

Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary School

Chestnut Street, Ruskington, Sleaford, NG34 9DL

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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. Select

- The standards reached by pupils are above national averages in English and mathematics.
- The rates of progress pupils make in English and mathematics are good.
- Teaching is good, particularly in the older-aged classes.
- Reception children make good progress due to high quality provision.
- Disabled pupils and those with who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Behaviour is good, and pupils support each other well in their learning and play.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and say that they enjoy coming to school.
- The recently assembled senior leadership team makes sure that teaching and pupils' progress are at least good, and has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governors have made improvements to the school, resulting in raised standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More-able pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills and mathematical problem-solving skills.
- Pupils do not always know what their targets for learning are.
- Although leaders collect and manage information that shows the progress that pupils are making, it is not always shared in a format that is easy for staff to understand.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons. Two joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils’ books, listened to pupils read and examined display work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- The inspectors took account of the 56 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and talked to parents during the inspection. In addition, 32 responses from a staff questionnaire were considered.
- 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

Sara Storer

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The percentage of pupils joining the school at a time other than Reception is higher than 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.
- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, and thus further increase pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils understand their learning targets
 - providing extended opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in English and problem solving in mathematics
 - ensuring that work fully meets the needs of higher-ability pupils.
- Further improve the quality of leadership by ensuring that summary information which shows how well pupils are doing is shared with and understood by all subject leaders and teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The standards reached in English and mathematics are above national averages. Most pupils achieve well and acquire skills that equip them for their next stages in schooling.
- A significant proportion of children start in Reception below expected levels of development, with the remainder at average levels. Over the course of the year, all children make good progress, completing the year at and above expected levels of development. For example, children become particularly confident in their use of early speech and language.
- While there is some variation in the rate of progress made across classes, most pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. For example, by the end of Year 2, pupils are working at above expected levels in English and mathematics. However, pupils who started Year 1 with an already high level of achievement do not always make as much progress as their peers.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is stronger in reading and mathematics as a reflection of the work done by the school to address previous underperformance in these areas. Progress in writing is mainly good. A few older pupils lack confidence when asked to write independently.
- Disabled pupils and those with who have special educational needs make a strong start in Reception. They maintain consistently good rates of progress across all classes, doing particularly well when taught in small groups. For example, very good progress was seen in English booster classes.
- The support given to pupils eligible for the pupil premium ensures that they achieve well. In the past, the standards attained by these pupils were a term behind their classmates in English and two terms behind in mathematics. Current school information that shows how well pupils are doing confirms that this gap is now closing rapidly. This is due to the intensive support which has been funded by the pupil premium.
- Higher-ability pupils have not made enough progress in relation to their starting points. While a higher proportion of more-able pupils are now progressing to advanced levels, particularly in mathematics, the progress made by more-able pupils is still too variable.
- Older pupils find work harder when they are left to work independently. Standards of work produced in such circumstances are slightly less than those produced when working in a group or whole-class situation. For example, pupils are less confident in the use of their mathematical problem-solving skills when working on their own than when working with a peer.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is mainly good, with a small amount outstanding. Where it is good or better, teaching addresses the needs of all pupils particularly those of a higher ability. For example, the teaching of mathematics to higher-ability pupils is now consistently good or better in Year 6.
- Teaching in Reception is almost always good or better. Pupils are given excellent opportunities

to develop their speech and language skills. For example, having learnt letter sounds and shapes together in the classroom, children use chalk to draw letter and sound combinations in large letters on the playground, thus reinforcing their learning with a fun activity.

- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mainly good. Where it is less effective, more-able pupils are not set work that challenges them enough. For example, when working as a whole class, those pupils able to complete the set activity quickly are not always provided with extension work while the rest catch up.
- The teaching of reading is generally good. Pupils have a wide choice of texts to choose from, and they say that they enjoy their reading. The school has an effective system for monitoring the progress that pupils are making. For example, good opportunity is given for pupils to read to adults on an individual basis and detailed records are created from these sessions that inform teachers' planning.
- Teachers use a wide range of exciting texts to explore different forms of writing. This works very well when pupils are working in groups and on a whole-class basis, and results in pupils having a good appreciation of different writing styles. Occasionally in lessons, not enough opportunity is given to older pupils to practise their writing skills through individual writing work.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, as shown by improvements in pupils' progress. Teachers are able to meet the needs of individual learners, and find it helpful to structure teaching groups according to ability and need. However, a few pupils do not always have enough opportunity to develop independent problem-solving skills.
- Marking is undertaken regularly and is effective in helping pupils to obtain a clear understanding of how to improve their work. While this is successful, learners are not always able to articulate the learning targets set by the teachers. These are helpfully recorded by teachers in the front of pupils' books but pupils do not always read or understand them.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium receive extra help from teachers and support staff which enables them to make good progress. The funding has been used sensibly and effectively to give them extra learning resources and trips to extend their learning opportunities.
- The teaching of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all year groups is outstanding. Pupils have very good opportunities to express their feelings and discuss moral issues. The school continues to develop very good links with other schools, widening pupils' awareness of other cultures both in the United Kingdom and abroad. The spiritual development of the pupils is a particular strength of the school, and church links are used effectively to promote this, including in understanding the belief systems of other religions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe and find their lessons exciting and fun. Pupils' attendance is above average. It is closely monitored, and any unplanned absences are followed up.
- Pupils work very well together in groups. When asked to work collaboratively, they support each other's learning and listen to the ideas of their peers. Pupils of all ages, ability and background

are treated equally by every member of the school community. For example, pupils play well together in mixed-aged groups and are aware of each other's needs. As a result, bullying is very rare, and the majority of pupils and parents feel that where concerns do arise they are dealt with properly.

- Pupils feel listened to because they have a wide range of ways to make their views heard; for example, through an active school and arts council. This is supported by very good adult-pupil relationships. For example, a representative from the governing body attends all pupil council meetings.
- The outdoor areas are safe, stimulating and very well maintained. Pupils have a good awareness of risk from a young age, including when using the internet and other forms of technology, being around unknown adults, and travelling to and from school. Pupils are able to describe a good range of strategies at their disposal, should they feel at risk of harm in such scenarios.
- Disruption in lessons is rare and, where it does occur, teachers use consistent methods to address it. Pupils say that adults are very approachable and fair when dealing with the small number of issues that do arise.
- The process by which incidents concerning perceived racism, or those involving accidental injury, is recorded and investigated, is effective. The school is very good at identifying pupils at risk. Parental views collected at the time of the inspection show that the large majority of parents feel that this is a particular strength of the school. Pupils are very well supported through such provision.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has a very effective headteacher who has a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Since joining the predecessor school in 2010, she has focused on the needs of the school, restructuring teaching to address areas of perceived underperformance.
- Subject coordination is good, and leaders ensure that all teachers have a good understanding of different subject areas. The coordination of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Pupils' progress and welfare are closely monitored by all staff, and pupils receive support that is proportionate to their need.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is very good. The leader has a deep understanding of the needs of young children, and ensures that provision is closely matched to their needs.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing, due to the effective use of assessment information. However, while teachers have a good understanding of the specific needs of individual pupils, outcomes for different groups of pupils, and for the whole school, are not summarised in a format that is easy for them to understand. In the past, this has led to patterns of underperformance going unnoticed, such as the progress made by more-able pupils.
- The range of subjects and activities provides positive experiences and rich opportunities for good-quality learning. It contributes very well to pupils' academic achievement and their very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide range of activities and experiences are planned, including numerous educational visits, and religious and cultural events.

- The school’s arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet statutory requirements.
- While the school is no longer under local authority control, the academy has invited the local authority to provide support in an external capacity. A local authority officer provides effective challenge, through the monitoring of end-of-key-stage national assessment data and regular meetings with the school’s senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The Chair is particularly effective in his leadership of the school. Since academy conversion, the governors feel that the governance structure is now better aligned to school improvement. The new governors have supported the headteacher in direct action to address areas of perceived underperformance, thus demonstrating the capacity to take direct action. They have a clear picture of teaching quality and the effectiveness of the arrangements for managing the performance of teachers. Since many governors are new in post, a training plan has been put in place to meet their needs and support other governors in the many new demands of running a recently converted academy. Leaders hold the school to account and have a good understanding of information that shows how well pupils are progressing, with performance indicators closely focused on the achievement of pupils. For example, governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent, and that it is leading to good levels of attainment for the eligible pupils. Governors have deployed a highly effective school bursar, supporting the Deputy Chair's own very good understanding of the academy’s finances.

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	138324
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	409385

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Osbourne
Headteacher	Mrs Laura Suffield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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