

Lutton St Nicholas Primary School

Lutton, Spalding, PE12 9HN

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2013

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

- Pupils do not learn consistently well in the different year groups. Progress is slower in mathematics than in English.
- Teachers sometimes set work that is too hard or too easy, especially in mathematics. This is because lesson plans for mixed age classes do not take enough account what pupils have already learned to do.
- Teachers do not check often enough that pupils fully understand the work they are undertaking, and that it is challenging them to reach higher levels.
- Marking does not give enough guidance about what to do next to improve.
- Too often, teachers give extended explanations about what pupils are going to do. This inevitably curtails time available for learning.
- Subject leaders are not active enough in helping the headteacher to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Governors have not done enough to make the school rapidly improve pupils' progress, nor have they made full use of the potential of the federation to improve teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They have good relationships with teachers and other adults. They enjoy school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- Staff are totally committed to the education and well being of the pupils. Staff morale is high.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The hard-working headteacher knows the strengths of the school well, is right about what it needs to do to improve, and is doing the right things to be successful.
- The school gives pupils a wide range of experiences outside the classroom including trips and residential visits.
- The school has close links with pupils' families.

Information about this inspection

- At the same time as Lutton St Nicholas was being inspected, Gedney Church End Primary School, which is federated with Lutton St Nicholas, was inspected by a different lead inspector. To avoid unnecessary duplication, some meetings with staff were held by one inspector on behalf of the other, at the convenience of the schools.
- When the two inspectors needed to share information about the federation, this was done during paired meetings with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed 10 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. He also listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- He held a meeting with a group of Year 6 pupils, and also spoke informally to several other pupils at different times during the inspection.
- The inspector took account of 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection. He also looked at 9 questionnaires returned by staff.
- He observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan, data about the achievement of pupils in all year groups, records of the school's governing body, and samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Since 2008 Lutton St. Nicholas Primary School has been part of a hard federation with Gedney Church End Primary School. The schools have the same headteacher and governing body. The headteacher shares his time between the two schools.
- All leadership and management roles allocated to staff are across the federation. Staff employed before the federation are contracted to their own schools. Staff employed after 2008 are contracted to the federation.
- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school serving families living in Lutton and several other surrounding villages in a widespread rural community.
- The school currently has three classes, all with a mixture of year groups.
- Boys outnumber girls by three to two.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. All pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action, and at school action plus or by a statement of special educational need, are below average.
- More pupils than is usual enter or leave the school at times other than those normally expected.
- None of the school's pupils are in alternative provision (none are taught elsewhere).
- The school has undergone significant staffing turbulence in recent years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned so that all pupils have work set which accurately meets their different learning needs
 - making sure that pupils are given more time to participate actively in learning in lessons
 - giving clear guidance to pupils when marking their work about what they need to do to make it better.
- Accelerate achievement and raise attainment overall, and particularly in mathematics, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to work things out for themselves without excessive instruction
 - ensuring that different and more challenging work is always available when pupils have successfully solved a problem, or understood a new way of working.
- Ensure that subject leaders check much more closely and rigorously on the amount of learning taking place in those areas for which they are responsible.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to find out how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement in this school requires improvement because pupils do not learn consistently well in either English or mathematics.
- Though pupils' knowledge and skills can vary markedly from one year to the next, they often enter school at about the level expected for their age.
- Irrespective of their different starting points, they make uneven progress over time because work set in mixed age classes throughout the school does not always meet their learning needs accurately.
- Pupils' progress is variable from year to year because of teachers' inconsistencies in planning work, in keeping a fast pace in lessons, and because of instability in staffing.
- In 2012, the rate of progress made by pupils in English and particularly in mathematics was lower than the rate of progress made the previous year and by all pupils nationally.
- From broadly average starting points in reading and writing, pupils reached average standards by the end of Year 6. But from starting points close to the national average in mathematics, pupils ended Year 6 almost two terms behind the national average.
- Over time, pupils' literacy skills have developed better than those in mathematics because of the school's systematic focus on reading and writing. Pupils' mathematical skills are not as well developed because teachers do not always set sufficiently challenging work for the more able, usually older, pupils. Sometimes they give too much instruction to pupils and do not give them a chance to work things out for themselves.
- The school's records show that progress being made by pupils currently in the school lacks consistency. Inspection observations show that the most consistently good progress is being made in class four, a mixed age Year 5/Year 6 class, where work is set which usually builds on pupils' prior learning.
- The school has developed a wide range of interventions to give support quickly to those pupils who need to catch up. This ensures that the majority of pupils are making progress at about the expected rate. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.
- The 2012 Year 6 results show pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals all made the expected progress in English, and nearly all did in mathematics. The gap between the test points they scored and the test points scored by other pupils was less than it is nationally.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class because of the good links between school and home. When these children work as a discrete class, they play and learn well together. They quickly develop their inter-personal skills as well as rapidly developing their communication and number skills.
- Too few pupils in the mixed-age classes are making good progress. However, no group of pupils underachieves significantly.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching is variable in quality. It ranges from outstanding to very occasionally inadequate. Not enough is good or better.
- Usually work is set at the right levels for pupils of all abilities. However, sometimes it is too hard or too easy, particularly in mathematics, and the pace of learning slows. When teachers are assessing pupils' learning as the lesson proceeds, this mismatch is sometimes picked up quickly. When teachers focus too much on one or two pupils, this is not always the case.
- Pupils capable of reaching the higher levels in their work do not always do so because teachers do not set them tasks that will extend their learning. Too many pupils get too many answers correct first time in mathematics, which suggests some of the work is too easy.
- The marking of pupils work is regular and very often celebrates good work. However it does not often enough tell pupils what they need to do next to improve further.
- Learning slows most when teachers talk too much, giving the same lengthy explanation to all the pupils in their mixed age class. Some pupils get the idea very quickly and wait patiently and politely for their tasks. A few pupils never really understand what they have to do.
- A common feature of all lessons is the good relationships between pupils and adults. The mutual respect and trust they have in each other is plainly obvious.
- The best lessons move forward rapidly and challenge pupils to work things out for themselves. Pupils like this way of working. They respond well when given practical tasks that make them think.
- Pupils settle down promptly to learning. Their attitudes to learning are good and they sustain concentration well when given the opportunity to work without direct adult supervision.

