

Cranford Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Cranford, Kettering, NN14 4AE

Inspection dates 12–13 November 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- A substantial legacy of underachievement means pupils have not achieved as well as they should since the last inspection, despite major improvements in teaching and learning over the last year.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to help pupils to make good progress since the last inspection. Standards remain lower than they should be.
- There are some minor weaknesses in the current good teaching in the school which prevent lessons from being outstanding.
- A small minority of parents have concerns about many aspects of the school's provision, which are not substantiated by the evidence of the inspection. The school has not been successful in reassuring these parents. Governors, until recently, have not been proactive enough in liaising with parents.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership from the new headteacher has helped the staff to transform provision in the school in the last year. She has formed a strong team that has greatly improved teaching, and pupils' achievement, behaviour and attitudes.
- Teaching has been good in the last year and pupils have made good progress, making up for much, but not all, of the lost ground from previous years.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel safe there. By Year 6, they have developed outstanding attitudes to learning.
- Leaders at all levels now help drive improvements successfully. Governors have improved their understanding of the school's provision, so they are better able to support and challenge the school about its performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of nine lessons, three of these jointly with the headteacher. Pupils were also observed in assembly and at break time.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met formally with groups of pupils from Years 3, 5 and 6, and talked informally with others. Pupils were heard to read from Years 1, 5 and 6.
- The views of 52 parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were considered, as well as those who expressed their opinions in emails, and others who were spoken to informally at the end of the school day.
- Samples of pupils' books were examined.
- A range of documentation was checked, particularly that relating to pupils' progress and keeping them safe, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and its plans for the future.
- Questionnaires returned by six staff were examined.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school, with four classes. Apart from Reception, each class caters for two year groups.
- Most pupils are White British with a few from different minority ethnic groups. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of some pupils, in this school, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements 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 by the end of Year 6.
- There have been major disruptions to staffing, including instability to senior leadership, since the last inspection for a variety of reasons. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2012 and the staffing is now much more settled.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the current good teaching and make some outstanding, thus raising standards and eliminating the gaps in pupils' attainment that remain from previous inadequacies in provision, by:
 - ensuring that work is closely matched to different pupils' abilities throughout lessons, particularly for the more able
 - always checking frequently on the progress of groups who are working independently in lessons, so that any misconceptions and mistakes are addressed more quickly.
- The school, and the governing body in particular, drawing on support available within the local authority, should work more closely with parents, particularly with the small minority who have particular concerns, to give them a better understanding of the school's provision and the reasons for any changes, and to show them the benefits for their children in the improvements that have been made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Good achievement identified at the time of the last inspection was not maintained. Progress declined and standards fell, with progress only improving again during the last school year.
- Although children start school with skills and understanding that are typical for their age, their standards at the end of Year 6 have been generally below average. Achievement fell after the last inspection and, until recently, pupils did not make enough progress, particularly in mathematics. Standards improved in 2013, especially in mathematics, but were still below average overall.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been average, but rose in 2013 to be significantly above average. The improvement came particularly in mathematics.
- The upturn seen in standards at the end of each key stage in 2013 reflects better progress throughout the school. Records show that progress was good in reading, writing and mathematics for all year groups over the course of the school year. For pupils in Year 6, this helped overcome some inadequate progress in previous years, but they still did not achieve as well in national assessments as would be expected in the light of their starting points in Year 3.
- Good progress continues across the school this year, with pupils achieving well in all lessons observed on inspection, and good progress seen in their books. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning and good teaching are the key elements driving this. More-able pupils are making good progress overall.
- Pupils who are entitled to support from the pupil premium make the same progress as their classmates. The standards they achieve are at least as good as and sometimes better than the rest of the class in English and mathematics. However, there were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium in 2013 to report their attainment in detail without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making the same improved progress as others, having not done well enough in the past. Good support and challenge from extra adults, work at the right level of difficulty, and support programmes tailored to their needs all promote this. Boys and girls, and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, all make similar progress.
- Progress in reading is improving and was particularly strong across the school last year, boosted by daily sessions dedicated to reading skills. By Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic, capable readers with decided preferences for authors and genres. Better teaching of phonics (how the letter combinations in words represent different sounds) is boosting the skills of younger pupils, although last year, Year 1 pupils did not do well in the national phonics check as their teaching had not been as good in this aspect. Current pupils in Year 1 have secure phonics skills.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching over time has required improvement. Too much teaching in the past has been weak. As a result, even the good teaching of the last school year was not enough to raise pupils' achievement to the level it should be at. Records show a significant improvement in the quality of teaching last year, with too much requiring improvement at the start of the year, and most being good by the end.

