length about subjects they enjoy in different parts of the curriculum.
- There are some weaknesses in how well teachers give work at the right level, particularly in making sure that work for the more able pupils is not too easy. This aspect of teaching is strong in some lessons but weak in others.
- Leaders have begun to improve teaching but they have not done so sufficiently rapidly to make it consistently good.
- In the Reception class, progress and teaching require improvement because staff are hampered from extending learning in the outside area.
- Behaviour is not good because some pupils lose attention and misbehave when activities in some lessons are not planned well enough to interest or motivate them.
- Governors have not been as effective as they should have been in holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.

### The school has the following strengths:

- There are now good systems in place for school leaders to check carefully the progress that each pupil is making.
- Leaders and the governing body are determined to make further improvements and have high ambitions for pupils and for the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and enjoy their lessons. They understand how to keep themselves safe in many different situations including when using the internet.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, amounting to nine hours in total. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders and teachers who have responsibilities for specific subjects, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and with groups of pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 18 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to a group of parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors also analysed 21 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is small.
- The proportion of pupils that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. A new headteacher took up post in September 2011 and a new Chair of the Governing Body in October 2012. A high number of teachers have left or joined the school over the last two years.

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

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching so that pupils' learning and progress are consistently good by:
  - making sure that teachers set tasks in lessons that get the most out of pupils, particularly the more able
  - ensuring that pupils spend less time listening to teachers talking and have more opportunities to be busy on tasks that help them do their best and find out things for themselves
  - using questions more astutely so that pupils think more widely and deeply
  - insisting on high standards of behaviour at all times.
- Raise attainment and improve the rate at which pupils make progress in writing by:
  - making sure that writing tasks are more exciting and relevant to all pupils, especially boys, so that all have a greater enjoyment of writing
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing when working in different subjects
  - making sure that all teachers give pupils help in how to structure their writing to give them more confidence to write.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
  - new systems for checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are used effectively by all leaders to bring about faster improvements to teaching and achievement
  - governors are more active in monitoring the school and checking that agreed actions are effective in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Develop the outside learning areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are used more effectively for developing all areas of childrens' learning and, in particular, to extend pupils' physical development.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills and abilities that are typical of those expected for their age. Progress is not yet consistently good between year groups throughout the school, although progress is improving and attainment rising, particularly in mathematics. Even so, pupils' attainment remains broadly average when they enter Year 1 and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, especially in writing.
- Too few pupils, in comparison with national figures, make more than the progress expected of them between Years 3 and 6. This is particularly true of the more able pupils in English.
- Progress is held back in the Reception class because there are too few high-quality outdoor resources for the children to improve their climbing, clambering and physical skills.
- Achievement in writing has started to improve, but not as quickly as in reading and mathematics. Most pupils make reasonable gains in the techniques of punctuation and sentence structure but only occasionally does their writing reflect real enthusiasm or enjoyment. Pupils' handwriting is not always well formed and their work is not always well presented.
- Staff have worked successfully to find reading and number activities that pupils find challenging and enjoyable. From an early age, children gain confidence in recognising letters and the sounds they make. Pupils in most year groups use these skills to recognise and understand words so that across the school, more and more pupils are beginning to enjoy reading stories and books relevant to their age and interest.
- The school keeps a close and watchful eye on the progress of every pupil and of different groups of pupils, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Much improved systems to check pupils' progress are helping to spot when individuals are falling behind. The extra support which is put in place to help these pupils catch up is effective and this means that no group of pupils is underperforming.
- There is still some difference between the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and others in the school. For instance in 2012, pupils eligible for such funding attained average points scores of 24 in English and 25 in mathematics, compared to 28.9 and 28.8 for all other pupils in the school in these two subjects. This gap, however, is smaller than that seen nationally because the school uses its pupil premium funding astutely to provide extra staffing to support these pupils in their learning and in their emotional well-being.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others. The additional support provided by the school enables many to do their best. This is not always the case, however, and in some classes, these pupils do not make better than adequate gains because teachers do not consistently ensure that tasks set are suitable for their needs.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all year groups and so requires improvement.
- Learning is held back in some lessons because there are times when pupils are not fully stretched and challenged, especially the more able. Some weaker teacher does not allow individuals who have fallen behind to catch up again. There is variation between year groups. There are times when pupils spend too long listening to teachers' explanations and this limits the opportunities for pupils to find things out and learn for themselves.
- In many classes, teachers take care to check that pupils have understood an idea by asking individuals precise and often quite probing questions that encourage them to think deeply. This is not always the case, however. Many teachers still rely on volunteers putting up their hands rather than targeting questions to individual pupils. This makes it easy for some pupils not to participate in question and answer sessions.
- Pupils have clear targets to aim for in their learning. These are not always used to guide