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

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and they respond very well to the firmly held school values of tolerance, respect and good manners. Consequently behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- They are enthusiastic learners and show a good ability to work by themselves at challenging tasks. For example, young readers persevered very well to use their understanding of letters and sounds to read difficult words successfully.
- Pupils also work well together. If they struggle with something in class, their first approach is often to talk with a fellow pupil to share ideas and to build understanding.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to each other, especially at lunchtimes when the whole school eats calmly and affably together.
- Some low-level inattention occurs when work in lessons does not engage pupils' interest. This occurs when tasks are too easy or when teachers talk too much.

- Pupils are certain they are safe and well looked after in school, and can explain why. They say there is no bullying, but they know what to do if it does occur. They have a good understanding of the different forms bullying might take, and know how to stay safe outside school especially when using new technologies.
- Pupils willingly give their time to build the team ethos in the school. The active school council ensures that pupils' concerns are raised and heard. Play leaders operate effectively at break times organising games for pupils of all ages, and several pupils are training as 'peer mediators'.
- Attendance is broadly average. There have been no recent exclusions from school.
- Pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 as confident and polite young citizens, prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The task of checking the school's effectiveness has been almost totally confined to the headteacher. Evaluating its effectiveness has been his responsibility. Records show that this has been carried out diligently and in detail. He has recently become able to share this workload with subject leaders.
- Governors and subject leaders have been too reliant on receiving this information without finding anything out for themselves.
- Subject leaders, who also carry responsibility across the federation, know the principles of how to measure the quality of learning taking place in those areas for which they are accountable. However, they do not carry out the necessary checks with sufficient rigour or frequency to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout either this school or the wider federation.
- School self-evaluation is accurate because it is related directly to the outcomes reached by pupils. It presents a realistic view of the school's current position. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching.
- The curriculum requires improvement. It rightly focuses on promoting reading, writing and numeracy. However, its effectiveness, particularly in the teaching of numeracy, is diluted by weak planning which does not always stretch or challenge pupils hard enough.
- Themed, or topic work, allows pupils to take the skills learned in other lessons, for example writing, and practice them in describing a Viking Settlement. Pupils engage enthusiastically in art, sport and music. Many visitors to the school, visits away, and a range of clubs help to make learning real and widen pupils' horizons. The Friends of Lutton School (FOLS) raise significant funds for strengthening the breadth of activities pupils can do.
- Almost all of the parents who responded to the online survey (Parent View) expressed their positive approval of the workings of the school.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body has not been sharp enough in pushing the school to improve the moderate progress being made by its pupils. It has not ensured the quality of teaching is good. The long serving Chair of the Governing Body of this school, and latterly of the federation, has an accurate view of where the school is strong and where it needs to improve.

However, the governing body as a whole lack focus on the learning of all pupils for whom they have responsibility, and does not ensure high quality support for the headteacher through appropriate training and development. Governors, through the headteacher, ensure that decisions about pay and promotion are based on how effectively teachers are ensuring pupils' progress. Governors take their responsibilities for the safeguarding of pupils' well being very seriously. All the current requirements are fully met. The governing body is aware of how pupil premium funds are spent; they are used effectively to provide additional learning support, subsidies for trips and residential visits, and other specialist resources to aid learning.

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	120421
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	405925

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	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Howard
Headteacher	Luke Whitney
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
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