- Teaching during the inspection was consistently good. A positive working atmosphere, well-understood routines and good relationships characterised all lessons. Pupils enjoy learning and say they find lessons fun.
- Teachers make increasingly good use of the improved assessment systems to give pupils work at the right level for them, so that it is neither too easy nor too hard. At times, this is not done as accurately as it might be, so progress can slow for a while. Sometimes, more-able pupils do the same work as everyone else before moving on to more challenging work, when they could have coped with the more difficult tasks from the start.
- Pupils are successfully encouraged to be independent. Generally, adults keep a careful eye on how all pupils are getting on during the lesson. Occasionally, however, the teacher and other adults spend their time with particular groups, and do not check up often enough on how well pupils working independently are making progress. This means that sometimes mistakes and misconceptions are not identified quickly enough, and opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to refine their work.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have a good understanding of their own attainment, so they know the targets they are aiming for in each subject, and what they need to do to meet them. The marking of pupils' written work is of good quality. Pupils' successes are clearly identified, and they are given pointers for greater success in future. Sometimes, pupils are given specific extra little tasks to challenge them further, or to give more practice where it is needed, but this is not consistent.
- Teachers provide pupils with many good opportunities to discuss work together. This improves their speaking and listening skills, helps them sort out their ideas, and keeps everyone involved in the lessons.
- Teachers explain ideas well to pupils, often using interactive whiteboards to clarify concepts and to enthuse pupils. A good pace is maintained in lessons because pupils are clear about what is expected of them in work and behaviour. They like and respect their teachers so try hard to meet these expectations.
- Homework is a strength of the school, and is very popular with pupils, developing their self-reliance across a range of subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In class, pupils work hard, collaborate sensibly together, listen attentively to the adults and to each other, and enjoy learning. Their enjoyment is reflected in good levels of attendance. They appreciate that they are encouraged to succeed, with pupils in Year 6 saying it will give them a better chance in secondary school and that, 'The new headteacher makes us push ourselves more...she believes in us.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying and of how it differs from other misbehaviour. They say that incidents are rare and that, along with other behaviour problems, have become much less frequent in the last year because they are dealt with much more strictly. They greatly appreciate this, one pupil in Year 5 saying, 'You can really see the difference'.
- Pupils feel safe in school and, again, commented that this has improved in the last year with the better systems introduced. They are gaining a good understanding of how to keep themselves

safe, for example in case of fire, or when using the internet.

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and take a pride in the progress they make. Older pupils are very confident of their current levels of attainment, and are ambitious to improve them by the end of the year.
- Pupils behave well throughout the school. They are positive but realistic about behaviour, acknowledging that there are sometimes squabbles between friends, or occasional silly behaviour, but they say that these incidents are always dealt with well by adults. Most parents agree that behaviour is good.

The leadership and management are good

- There have been major improvements in leadership and management in the last year. The very clear educational direction from the headteacher, with strong support from the senior teacher, has led to a cohesive and effective approach by staff to improving teaching and raising standards. Behaviour has also been improved. The clear focus last year on mathematics led to much improved progress in the subject.
- Systems for managing teachers' performance have been strengthened, including the proper links to teachers' pay. A sharper focus on giving staff feedback about their performance in lessons has led to much better teaching. New and inexperienced staff have been given good support to help them be successful. Better assessment systems are used effectively to provide help to pupils in danger of falling behind, and to hold teachers to account for pupils' performance.
- Subject leaders play an increasingly successful role in checking up on progress in their subjects and helping colleagues to improve their practice through sharing expertise. They have helped to expand the curriculum during the last year to give pupils a more diverse and interesting range of experiences, often linking different subjects together to make learning more meaningful. Pupils say how much they enjoy these, and they particularly enjoy music and sport. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding meets requirements, with many improvements in procedures contributing to making pupils safer, and helping to make them feel more secure in school.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent well to support eligible pupils socially and academically. Such pupils do at least as well as their classmates, and this exemplifies the school's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all its pupils and preventing any possible discrimination.
- The new funding to support sport and physical education is being used effectively to extend pupils' experiences through better equipment and through the use of a specialist to develop pupils' skills in a range of areas.
- Before the appointment of the new headteacher, the school's work was affected by disruptions to staffing and instability in senior leadership. The local authority identified a considerable overspend at the start of September 2012 and rightly insisted that the financial problems be urgently addressed. The headteacher and governors took immediate action to comply. This resulted in a major restructuring of staffing, including the times that teaching assistants worked, to maximise the value for money from the school's spending in terms of the impact on pupils' achievement. The overspend has now been dealt with.
- The school has introduced a number of significant improvements to the information provided to

parents, particularly about pupils' achievement. However, the many changes introduced into the school have been disliked by a minority of parents. Although some of the reasons for changes could not be shared with parents because of issues of confidentiality, governors had not been proactive enough in explaining what could be shared until the end of last year. More remains to be done to alleviate parents' concerns and to strengthen the partnership with them.

- The local authority has given good support to the school over the last year in making improvements in provision. It provided the headteacher with details of the financial difficulties in the school as soon as she took up post, so that they could be addressed at once. The authority's financial and human resources personnel have helped the school to deal with this situation.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance had not been strong enough for some time after the previous inspection. Governors were not given sufficient information about pupils' progress and teaching to hold the school to account. This has been improved over the last year, with governors having a better understanding of data about achievement, and of the systems to manage teachers' performance, including links with progression up the pay scales. Together with the headteacher, they have ensured that pupil premium funding is spent effectively, and know that these pupils have done just as well as others. Governors now have a much clearer overview of finances. This has been helped by the addition to the governing body of experienced people with relevant expertise. Governors now have the understanding they need to challenge and support the school, although minutes do not yet show that this is done systematically. Better liaison with parents remains a key area needing action.

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	121966
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	425112

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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Dixon
Headteacher	Julie Grey
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2011
Telephone number	01536 330300
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