

# Spaldwick Community Primary School

Royston Avenue, Spaldwick, Huntingdon, PE28 0TH

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Children make good progress in Reception across all the areas of learning, and they develop a particularly good knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics).
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. They reach standards that are usually above national averages in English and mathematics, and sometimes high.
- Teaching is typically good. Throughout the school, teachers communicate with pupils and explain work very clearly.
- Parents are kept very well informed about their children's learning, and closely involved in the life of the school.
- The school has a happy and supportive family atmosphere. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear direction to the school's work. All the staff show a high level of commitment to providing pupils with a positive learning experience.
- Senior leaders and governors are focused on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. Following a period of staff absence, which contributed to a dip in results at Key Stage 2 last year, the school is again improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always give more-able pupils work that is difficult enough. Adults sometimes provide too much guidance for pupils when they are completing written or mathematical tasks.
- Teachers' marking does not always make clear how pupils could improve their work.
- Staff do not always make the most of opportunities to point out exactly how pupils' behaviour could be improved to an even higher level.
- Leaders of key stages and subjects do not all take as much responsibility as they could for improving teaching and raising achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher. They observed two assemblies, observed pupils in the playground, sampled pupils' work and listened to younger pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 50 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires completed by 21 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, its development plan, and information about pupils' attainment and progress. They also looked at records relating to aspects of behaviour and safeguarding, and at teachers' planning.

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Megan Stockley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves a number of small villages as well as Spaldwick.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding, in this case for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action fluctuates between average and a little below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- More pupils than average join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school experienced long-term staff absence in the last academic year. In September 2012, two new teachers joined the school, one of whom took over the leadership of mathematics.

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

- Raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching by:
  - always giving more-able pupils work that challenges them
  - making sure that average-ability pupils develop their independent learning skills when completing written and mathematical tasks
  - making sure that teachers' marking always provides pupils with clear information on how they could improve their work
  - communicating the highest possible expectations to pupils about how they should behave, and developing in them a greater sense of self-discipline.
- Strengthen leadership and the drive for school improvement by:
  - providing training for key stage and subject leaders in observing lessons, and making sure that they take greater responsibility for using performance data in raising achievement
  - frequently checking that all staff are working to the same high expectations in their teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress in Reception and over the last two years, children's attainment has been above the national average by the time they moved up to Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1. In the most recent Year 1 phonics screening check, the percentage of pupils who met national expectations was above average. Less-able pupils who read to an inspector showed a good knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently above average over the last few years and was high in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012. An above-average percentage of pupils gained higher levels in all three areas.
- The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average in 2010 and 2011, but were affected by staffing issues and dipped to broadly average in 2012. More pupils reached higher levels in English than in schools nationally but only an average proportion did so in mathematics. Progress for pupils who left the school in 2012 was in line with national expectations in English, but not all pupils made as much progress as they should have done in mathematics.
- The school's own data show that a larger proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 are likely to reach or exceed the expected level of attainment for their age in English and mathematics at the end of this year. In particular, more pupils are now working at higher levels in mathematics. Most pupils are now making good progress throughout the school.
- There were too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to compare their attainment with that of their classmates without identifying individuals. However, the progress of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is generally at least in line with that of the rest of the class and sometimes better. This is because the school uses its funding well to support pupils' individual needs, considering carefully what will help each pupil the most.
- In lessons, pupils generally make good progress, including in English and mathematics. On occasion, more-able pupils could make faster progress and those of average ability sometimes receive too much adult guidance in completing their written work or solving mathematical problems.
- Good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make at least as much progress as their classmates. This is because teachers give them tasks that are matched well to the next steps in their learning, and the school is careful to provide specialist support for those pupils who need it. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations and the school's own records of teaching show that it is mostly good, and occasionally outstanding.
- Throughout the school, the ways in which teachers communicate with pupils and explain work are very clear. They often link new learning well to work completed in previous lessons, and give pupils good opportunities to discuss their ideas. This helps to promote their grasp of subject

language. Teachers often ask probing questions to clarify pupils' thinking, especially at the beginning and end of lessons.

- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their writing and communication skills in a range of subjects. They also give them the chance to learn through plenty of practical, hands-on activities.
- In Reception, children have exceptionally good opportunities to develop their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make. In a lesson during the inspection, the teacher's high expectations resulted in children making very good attempts at spelling 'spaghetti bolognese' and 'macaroni cheese' as they helped to compile a café menu.
- In the best lessons, work is matched closely to the needs of different groups of pupils. However, there are instances when more-able pupils have to work their way through the same tasks as average-ability pupils before tackling more challenging activities. Pupils benefit from a great deal of adult support and some small classes. Just occasionally, adults supervise tasks too closely so average-ability pupils do not have enough opportunity to think for themselves and work independently.
- Pupils are clear about their targets and are involved in assessing their own work. Teachers increasingly inform them about the next steps in their learning so that they take greater responsibility for their achievement. They provide pupils with good advice in lessons and a new marking policy has been introduced. However, marking tends to praise pupils rather than also making clear what they could do to improve their work.

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

- Pupils are happy at school. They feel valued and benefit from the warm family atmosphere. They have good attitudes to learning and eagerly contribute their ideas in class. They usually concentrate well in lessons and relationships are strong throughout the school. This helps to make sure that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the various forms bullying can take, including cyber-bullying. Records show that there have been very few instances of bullying and pupils feel confident that these are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils feel safe at school and have a high level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they understand how to identify possible risks and know about road safety and ways of staying safe when using the internet. Parents who expressed their views feel confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- Staff keep a close check on pupils who have particular behavioural needs, and individual plans are drawn up to support them and their parents. The school's effective procedures for enabling pupils who join from other schools to settle in mean that they make progress in line with their classmates.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and to develop leadership skills through the 'pupil employment project', where about 50 pupils have jobs around the school which they complete each day. Acting as 'buddies', Year 6 pupils also nurture and support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attendance is above average and the school has good systems for following up any absence.

The overwhelming majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

- Although good, behaviour is not outstanding because staff do not always point out to pupils how their behaviour could be even better. Classroom routines are well established but minor examples of inappropriate behaviour go unchecked at times and, partly as a result of this, pupils do not develop as much self-discipline as they could.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school, and the staff share their commitment to giving pupils a stimulating and memorable education. Leaders have made some important changes to raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching and learning. After a period of staffing difficulties that contributed to a dip in the Key Stage 2 results last year, standards are rising again.
- The school has introduced a system that helps teachers to identify gaps in learning and involves pupils themselves in this process. Checks on pupils' attainment are updated at least every half term, so teachers are now much clearer about how well their pupils are doing and what they need to learn next. Leaders have been able to use this information to see where extra support is needed.
- The school collects a good deal of data and staff meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss the progress of individual pupils. Joint lesson observations with the headteacher showed that her judgements are accurate. Teaching assistants are included in the performance management process as well as teachers, and the school provides effective support for newly qualified teachers.
- The new mathematics leader has made a good start in identifying what needs to be done to raise achievement, and is working to a clear plan of action. However, not all teachers who are responsible for leading key stages and subjects have a clear enough knowledge of what data reveal. They carry out some checks on teachers' work but have not been trained in observing lessons, so do not contribute as much as they should to driving school improvement.
- A good range of subjects and topics meets pupils' needs well. Links with other schools extend learning opportunities, including for pupils with particular gifts and talents. A variety of special events and activities make learning enjoyable and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Recent improvements to the school's partnership with parents means that it is now strong. Parents of Reception children receive daily e-mails about what they have been learning. Workshops, information in booklets and through the school website, and 'Find out Fridays' inform parents about how their children learn.
- The school has good procedures for safeguarding pupils, and provides high quality support to pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. In its efforts to make sure pupils receive equal opportunities, it provides weekly speech and language therapy for pupils who have a statement for speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support to this good school, responding to requests for support when needed. Recent guidance for the newly appointed mathematics leader by a local authority adviser has contributed well to the development of her leadership skills.

### **■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a good understanding of the school’s work and preparation for the Governor Quality Mark has increased their knowledge. The Chair of the Governing Body was able to discuss in detail what data reveal about the school’s effectiveness, and governors provide both support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The governing body contributes directly to school improvement. For example, its members have led developments to strengthen parents’ involvement in their children’s learning, and have taken part in an audit to see how well the school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors are clear about the quality of teaching and how performance management is used to reward more effective teachers and to tackle underperformance.
- Governors keep a close check on the use of pupil premium funding, and make sure that it is spent appropriately to meet the needs of pupils for whom it is intended.

## 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>	110690
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412397

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>	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Hindmarsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Prior
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 890371
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