

Kirklington Primary School

School Lane, Kirklington, Newark, NG22 8NG

Inspection dates 13–14 March 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- A welcoming, caring atmosphere in the school supports pupils' learning and self-confidence.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most pupils attain standards in English and mathematics that are at least a year ahead of most 11-year-olds.
- Teachers build good relationships with pupils that set the scene for good learning. They help pupils to develop good independent learning skills by encouraging them to carry out their own research, including good use of modern technology.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They persevere with their tasks in lessons, and cooperate well when working in groups.
- The headteacher expects the very best from pupils and staff. She has worked closely with staff to improve the teaching and achievement in writing and mathematics, where standards had previously been lagging a bit behind.
- Leaders track pupils' progress closely, and use the resulting information to set targets for teachers. Teachers are helped to improve their lessons through relevant training.
- The governors provide strong support while challenging the school's leaders about its performance.
- Parents are enthusiastic about the education provided for their children, and feel they are well looked after and well taught.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In some lessons, long introductions and explanations slow the pace of learning, and the activities are not always sufficiently demanding to stretch the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they are intended to learn in each lesson, or how they can measure their success.
- The advice leaders give teachers after checking lessons does not focus sharply enough on the progress pupils have made, and the aspects of teaching identified for improvement are not followed up when lessons are checked again to make sure they have been tackled.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and saw 12 lessons, all jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books to check their current achievement and progress over time. She spoke to many pupils about their work, what they are involved in at school, and what they think about behaviour.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and checked the school's records of reading progress.
- Meetings were held with three governors and key subject leaders. A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, records of the quality of teaching and improvement plan, and its tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked at safeguarding documents and the records of behaviour.
- The inspector took account of 32 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). She also considered the views expressed in three letters sent in by parents.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The youngest are taught in a class for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The other two classes are for Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- There are far fewer disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs than average. These pupils are all supported by school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is smaller than average. In this school, this extra funding for certain groups only applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The number of pupils is too small for valid comparisons to be made against the government's floor standards (the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress).
- The proportion of pupils who join partway through their primary school education is far higher than in most schools.
- The school has won several awards for its provision, including the 'Sing-Up Gold' Award, and ActiveMark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so more is outstanding by making sure that in each lesson:
 - the pace is brisk, and introductions and explanations are kept short
 - tasks are sufficiently demanding for all the different ability groups
 - teachers identify and share with pupils what is to be learned, and how they can measure their success in reaching this aim.
- Make the checks made on teaching and learning more effective by ensuring that:
 - the progress made by each pupil is the main focus when judging the quality of teaching
 - the points for development identified in feedback to teachers are checked for success in the next lesson observation
 - teachers' lesson plans are checked routinely to ensure consistency.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From starting points that are broadly typical for their age, pupils achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics are usually above average by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- Until recently, standards were higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. The gap is disappearing quickly as pupils respond to a range of good new teaching strategies. For instance, working in small groups on phonics (linking sounds and letters) has improved their spelling and knowledge of sentence structure. In mathematics, a wider variety of teaching methods is helping to improve pupils' skills in calculating and problem-solving. Progress is fastest when problems are related to real life, such as in a popular 'Enterprise Day' when each class was given a sum of money to turn to profit.
- By Year 6, pupils read widely and enthusiastically and with understanding beyond their age. In all year groups pupils use dictionaries, fact books and laptops independently and throughout the day to support their learning.
- Children settle quickly in Reception, and make good progress in developing their skills and understanding that prepares them well for Year 1. The 'Pirates' theme set imaginations whirring during the inspection. Children laughed with fun when dressing up in the pirate outfits or as princesses, or sifting sand outside to find pirates' 'treasure'.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1. In the last two years, pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 have risen to well above average. Typically, the classroom buzzes with a variety of activity, with pupils working on differing tasks pitched just at the right level, sometimes on worksheets, sometimes practical activities and sometimes computer-based.
- The themed curriculum works exceptionally well in deepening learning for all age groups. In Key Stage 2, where new pupils join in every year group, progress is also good. Most of the new pupils join at a lower stage of development than those who were at the school from Reception. The individual help that can be given in such a small school soon enables these pupils to achieve well. The focus on working independently develops pupils' confidence and increases all the pupils' knowledge and understanding of any particular topic, while developing good research skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Teachers are good at building productive relationships and setting work at the right level to help pupils who find learning difficult, so all pupils are involved in all the school offers, without discrimination. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were thrilled when they visited a Viking resource centre to support their work in history and geography. This led to some very successful 'scenes' where pupils of all abilities acted out life as Viking settlers. Their subsequent writing was exciting and imaginative.
- The school uses pupil premium funding wisely to support eligible pupils by providing more time for support staff and extra help. These pupils progress at a similar rate to their classmates. The very small number of pupils involved means that individuals would be easy to identify. However, test results and current school data show that the spending has boosted their performance in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching results in good achievement in all age groups. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to meet the special challenge of teaching mixed-age classes, including whole class, small group and individual tasks, and talking with a partner. Technology plays a significant part.
- Teachers' work in physical education has led to the ActiveMark award. In a dance session linked with music in Year 4, 5 and 6, pupils made good progress as they composed music and performed a scene to it, representing a Viking sea journey. Good teaching in music has resulted in the award of 'Sing Up Gold'.
- Behaviour is managed well, successfully promoting pupils' social and moral development. Teachers help pupils to concentrate well and persevere with tasks.
- Teachers mark pupils' books carefully and show them what they have to do to improve their work. They tell pupils what they are going to do in each lesson, but sometimes do not say clearly what they are expected to learn from the activity, or how they can measure their success. This lack of guidance sometimes slows progress. Sometimes, tasks that are intended to extend learning or require higher-level skills from more-able pupils are not demanding enough to do so, limiting the progress these pupils can make.
- Teachers usually explain things clearly. In some lessons, however, introductions and explanations are too long and pupils spend too much time listening instead of being actively involved. When they are more active the pace of learning is brisker, as seen in an outstanding topic session where pupils plotted their individually-chosen journeys as Vikings from various Scandinavian countries to the nearest landing points in Britain.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well and opportunities to write for a range of different purposes such as letters, diaries, and reports, are included across a wide range of subjects. Guided reading sessions are well planned, and staff quickly pick up any misunderstandings. New initiatives introduced when leaders spotted a falling off of standards in writing and mathematics have led to sharp improvement. Linking learning to themes has had a positive impact on imaginative writing and pupils' perseverance when solving problems in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They get on well together and the school is welcoming and friendly. All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' endorsed this by saying that their children feel safe and happy and are well looked after.
- School records show that bullying is extremely rare and quickly dealt with. Pupils are not fully sure about the types of bullying that pupils of their age may meet, even though the school has a good programme to teach them about this. Pupils are respectful of each other. Almost all parents who responded to 'Parent View' feel that the school deals well with bullying.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good and effective procedures, including one-to-one support, make sure the small amount of unsuitable behaviour does not disrupt the learning of the majority. Most pupils are eager learners who want to do their best. These positive attitudes support good progress in lessons. Pupils cooperate with each other and with their teachers. For example, in a drama lesson, Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils showed mature thoughtfulness when commenting on each other's performance and how it could be improved.
- Pupils are very eager to take responsibility and have many chances to do so as members of the

