

Norwell CofE Primary School

School Lane, Norwell, Newark, NG23 6JP

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Too few pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Changes to the teaching of spelling, mental mathematics and calculation are leading to improvement but are not yet fully established.
- Pupils do not use their mathematical skills often enough in other subjects.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged enough; in mathematics, pupils of all abilities are not encouraged to decide for themselves how to tackle a calculation or problem.
- Pupils' misunderstanding in lessons is sometimes not spotted quickly enough.
- Pupils are not given time to respond to teachers' marking. Teachers do not always help pupils to improve their writing in their topic work.
- Leaders do not look closely enough at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- It is not clear when pupils will be taught specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and learning have improved this year because leaders have identified weaknesses and have introduced suitable strategies to tackle them.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because it is well taught.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and their attendance is above average.
- Governors have made a strong contribution to the school's recent improvement.
- Those parents and carers who offered an opinion are pleased with the school.
- Children in Reception make a good start to their education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- He held discussions with pupils, the executive headteacher, school leader, teachers, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe and information relating to the managing of teachers' performance.
- The views of 12 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspector also spoke informally to parents and carers to seek their views about the school.
- The views expressed by the 10 staff, who returned a questionnaire, were considered.

Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is well above average.
- Very few pupils are supported by the pupil premium. In this school, this relates to those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average; no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Usually, the school's national test results cannot be compared to the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. This is because there are fewer than the minimum of 11 pupils required to make such a comparison meaningful. There was a larger group last year, however, and the school did not meet the floor standards.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Reception children are taught alongside Year 1.
- The school works in partnership with another local primary school. The headteacher is executive headteacher for both schools.
- The school hosts a privately-run pre-school playgroup, which is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or outstanding teaching by:
 - providing a consistently high level of challenge for more-able pupils
 - keeping a closer check on pupils' understanding during lessons, so that any errors can be corrected
 - making sure that teachers help pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write in all subjects.
- Raise pupils' attainment and help them to make faster progress, thereby securing equal opportunity for all pupils, by:
 - giving pupils, especially the more able, more opportunities to decide for themselves how to tackle a mathematical problem or calculation
 - building on the work already started to improve pupils' mental calculation skills and spelling
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and practise their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - giving pupils more time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - keeping a closer check on the impact that teachers have on pupils' learning
 - setting out when specific ICT skills are to be taught and how they will build on what pupils have learned previously
 - checking that the new calculation policy is being used consistently and is helping pupils to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Analysis of the school's performance in the national assessments must be made cautiously, as the number of pupils in each year is small and the performance of individual pupils can have an exaggerated effect on results. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment and progress fell after the last inspection and were below average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Successful work in the past year has eliminated this underachievement. Most pupils now make the progress expected of them. Pupils achieve well in reading. In some year groups, they now make good progress in writing and mathematics but, across the school, too few pupils make good progress in these areas. Although pupils' attainment is rising, it is not yet as high as it should be.
- Pupils write in a wide range of subjects, but opportunities to use their mathematical skills are not so widespread. A new policy for mathematical calculation has been shared with parents, and is beginning to secure improvement, but there is still more to do. Pupils' spelling is improving, but progress is still uneven across the school.
- Children join Reception with typical knowledge, skills and understanding for their age, but this varies from year-to-year, depending on the proportion of more-able pupils or those who find learning difficult. Whatever their starting points, children achieve well because they are well taught. By the end of Reception, most reach the goals expected of them.
- Pupils achieve well in reading because early reading skills are taught well and there is a well structured programme across the school. Older pupils read widely for enjoyment and to help their learning in other subjects. Attainment in reading was below average in Year 2 and Year 6 last year, but current pupils are on track to reach higher standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given appropriate support, and they make similar progress to their classmates. These pupils often make great strides in their personal development, gaining confidence and becoming increasingly independent.
- Pupils of all abilities are sometimes given too much direction, which limits the scope for them to do things for themselves or make choices and decisions about how they should tackle their work.
- There are not enough pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without identifying them. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their classmates.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Improved teaching has enabled previous underachievement to be eliminated. However, there is not yet enough good or outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress, and some inconsistencies in teaching remain.
- Staff cope well with the demands of planning for mixed-age classes and pupils appreciate teachers' efforts to make lessons interesting. Occasionally, the work planned for the more-able pupils does not challenge them to think more deeply, and this slows their progress.

