

Hillocks Primary and Nursery School

Unwin Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 4ND

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. This is due to variations in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' attainment is below average in most year groups.
- Pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent across the school. Pupils' skills in spelling are weak and the presentation of their written work requires improvement.
- Girls' progress is not as good as that of boys in mathematics.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work and they are not given enough opportunities to respond to feedback.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have limited opportunities in which to check the quality of teaching and evaluate the impact of the changes which they have introduced on pupils' progress.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not set out clear milestones linked to pupils' progress and attainment. This makes it difficult for leaders to check on the impact of their actions.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6.
- The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers, who are appreciative that their children enjoy school, feel safe and are well cared for. This is reflected in improved rates of attendance.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Consequently, behaviour around school and in class is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by nine teachers. In addition, they listened to pupils reading, observed assemblies and breakfast club, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior subject leaders, leaders of English and mathematics, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including: the school's plans for improvement; the data held by the school in relation to pupils' progress and attainment; the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching; and the school's documentation relating to attendance and safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as analysing questionnaires completed by 36 members of staff.

Inspection team

David Carter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Hiscock

Additional Inspector

Helen Masefield

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of boys compared to girls is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching so that is consistently good or better by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons, especially those who are more able, and girls, particularly in mathematics
 - improving the quality of marking, so that all pupils know how they can improve their work, and providing them with more opportunities to show how they have responded
 - provide pupils with further opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve achievement in writing for all pupils by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - developing pupils' skills in handwriting so that the quality of presentation of pupils' work improves
 - ensuring that pupils are given more frequent opportunities to develop their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, including correcting errors in their written work
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - providing leaders of English and mathematics with more opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject and to drive improvements
 - refining plans for improvement so that there are clear measures of success linked to the progress and attainment of pupils, so that leaders at all levels can readily check the extent to which actions have been successful.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make consistently good progress during their time in school. As a result, attainment in most classes is below average. More-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and few attain the higher levels in the national tests.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics varies between year groups. In Key Stage 1, pupils are now making better rates of progress than has been the case over recent years, but attainment still remains below average.
- Past underachievement means that pupils in the current Key Stage 2 classes have gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils in the current Year 6 class have made outstanding progress during the last year. This has meant that, for the first time in three years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics is average. Though it too is improving, attainment in English at the end of Year 6 is still below average.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is improving. Pupils develop a secure understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in Key Stage 1 and this is helping them to read a wider range of books. Pupils' interest in reading is now maintained across Key Stage 2 and, although attainment remains below average, the gap with what is expected nationally is narrowing.
- Pupils' achievement in writing lags behind that of reading. Although children are making a good start in developing their skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage, this is not being built upon quickly enough in Key Stage 1 and sustained across Key Stage 2. Pupils' skills in the technical aspects of writing are weak. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to learn new words and practise spellings. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the need for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' written work.
- There is a lack of consistency of expectations regarding the quality of presentation of their work and pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop and practise their skills in handwriting. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply and develop their skills in writing in a wider range of subjects.
- Boys' achievement over time is better than that of girls, particularly in mathematics. Due to the actions of senior leaders, girls are benefitting from working in small groups, receiving individual tuition and attending after-school clubs in mathematics. As a result, the gap in attainment between boys and girls in the current Year 6 class has narrowed significantly. However, leaders acknowledge that expectations of girls' achievement in mathematics needs to continually be raised. However, senior leaders recognise that additional support needs to be maintained so that girls in other classes can achieve as well as boys in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected rates of progress from their starting points. This is due to the targeted support which they receive.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium are making similar rates of progress to their classmates. The attainment of eligible pupils in the current Year 6 cohort is at least in line with those of their classmates. This represents a huge improvement on 2012, when eligible pupils were around six months behind their classmates in English and more than a year behind in mathematics.

- Children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and understanding which are well below those typical for children of their age, especially in communication and language skills. Children respond well to the stimulating learning environment and the support which they receive from adults. They make good progress during their time in Early Years Foundation Stage.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is more that is good, and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Teaching requires improvement because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well over time, particularly in writing.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough. Although work is generally pitched at the correct level for pupils of middle and lower ability, pupils of higher ability are not challenged sufficiently. As a result, too few pupils reach above-average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Pupils have targets which set out what they have to do to improve their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these are not referred to in other lessons. For example, although pupils know their targets in mathematics, they are not provided with enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects in order to achieve their targets more quickly.
- Most teachers mark work regularly, but there are inconsistencies in the quality of guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils are provided with few opportunities in which to respond to marking and to demonstrate how they are improving.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All adults work effectively to support children's development in all areas of learning. Children enjoy being active, both indoors and outdoors. Adults question children regularly to check on their understanding as well as encouraging them to develop their speaking and reasoning skills.
- Teaching is good in Year 6. Over recent years, pupils have joined Year 6 with gaps in their knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to close checking on pupils' progress during lessons and over time, pupils have been provided with activities which have helped to address prior misconceptions and to develop their skills at a faster rate than in other year groups in Key Stage 2.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, including during break times, in assembly and when they attend breakfast club.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning, particularly where activities in lessons are pitched at the correct level for their abilities. They collaborate well and work effectively when working in small groups as well as individually.
- Pupils have learnt how to respond to risks. For example, they are aware of dangers associated with using the internet. Pupils enjoy being taught by a range of visitors to the school, who help to raise their awareness of personal safety issues.
- Leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are supported effectively in the school. As a result, there have been no