school council, or as classroom helpers.

- Attendance is above average. Pupils are eager to return to lessons after break because learning is enjoyable.

The leadership and management are good

- Everybody supports the headteacher's clear lead. Working together with the subject leaders, she has driven forward ways to improve teaching and achievement. Inconsistencies are being eliminated.
- The headteacher and governors use effective methods to check the quality of teaching, manage the performance of teachers and review the progress of pupils. All teachers are given targets for improvement that help to raise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders regularly observe lessons, look at pupils' work and check their progress. As a result they identify strengths and weaknesses well, but they do not promptly follow up teaching weaknesses, or check lesson planning thoroughly. Relevant training covers teachers' needs and school priorities, but feedback from lesson observations focuses too heavily on teaching techniques rather than their impact on the progress pupils make.
- Leaders are ambitious to make learning exciting. Visits, for instance to historical centres, support learning in class and capture pupils' imagination. Pupils have many worthwhile opportunities to play sport and make music. Assemblies and themed learning days promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils learn and play very well together because leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to flourish.
- The local authority provides appropriately 'light touch' support for this good school. It has helped the school to form links recently with other local schools, including secondary schools. Expertise is shared for pupils' benefit, for instance to facilitate specialist musical instrument tuition. The links also give a boost to pupils' preparation for their next school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body challenges and supports the headteacher well. It ensures all national safeguarding requirements are met. Governors manage finances well and know, for example, how well pupil premium funding is used to improve achievement for eligible pupils. Governors' good knowledge of how well pupils are achieving, through data compared with other schools, is enhanced by productive links between individual governors and specific aspects of the school such as literacy and numeracy. Governors take training to keep their skills updated. They work well with the headteacher to successfully manage teachers' performance and pay-related issues.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 122653 |
| Local authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 403494 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 57 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Marie Smith |
| Headteacher | Tracy Burn Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 19 September 2007 |
| Telephone number | 01636 812360 |
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