improvement when pupils write in different subjects across the curriculum.

- Where teaching is good, lessons are purposeful and tasks are well planned to get the most out of each pupil so that learning proceeds at a good pace. Good opportunities for drama, role play and talking with partners give pupils chances to talk through their ideas about stories and characters. In an excellent Year 5/6 English lesson pupils were imagining and then writing about what it would be like to be a Victorian child working down a pit. All pupils were totally immersed and enthusiastically took part in a role play of going down the mines. Very skilled questioning by the teacher drew out sophisticated ideas and refined vocabulary from the pupils and prompted them to write a lengthy and high-quality account of the scene.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up to date and often sets out clearly what has been done well. Through helpful and constructively written comments they ensure that pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve.

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

### **require improvement**

- The school has been working hard to help pupils take responsibility for managing their own behaviour in lessons and around the school, but too few pupils are able to do so without the need for supervision.
- Behaviour in some lessons is not good enough. Pupils lose concentration and become restless because the work does too little to engage them and expectations of behaviour are too low. The school has introduced new procedures in lessons, which are generally supporting the better management of behaviour, but not all teachers use them consistently.
- Pupils emphasised that behaviour has improved and confirmed that disruptions are now rare. They say that any misbehaviour is more firmly dealt with appropriately by most teachers and other adults. School records show there are fewer reported cases of misbehaviour and almost no fixed-term exclusions.
- Bullying of any kind is rare and pupils and parents and carers say that unkind behaviour, such as name-calling and teasing, are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school has worked successfully to make all pupils aware of the different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to gender, race and disability.
- The school makes great efforts to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils have an awareness of issues relating to safety and how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- Most pupils enjoy school, which is demonstrated by their above average attendance rate and good levels of punctuality.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- Although leaders have raised achievement and improved the quality of teaching over the last year, there are still inconsistencies which require eradication. The school's accurate view of its own performance means it has clearly identified most of the important issues that need to be tackled, and actions have been taken to do so, but the full impact of these actions is not yet showing through the school.
- Good systems are now in place to monitor the quality of lessons and the overall progress of pupils. Clear feedback, coupled with appropriate advice and training, is offered to teachers whose performance falls short of the mark. However, leaders do not always follow up these shortcomings with sufficient urgency so that the improvement in teaching is not as rapid as it could be.
- Systems for setting targets for teachers to improve their work are now being used rigorously to reward good performance and are based on an accurate review of teaching and progress.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Progression in reading, writing and numeracy skills is planned for and much has been done to help pupils enjoy reading. However, the curriculum is not yet giving pupils enough chances to write about different subjects or about subjects that really appeal to them.

- The school works effectively with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning.
- The local authority keeps a close check on the performance of the school and has provided a balance of challenge and support to help the school improve.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors bring a good range of skills to their roles and have undergone useful training. They have an increasingly realistic knowledge of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools across the country. They are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and are now involved in decisions that reward teachers for good performance. Governors understand how pupil premium funding is spent but have had insufficient information to be able to check on its impact on the school's most vulnerable pupils. In addition, the governing body has not, until recently, had enough information to identify patterns in pupils' achievement accurately or to ensure that teaching is improving quickly enough.

## 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> | 126249  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Swindon |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 403597  |

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>                     | Community                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 174                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Kevin Parry                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Bethan Fry                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 13 December 2007           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01793 524024               |
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