- Teachers question carefully; they generally keep a check on pupils' understanding and help those having difficulty. Occasionally, errors or misunderstandings are not picked up quickly enough.
- Pupils are given good quality feedback in English. They are given a clear picture of how well they have done and what needs to improve. When pupils write in other subjects, teachers do not pay enough attention to the spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors pupils make.
- Marking in mathematics, although improving, is not as strong as in English because the feedback is not as detailed. In all subjects, there are few examples of pupils responding to teachers' written comments or deciding the best way to improve.
- Reading is taught well and contributes to pupils' good achievement in this area. Teachers keep a close check on pupils' progress and help to promote reading as an enjoyable activity.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They ensure that pupils are fully included in lessons and able to learn.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and lessons are rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes have contributed to their improving achievement. Staff give a high priority to ensuring that pupils understand how they should behave and the consequences of not meeting those expectations.
- Some parents and carers spoke highly about the school's family ethos, the benefits of its small size and the care that staff take of their children. Pupils appreciate this, too, and say they feel safe because staff are vigilant and are readily on hand to deal with any problems.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and concentrate well. They particularly enjoy practical lessons, such as science and art. Occasionally, the attention of a few pupils wanders if they do not find the work interesting, and this slows their progress. Sometimes, teachers give too much direction to pupils, which limits the scope for them to work independently.
- Pupils say that most pupils behave well most of the time. They report that bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly by staff when it is brought to their attention. Older pupils, in particular, have a good understanding of how to deal with different forms of bullying. Pupils know how to stay safe in a variety of situations when out of school.
- Pupils play with a good regard for each other's safety. Break-times are enjoyable and provide plenty of scope for energetic games or quiet reflection. Older pupils and younger ones play well together.
- Pupils who attend the before and after-school clubs behave well. They enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. The clubs promote pupils' social skills and their independence well.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders, governors and staff acknowledge they were slow to respond to the decline in the school's performance but, in the past year, they have worked well to secure improvement. Leadership and management are not good, however, because, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not yet as good as they once were.
- Leaders have a clear picture of what needs to improve. They have introduced a wide range of initiatives, some of which, for example, the approach to teaching reading, are already working well and demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve. Leaders rightly recognise that others strategies, such as the calculation policy and approaches to spelling, have not been in place long enough or are not yet used consistently by staff.
- Leaders have introduced comprehensive systems to check on the quality of lessons and pupils' work. Weaknesses are identified and staff are supported to help them improve. While leaders evaluate teaching and how well pupils learn, the impact that teachers have on learning is not examined closely enough.
- Pupils use computers regularly to help them learn in a wide range of subjects, but the planning for ICT is not clear about when specific skills will be taught or how they will be built upon as pupils move through the school.
- There is no discrimination within the school but because not all pupils make the same progress in all subjects and classes there is still more to do to ensure equal opportunities.
- Good leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make a good start to their learning.
- Pupils are given a broad and interesting range of activities. There is a strong emphasis on promoting their personal development, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The local authority stepped up its support last year and is having a positive impact on improving teaching, learning and leadership. The school is benefiting from its partnership with another local school, by sharing expertise and reviewing and improving the quality of its work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have introduced good systems to check on the school's work and they are now well placed to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
 - Governors visit classrooms regularly, examine pupils' progress and talk to staff about their work. They understand the data produced about pupils' progress and what this says about the school's performance. They know what has already improved and what needs to be tackled next.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Good links are made between the performance of teachers and how salary progression is used to reward good teaching. They know that the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to enable those pupils to raise their attainment.
 - Governors take appropriate steps to ensure that pupils are kept safe, and safeguarding requirements meet current government requirements.

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	122766
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	412728

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Purveur
Headteacher	Wendy Ramshaw
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
Telephone number	01636 636244
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