

Danesholme Infant School

Motala Close, Corby, NN18 9DT

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 reading, writing and mathematics.
- While standards are broadly average, not enough more-able pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Teaching is not consistently good, as learning is not always matched precisely to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not have the same high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, especially in Year 1.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their writing across different subjects.
- Less-able pupils do not read regularly enough to an adult in school.
- Behaviour in the playground is sometimes rather boisterous.
- In mathematics, pupils do not regularly solve problems in real-life situations to develop their skills.
- Parts of the school day are not used efficiently enough to support learning, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not maintained the high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
- Subject coordinators are not sufficiently involved in checking how well pupils are doing.
- Governors have not challenged leaders enough over the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery because teaching is consistently good.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils in small groups.
- The new headteacher has identified what needs to change and is making gains in driving improvement.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say they feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and, together with the headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders, members of staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and also spoke with parents and carers.
- The inspectors considered 13 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Bartleman	Additional Inspector
Ruth McGill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average infant school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good by making sure that:
 - teachers match learning more precisely to the full range of pupils' abilities
 - there is a greater focus on what children will learn rather on activity in Reception
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Year 1.
- Improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, so that more pupils make more-than-expected progress, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to extend their writing across different subjects
 - providing less-able pupils with regular opportunities to read to an adult
 - giving pupils more real-life problems to solve in mathematics
 - making more efficient use of every part of the school day in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of subject coordinators through giving them more opportunities to check on teaching and learning, and their becoming fully involved in tracking pupils' progress and analysing data
 - taking steps to make play times calmer for all pupils
 - making sure that governors hold the school fully to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and that pay rewards are linked closely to good performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils make expected progress during their time in school and leave Year 2 with broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Inconsistency in teaching means that not enough pupils make more-than-expected progress for achievement to be good.
- Pupils join the Nursery with skills that are as expected for their age, especially in their social development. They make good progress because the Nursery meets their needs well and provides a good range of interesting activities that develop their early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Progress is not so rapid in Reception because there is too much emphasis on what pupils will do rather than on what they will learn. While pupils continue to make good progress in their social development and learn to play together happily, they do not make such fast gains in developing reading and writing skills.
- The new headteacher identified writing as a key area to improve and has introduced a new approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) and spelling and punctuation. This is having a positive impact, especially in helping pupils to read and write unfamiliar words. As a result, scores improved in the phonics reading check for pupils in Year 1 in 2013, and boys and girls did equally well.
- The school accepts that data have not always been reliable, but the headteacher has strengthened the system to check the accuracy of assessments. These now show that pupils are making expected progress in Key Stage 1, but not enough more-able pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment. This is because they are not always sufficiently challenged, especially in Year 1, where expectations of what they can achieve sometimes vary.
- In reading, while most pupils reach the expected Level 2, some less-able pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise reading to an adult in school, and this slows their progress. More-able pupils read confidently and can talk about the books they enjoy.
- Progress requires improvement in writing because pupils do not write enough at length in different subjects. In Year 1, in particular, pupils are not encouraged to apply their skills in punctuation and sentence construction in their everyday writing.
- While there is better progress in mathematics, few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment because they have limited experiences of solving problems in real-life situations.
- School data show that the gap between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates is equivalent to half a term behind in English and mathematics. This represents a considerable improvement on the situation in 2012 and is better than the national picture. Eligible pupils benefit from small-group support from teaching assistants.
- The attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs compares favourably with such pupils nationally and standards rose in 2013. This is because teaching assistants support these pupils well in small groups in class, making sure they have work that is tailored to their needs.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good because there is too much variation across year groups and between classes. More-able pupils are not always given the demanding work they need to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Good teaching in the Nursery means that children make a positive start to schooling. Activities build on their interests and staff carefully assess how well they are doing and what will help them to move forward in their learning. This promising start is not, however, sustained in Reception, because some of the activities do not have a clear learning purpose and so children's progress slows.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is uneven. While there is some good teaching, especially of mathematics, there is not enough to make sure pupils achieve consistently well. In the best teaching, teachers ask probing questions to check and deepen pupils' understanding, good links are made with previous work and pupils are clear about what they are learning. Tasks are set at the right level for them so that they make rapid gains in knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their skills to solving mathematical problems. However, when they are given the opportunity, they make good progress. For example, pupils in Year 2 made good progress when they were set the challenge of finding three numbers that together made 12 and then to work out how many different combinations they could find. They developed a range of approaches to solving the problem and were highly motivated.
- Pupils respond well to adults and are keen to play an active role in learning. This is especially the case when work is set at the right level for them and is not too easy or too difficult.
- The new headteacher has introduced a marking policy that is being followed across the school, so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. Books show that this has had a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the next steps in their learning. However, teachers' expectations vary as to what pupils can achieve and, in Year 1 especially, some pupils do not write enough or with sufficient accuracy.
- In Key Stage 1, too much time is allocated to activities that are not central to learning such as washing hands for dinner and eating snacks, when these tasks could be completed more efficiently and with greater independence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because too many pupils still lack self-discipline and depend too much on adult supervision to behave well. They respond positively to the new rewards system. While they behave generally well in class, in the playground games can become boisterous.
- There are small numbers of pupils with more severe difficulties whose behaviour is usually managed well, but there are instances when adults are not consistent in their approaches. The school makes sure that discrimination is not tolerated.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and have good relationships with adults. They respond very well to exciting teaching or interesting experiences, such as their 'forest schools' work in local woodland.

