

# Elkesley Primary and Nursery School

Headland Avenue, Elkesley, Retford, DN22 8AQ

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although overall progress is increasing and attainment rising, achievement is not good enough in mathematics.
- Long-term staff absences have made it difficult to establish consistently good teaching. As a result, pupils have gaps in their understanding.
- Teachers do not always challenge the more able enough or routinely modify tasks to the right level for pupils during lessons to help them to do their very best.
- Progress in mathematics is not always as good as it is in English because pupils do not practise their skills enough in other subjects or explore and find things out for themselves.
- Subject leaders are not yet experienced enough in using what they see happening in lessons to improve learning.
- The school does not make sure that pupils are well prepared for life in a culturally diverse modern United Kingdom.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are now making better progress, particularly in reading and writing, and achievement is rising steadily.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe in school and have great confidence in their teachers to deal with any problems that may arise.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning and progress, especially for pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils make rapid progress in their reading, especially in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education provided.
- The strong leadership from the headteacher and governors is resulting in marked improvements in teaching and learning, achievement and attendance.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector made 12 observations, including lessons and groups who were being given extra help, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke formally with a group of pupils and informally with others during work and play.
- The inspector visited assembly, listened to pupils read and discussed their learning in class.
- The inspector carried out a scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- The inspector observed the school's work and considered a range of documentation, including data about pupils' achievement, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to attendance and behaviour, the school's self-evaluation of its work and information on the setting of targets for teachers.
- Meetings were held with the members of the governing body, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the schools' own questionnaire, which has been carried out recently, and he spoke informally with parents and carers.
- An evaluation was made of the views of staff expressed in 17 questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children, is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been some changes in staffing and significant and unavoidable periods of staff absence due to sick leave. The headteacher took up post in April 2013.

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

- Improve teaching by making sure that teachers:
  - plan tasks and activities that challenge all pupils at the right level, particularly the more able pupils
  - check pupils' progress and understanding during lessons and, where necessary, reshape tasks to meet their needs.
- Accelerate progress in mathematics by:
  - giving pupils opportunities to practise and refine their mathematical skills in different subjects
  - ensuring that pupils have more chances to solve problems, explore and discover things for themselves
  - giving pupils clear guidance through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve.
- Develop subject leaders' skills in observing teaching and its impact on learning, through paired observations with the headteacher.
- Create more opportunities to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is improving, but pupils have not yet made enough progress to fully close gaps in their learning and skills in mathematics. These were left because of previously inaccurate Key Stage 1 assessment, which led to staff believing understanding was more secure. As a result, achievement requires improvement in Key Stage 2.
- The small size of each year group means attainment at the end of Year 6 is considerably affected by the standards with which individual pupils start. In the last few years, this has varied from below average to above average.
- Pupils who left Year 6 in 2012 made good progress in English and mathematics. Those who left in 2013 made progress that required improvement in both subjects. A whole-school focus on improving pupils' writing and increased specific help for individual pupils over the last year has meant that pupils currently in Year 6 have made better progress in English. Their progress in mathematics requires improvement. This has already been recognised by school leaders and has been set as the priority for their focus this year. Pupils' work shows that some have gaps in understanding that make it difficult to learn effectively.
- The school's data, confirmed by the findings of this inspection, show that progress is accelerating. Pupils in lower year groups in Key Stage 2 are doing better, but not yet consistently well; progress remains more rapid in English than in mathematics.
- The 2012 results show that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were over four terms behind their classmates in English and over three terms in mathematics, a larger gap than nationally. The use of pupil premium funding to create smaller teaching groups and increase one-to-one support has had a positive impact on the progress made by eligible pupils and the data shows that the gap is closing. Eligible pupils currently in the school are making good progress in mathematics as well as in English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar progress and in some cases better than their peers, especially those at school action plus.
- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. They play together well and are well behaved. They enjoy exploring for themselves, alongside adult-led activities, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage class and in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) systematically and effectively. In the national Year 1 phonics checks in both 2012 and 2013, a high proportion of pupils reached the expected standards.
- Progress is accelerating rapidly in Key Stage 1. Many pupils write confidently, read well and are developing a secure understanding of the skills required to succeed in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good and has not ensured that pupils currently in the school have made good progress over time in all year groups, especially in mathematics. This is because tasks set are not always hard enough to stretch the more able pupils and they have few chances to use their mathematical skills in other subjects and to solve

practical problems.

