

# Bythams Primary School

Creeton Road, Little Bytham, Grantham, NG33 4PX

**Inspection dates** 7–8 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		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

- Over time, more-able pupils have not made as much progress as might be expected, given their starting points.
- Not enough teaching is good or better, and some is not well matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- Marking in pupils' books does not always help them to understand how they can improve their work.
- Governors have not done enough to appoint an interim or permanent headteacher, and have not put in place formal arrangements to ensure the on-going support of the consultant headteacher.

### The school has the following strengths

- The rates of progress pupils make in English and mathematics are improving, reflecting recent improvements in teaching.
- Over time, pupils who find learning hard make progress that compares well with similar pupils in other schools.
- The teaching of reading in younger age groups is now good, and pupils enjoy their reading.
- Behaviour is good, and the pupils support each other well in their learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and are very positive about the new resources and other improvements made to their school.
- The consultant headteacher, along with her leadership team from an adjacent academy, have made significant improvements through their outstanding support.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the consultant headteacher. In addition, the inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils read and examined display work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and talked to parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- An after school club shares the school site. 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 above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is 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.
- All pupils are educated on site. There is no alternative provision elsewhere.
- At the time of the inspection the school was without a nominated, formally appointed headteacher. A visiting headteacher and deputy headteacher from an adjacent academy have been working with the school on a consultancy basis. An interim headteacher was formally appointed by the local authority at the end of the second day of the inspection.

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

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching, and so raise standards, by:
  - developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in writing and mathematics
  - setting work for more-able pupils that is challenging enough, particularly in mathematics
  - making sure that all pupils have access to information that tells them how well they are doing, and how to improve their work.
- Strengthen the capacity of leaders and managers to continue the improvements already made by:
  - appointing a permanent headteacher
  - making sure that the work carried out by the consultant headteacher and visiting staff is undertaken on the basis of a formal, written agreement
  - clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the governing body in such a way as to ensure that the school continues to improve.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over the last five years attainment in English and mathematics has been similar to national averages. Pupils have been entering the school at expected levels of development, and making adequate progress across both subjects.
- Levels of attainment dipped in 2012, with fewer pupils making better than expected progress in English or mathematics in both Key Stage 1 and 2; in the Key Stage 2 national tests, attainment in mathematics was below national average. The school's assessment data and inspection evidence suggest that this fall in standards is being addressed, and standards have risen sharply in recent months.
- Progress seen in lessons and pupils' work show that a large majority of pupils are now working at nationally expected levels of attainment. The rate of progress made in reading has increased markedly this academic year, and most pupils are now able to read well.
- The progress made by children in Reception has recently improved significantly, and is now good. Children are developing their early reading, writing and number skills well.
- Pupils' progress in writing, while still in need of improvement, is accelerating across the school. While standards of presentation are still lower than might be expected, work is increasingly accurate and of higher quality. For example, pupils are increasingly able to use a variety of writing styles. This is because teachers are making better use of exemplar texts as a means to show how writing can be tailored to specific audiences.
- Despite recent improvements, some higher attaining pupils are still making less progress than might be expected, particularly in mathematics. This is evident in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, where not enough pupils make better than expected progress when compared to similar schools nationally. This is due to the fact that the work set for them is not always challenging enough.
- The progress made by pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is at least as good as other pupils in the school, and in some cases better. Overall, standards for these pupils are similar to all pupils nationally. Where such pupils make better than average progress, it is because they are receiving individualised support which is well matched to their individual needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make a good start in Reception, and make average progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make better progress when taught in small groups or individually, as supporting teachers are better able to meet the particular needs of the pupils. Pupils with specific medical needs make very good progress, due to the quality of care and support provided for them.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over time, there has not been enough good or better teaching in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. A common weakness has been in the match of work to pupils' different attainment levels, and in particular the lack of sufficiently challenging work for higher attaining pupils in mathematics. The school's monitoring of teaching shows that more teachers are now successful in matching work closely to the needs of pupils. This was confirmed by classroom observation during the inspection.

- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve their work. Marking, although undertaken regularly, often lacks guidance on next steps. In lessons, teachers do not always ask questions to find out how well pupils have understood learning, and therefore miss opportunities to address errors or misunderstandings.
- Teaching in Reception has recently improved. Support is now provided on an individual and group basis, and thus the needs of the learners are well met. The teaching of early reading is now a particular strength. During the inspection children were observed sounding out words and practising their early writing skills through well planned activities. Provision for outdoor play is good, and children have many opportunities for self-directed learning.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 now learn to read with greater confidence, and are making better progress in reading. This is because teachers have improved the recording of the progress individuals have been making in their reading skills, and the pupils have benefited from an increasingly diverse range of books. Progress in writing and mathematics is average however, as teaching is not yet planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- The teaching of writing has improved because teachers have broadened the range of contexts within which different forms of writing are explored. For example, good writing was observed in a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson, recounting the 'flash-back' memories of someone who experienced the Second World War.
- Information and communication technology is well used. Teachers use interactive whiteboards for whole-class and group teaching, and pupils make productive use of a class set of laptops. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were seen recording a scientific experiment using software that structured the way visual, numeric and textual information was recorded.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium receive extra help from support staff, and additional access to resources. As a consequence these pupils make at least good progress. The funding is well used to extend opportunities for participation in clubs and go on trips.
- Teaching makes an adequate contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the school. For example, in assembly pupils were seen listening intently to a group singing and others performing instrumental solos, showing good capacity to empathise with their peers.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Despite the potentially destabilising impact of a high turnover of staff, pupils have remained committed to doing as well as they can, and to the school. For example, the Reception and Year 1 class has recently been separated into two distinct learning groups, supported by two teachers: pupils have adapted quickly because they are good at supporting each other in their learning.
- Disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour is very uncommon. Pupils who find it harder to control their own behaviour are very well supported, due to close supervision by staff and encouragement from peers. This is a recent improvement brought about by support from the consultant deputy headteacher. As a result exclusions are now very rare.
- Pupils feel that they are listened to. They have worked with the consultant headteacher and new site manager to identify new classroom and playground resources, and have an active part in

improving the physical environment of their school.

- Pupils play very well together, and feel safe in a well-resourced outdoor area. They have good awareness of risk, and are able to independently care for each other when an adult is not close at hand. Pupils say that they feel that any concerns that do arise are dealt with quickly by teachers, who they find easy to talk to.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of risk, and know what to do and who to tell if they feel unsafe. For example, pupils can talk about the different risks associated with using the internet and social media, demonstrating that e-safety awareness is good.
- The recording of incidents concerning perceived bullying or racism, or those involving accidental injury is good. Such incidents are both rare and without pattern. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored, and any unplanned absences are followed up. As a consequence attendance is average, and improving over time.
- The school is good at identifying pupils at risk, and parents feel well supported through such provision. Any concerns raised are followed up, and where necessary the support of external agencies is sought.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- In the last three years the school has had several different headteachers. Since the departure of the most recent of these, a consultant headteacher and deputy headteacher from another school have been providing leadership support in an advisory capacity. This support has been outstanding.
- Significant improvements have recently been made to the quality of teaching and learning, and thus to the progress made by pupils. The consultant headteacher has instigated a full review of the quality of teaching in lessons, reorganised staffing and class structure, and improved the accuracy and use of information that shows how well pupils are doing. As a consequence standards have risen sharply in all subject areas.
- The consultant deputy headteacher has reviewed the coordination and provision for disabled pupils and those who have special education needs in the classroom. The quality of such provision has thus improved considerably, and work is now better matched to pupils' needs. The support staff working with these pupils are also well led and managed.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently improved, and has benefited from the advisory support of a visiting specialist practitioner. For example, the way in which children are grouped has been changed so that, for example, children now work with others of the same age and developmental need.
- Safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations, and make sure that pupils remain safe both in school and when on school trips. The consultant headteacher has made sure that all staff recruited are closely checked; and that staff identify and respond to concerns regarding child welfare.
- The curriculum is good, particularly in areas of sport and art. The pupils feel that a wide range of activities is available for them to participate in, including additional clubs. A review of the breadth and balance of the curriculum is under way, and pupils are already being given better

opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy through different topics. The school makes sure that all pupils have equal opportunities and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- The local authority, while arranging for a local headteacher to provide leadership advice, has not done enough to ensure the appointment of an interim or new headteacher; neither has it ensured that governors have made it clear to parents who is running the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a reasonable understanding of the performance of the school. Governors are aware of the standards reached by pupils. For example, they know that pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making adequate progress, and how the additional funding is being used to ensure that this continues. They also know about the quality of teaching and the overall standards reached by pupils, due to the detailed reporting undertaken by the consultant headteacher. They are working to make sure that teachers' pay and promotion is better linked to the contribution that individual teachers are making to raising standards. They have taken action to tackle under performance, based on this information.
- The governing body requires improvement, as governors did not ensure that an interim headteacher was in place following the departure of the previous headteacher. While a consultant headteacher was found to work with the school, governors have not put in place any formal agreement with the consultant headteacher, or the Responsible Body of the academy that employs her. Neither did they nominate a responsible teacher currently working in the school to deputise as an acting headteacher. As a consequence, the school did not have a nominated headteacher at the time of the inspection. Despite this failing, given the substantial improvements already made under the guidance of the consultant headteacher, it was judged that leadership and management is not inadequate, and has the capacity to continue improving standards.
- The local authority, working with the governing body, appointed an interim headteacher on the second day of the inspection. It was agreed that this headteacher is to work in partnership with the consultant headteacher, underwritten by a guarantee of financial support from the local authority.

## 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>	120506
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403439

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>	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Allan Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01780 410275
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