- Attendance improved in 2013 and is now above average for infant schools because pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe in school and know about road safety and 'stranger danger'. They know what bullying is and say there is very little in school. They are confident adults will help them if they have any worries.
- Parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke with inspectors expressed positive views about children's behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although improving, pupils' progress is not fast enough, especially in Year 1. The roles of subject coordinators are not fully developed to assist the headteacher in checking the impact of teaching on pupils' progress or analysing data to see the performance of different groups of pupils.
- The new headteacher has formed a very clear view of how the school can develop and introduced well-organised systems to bring about improvement. There is a well-understood rewards system for behaviour, and marking in books is regular and helping to move pupils on in their learning. Teachers are now fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and are held accountable for pupils' progress. Teaching has improved because of well-planned training targeted at teachers' individual needs.
- Assessment has been sharpened and is now more accurate and reliable, so that teachers can tell exactly how well pupils are doing and where improvement is needed. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are helping to target support. The school is committed to equality of opportunity, and this is seen in its inclusive nature, but not all pupils receive equally good teaching.
- The headteacher is using the management of teachers' performance as a useful tool to improve teaching, and setting appropriate targets that reflect whole-school priorities and the need for pupils to make rapid progress.
- Accurate checking of the school's work has led to strategic plans that are realistic and have the right priorities. They fit within a manageable timescale and their success can be measured.
- The school works well with parents, who are keen to help their children's education. Parents volunteer and help in school and with trips, as well as helping to raise funds.
- The range of subjects and topics contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is enriched through visits and visitors, including regular 'forest school' work, where pupils learn new skills and find out more about the natural world. The school has plans to use its primary school sports funding to enhance physical education through additional coaching, to increase pupils' participation and well being and to measure its impact.
- There are increasingly strong links with other local schools, including the neighbouring junior school, with joint working and sharing of facilities. The local authority has been slow to recognise the school's needs or offer support, but this has improved this year and a programme of support has been developed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an overview of how well the school is doing and are supportive of the new headteacher. They know about the quality of teaching and the data that show how well pupils are doing. While some individual governors are now asking searching questions, which are recorded in minutes, the governing body as a whole are not able to hold the school fully to

account for its performance because meetings are not held frequently enough. They understand about the management of teachers' performance. Until recently, governors had not been clear about the rewards that teachers received or how they related to school improvement. They know what the school is doing to tackle underperformance.

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	121903
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	429414

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Carr
Headteacher	Sandra Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
Telephone number	01536 741732
Email address	head@danesholme-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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