- When work is not demanding enough for pupils who should be working at higher levels, the pace of the lesson falls and, consequently, pupils do not always learn as quickly as they could in the classes covering a wide range of ages and abilities. Particularly in mathematics, pupils are not challenged enough to find things out for themselves as teachers give too much direction, and thus slow the impetus of learning.
- Initiatives implemented by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching are increasing the rate of pupils' progress. Staffing difficulties have been overcome, and this has been an important factor in helping the school to improve teaching quality. Although much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, pupils' work showed that misconceptions from previous years' work are not being fully countered by the tasks and activities they are given.
- In the better lessons, teachers show confidence in the subject, and explain tasks clearly or change them to make sure that pupils understand what they need to do. Subject matter is chosen well to make work interesting. For example, in a Year 5/6 English lesson, pupils were challenged to write a persuasive description of a book character to convince the reader. They made good progress in applying their writing skills by writing as if they, personally, were selling the book.
- Marking of pupils' work usually tells them what they have done well and how to make further improvements. This is not consistent, especially in mathematics, where there is not enough emphasis on involving pupils more directly to improve their work.
- The teaching of children in the Nursery and Reception Years is good. A consistency in the approach to learning helps the children learn orderly routines. Good partnerships with parents help children to settle into school quickly and make a good start.
- Reading is taught well in Years 1 and 2, and the quality of teaching is improving as a result of strong leadership. Leaders are determined to make sure that the basics of each subject are well taught.
- Skilled teaching assistants work effectively in class, and also lead small groups. This gives those pupils who need extra support, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium, good-quality help to make often better progress than other pupils.

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

- Pupils are courteous to each other and all adults when in lessons or moving around the school. They told the inspector that behaviour is good and they love coming to school. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire or met the inspector agreed with this.
- During lessons and play, pupils cooperate and are very enthusiastic. Attitudes to learning are good even in the weaker lessons. In discussions, pupils say that, 'School is great.' One pupil summed it up by saying, 'I love it here.' When they are given the chance to explore things for themselves, pupils respond well.
- The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour that staff use well. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and each other, are good. Pupils say that there is no bullying but that, if any happened, they know the school would deal with it very quickly.

- Pupils feel safe in school; parents and carers agree. Pupils know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. The school has visitors who talk with the pupils about how to keep themselves safe, both inside and outside school.
- Effective management of behaviour and good use of praise and encouragement contribute positively to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A growing range of visits and visitors also promote it well, including a residential visit in Year 6, which particularly enhances pupils' learning and social skills. However, pupils do not have a thorough understanding of the culturally diverse British society of today.
- Older pupils support the younger pupils very well, and participate in the school council. The 'gold' assembly is a good example of how successfully the school has fostered pupils' confidence.
- The school has worked hard to raise attendance, which, has been low in previous years. So far, this term, attendance rates are above the 2012–13 national average. Pupils are punctual to school and lessons.

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

- The recently appointed headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses and has acted quickly to address the latter. Her enthusiasm, drive and determination have contributed considerably to improvements in teaching through a difficult period of staff absence.
- Governors, parents and staff, including the assistant headteacher, who has recently returned to work, are strongly supportive of the renewed focus the headteacher has brought to raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. She has inspired all members of the school community and there is an obvious commitment to driving further improvement. Staff morale is high and staff say, typically, 'I am proud to be at Elkesley and wouldn't want to work anywhere else.'
- The school's action plan identifies the right priorities and is based upon accurate data. It is having a positive effect on improving teaching and learning, and boosting progress. Though relatively new, the checks that are made on teachers' use of assessment are making a difference to the quality of teaching because they are enabling teachers to start to pitch work more accurately.
- The headteacher and governing body take appropriate decisions about teachers' salaries based on pupils' achievement. Subject leaders' targets are focused on how well pupils achieve in their area of responsibility.
- Subject leaders' roles are not yet fully developed. They have monitored planning but have not carried out many observations of teaching and its impact on learning and pupils' progress. The result is that some possibilities for improving progress have not been followed through; for example, exploring how to help pupils grasp particular mathematical ideas more easily and practise them in other subjects.
- The school provides an interesting and well-balanced curriculum, which involves pupils in determining what they should find out about in some topics. The teaching of physical education is being enhanced through the new funding, which is providing an outside consultant to help train staff and give pupils expert tuition. The school has a plan for how the funding's impact on pupils' performance will be measured.

- The local authority provides effective support, including training for governors and regular monitoring. It offers an objective view of the school's performance through its visits and reports.
- Parents, carers and staff are positive about the school's leadership and would recommend the school to others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body understands the strengths of the school and what is needed to improve it. Governors understand data about pupils' achievement and raise questions relating to the progress of pupils. Their ability to challenge and support the school is strengthened by regular visits to the school to monitor what goes on. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on the progress of eligible pupils. Effective systems are in place to check on the performance of staff, including the headteacher, and governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that safeguarding systems meet requirements. Checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. Training to ensure effective support and protection for pupils is up to date.

## 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>	122640
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425028

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	75
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Adkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jen Lane
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01777 838615
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