exclusions since the last inspection.

- Leaders have worked effectively with parents and carers to encourage regular attendance. This is now average.
- Pupils enjoy school and they say that they feel safe and are well looked after. This is because there are good relationships between adults and pupils in the school. Pupils say that bullying does occur, but this is rare and adults deal swiftly with it and with any incidents of misbehaviour.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although there have been marked improvements since the last inspection, leadership and management require improvement because inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching; for instance, in terms of marking and the extent to which pupils have the opportunities to apply their skills in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- Senior leaders are keen to distribute leadership by developing the roles of subject leaders; in particular, in English and mathematics. Staffing absence has meant that the impact of this approach has been inconsistent. The mathematics leader has started to implement changes following her checking on the quality of teaching. This has led to a review of the calculation policy, and further checking has revealed that staff are using this more consistently, especially in Key Stage 1. Leaders of subjects, however, are not provided with enough opportunities to check on the quality of teaching in their subjects and to drive improvements.
- Senior leaders and those who are responsible for leading subjects have developed suitable plans of action, which are based on the correct priorities. The plans, however, do not contain milestones or measures for success based upon pupils' progress, so that leaders can check the extent to which their actions have been successful and have provided value for money.
- The headteacher has implemented a clear system so that leaders at all levels can check the rates of pupils' progress across the school. This is helping them to identify gaps in the learning of groups and put in place support for those who are underachieving. For instance, the introduction of the 'maths club for girls' has helped to accelerate the progress of girls in the current Year 6 cohort. The support provided for those at risk of underachieving is helping to narrow the gap with other groups of pupils and is indicative of the school's approach to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Senior leaders have tackled most of the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. For example, rates of attendance have risen and there are improvements in the rates of progress which pupils are making in reading and mathematics, in particular. This is resulting in standards being raised at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Senior leaders are reviewing the performance of teachers on a regular basis. Teachers are provided with targets based on pupils' progress and attainment and linked to whole-school priorities. Governors and senior leaders ensure that decisions about pay increases are linked closely to the performance of teachers.
- The curriculum has been developed over recent times and a topic-based approach has been introduced. This is based around a class reading book. Although this is helping to secure improvements in pupils' progress in reading, it is not equipping pupils with sufficient skills in writing.

- The curriculum is enhanced through themed weeks, where pupils are able to develop their knowledge and skills in particular subjects. For example, the recent Arts Week enabled pupils to work alongside visitors on the theme of 'performance'. The resulting artwork which is displayed around the school, is of a high standard. The teaching and other activities ensure that pupils develop well spiritually, morally, spiritually and culturally. Pupils have frequent visits to different places of worship, ensuring that they have a good knowledge and awareness of people who have a different faith to their own.
- The school involves parents in their child's education when they start school. This establishes a positive relationship which is maintained as pupils journey through the school. Parent View and the school's own information shows that the vast majority of parents appreciate the caring environment which the school provides for their children.
- The local authority has provided good levels of support and challenge since the school was placed in a category of concern. They have arranged for the school to work with a partner school and this has helped to secure improvements in attendance, teaching and achievement of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone a period of change recently, with new parent governors being appointed. Existing and new governors have accessed training regarding data and are able to independently challenge leaders about how well the school is performing compared to schools nationally. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are keen to secure higher achievement for pupils. Individual governors visit school frequently to check on developments in their areas of responsibility. The governing body has plans to extent this further so that it is more systematic. This will enable them to challenge leaders with even greater rigour about the rate of improvements.
 - The governing body draws upon the professional skills of key governors to ensure that finances are managed well. They have seen to it that additional money provided by the pupil premium has been spent appropriately to meet the needs of these pupils. Governors know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and how it tackles underperformance. The governing body meets all statutory requirements, including those for pupils' safeguarding.

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	122563
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	408903

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Gillott
Headteacher	Louise Regan
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2012
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