

# Isleham Church of England Primary School

Malting Lane, Isleham, Ely, CB7 5RZ

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because rates of progress are not yet consistently good across different year groups or subjects.
- Boys do not always make as much progress as girls.
- The most able pupils do not always make the progress and reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always match work well to the needs of different groups of pupils or re-shape learning in light of pupils' progress.
- Teaching is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and teaching in mathematics is not as good as in English.
- The mathematics curriculum does not focus well enough on developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills or on developing their ability to calculate efficiently.
- Subject leaders are new to post and have not yet gained a clear picture of the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- The time allocated for the leadership of special educational needs is insufficient to meet the needs of all the pupils. This affects their achievement
- Improvement plans are overly complicated

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading.
- Music is taught well.
- Children receive a positive start to their education and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders have successfully narrowed the achievement gap between those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well.
- The governing body challenges and supports the school in equal measure. They have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses and what is being done to address them.
- The headteacher leads by example and models her expectations effectively. Staff morale is high.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 part-lessons. The headteacher accompanied the inspection team on two lesson observations.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, staff, a representative from the local authority and a phone call was made to the Diocesan representative.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the online survey (Parent View). They also took into account the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including: the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment; documents on teaching and the school's performance; the schools' own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, and its development plan; records relating to staff performance; and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

## Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Murrell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller in size compared to the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, in this case for those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good with more which is outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all teachers provide work which challenges all groups of pupils effectively, particularly boys, and supports them in their learning
  - ensuring that teachers respond promptly to their assessment of pupils' learning in lessons and change their plans accordingly
  - sharing the good practice evident in the school more widely especially with new staff
- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress particularly in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - teaching focuses more on developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills so that they can solve problems for themselves more effectively
  - all teachers re-visit their previous marking and comments and check pupils' responses to them
  - pupils are taught the most efficient ways to calculate and that they apply these skills effectively
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - training is provided to support subject leaders to carry out their monitoring role more effectively
  - more time is allocated for the leadership of special educational needs
  - school improvement plans have a simpler format, are more succinct and clearly identify how leaders will measure success.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most children enter the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in literacy. During their time in the Early Years Foundation stage children make good gains in their learning and reach broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1. However, boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Attainment by the time pupils reached the end of Year 2 in 2013 was broadly average. This was an improvement on the previous year. Some turbulence in staffing from year to year has been reflected in fluctuating standards and varying rates of progress over time. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment is similar to the national average overall but below average in mathematics and above average in reading.
- Pupils in Year 1 performed well in the phonics screening check and achieved above national expectations. Progress in reading is good. Those who find reading difficult try hard to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to help them with new words. Generally, pupils are proud of their reading skills and they need little encouragement to read at home and to talk about their reading, for example in literacy lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- The proportion of pupils making the nationally expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics meets national expectations. Achievement is not yet good because the proportion exceeding expected rates of progress is not yet high enough in mathematics and writing. Rates of progress across year groups are inconsistent and reflect the quality of teaching. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1.
- There is a gap between the achievement of boys and girls in mathematics and to a lesser degree in writing. Boys' concentration and engagement in their learning is less well developed than that of the girls. The school is aware of the issue and is working effectively towards ensuring that the curriculum appeals to their interests more.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of their classmates although in 2013 in their progress in mathematics was weaker.
- The school has worked successfully to ensure that pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to that of other pupils, and sometimes better progress. There is no gap between the performance of this group and non pupil premium pupils. The provision of additional support, including small group tuition and the introduction of on-line resources has had a positive impact on accelerating rates of progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In some lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils to reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable. The work given to pupils of differing abilities is too similar which means it is not hard enough for some but too easy for others. This was the case in mathematics where the most able pupils were set a task which failed to stretch them sufficiently.
- Teaching does not always motivate the boys to want to learn and they sometimes show a lack of interest in their work. For example, in a guided reading session they were not engaged by the task they were given and as a result did not fully complete it.

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils learn the skills they need to be able to calculate in mathematics efficiently. Sometimes the methods taught are convoluted and leave too many opportunities for mistakes to be made, for example when dividing by a single digit number. Teachers do not ask probing questions which develop pupils' reasoning skills or promote pupils' deeper understanding of mathematics frequently enough. This affects their independence and ability to solve more complex problems.
- During lessons, teachers do not always check pupils' progress often enough or adjust their teaching to ensure pupils of differing abilities make maximum progress. This means that they do not learn as much as they could and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Able teaching assistants support pupils well in small groups and some support individuals. However, occasionally, teachers do not always direct them effectively enough and their time is wasted.
- Teachers' marking has improved since the time of the last inspection and is regular. Teachers provide comments for pupils about how they can improve their work. Pupils generally respond well to these. However, in some mathematics books, pupils' corrections were still wrong at the second attempt and there were clear misconceptions evident. Occasionally, teachers did not re-visit these corrections and therefore didn't notice pupils' misunderstanding of key concepts. This had a negative effect on their progress.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in the school but this is not yet shared effectively enough amongst all staff. In these lessons well planned activities challenge and engage pupils in their work. A exciting game of 'guess the number' in one lesson made pupils think carefully about which questions they could ask to be able to discover the number in as quick a time as possible. High levels of challenge promoted brisk discussions between talking partners and well thought out 'next questions'.
- Music is taught well and pupils clearly enjoy it. Pupils made exceptional progress in a short space of time when learning to sing. The teacher enabled pupils to use learnt strategies to improve pitch and harmony. In a small group mathematics session for the most able pupils, progress was good because the teacher provided challenging tasks which made pupils think hard about patterns, sequences and ratio problems.

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

- Pupils usually display good attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. They get on well with each other and their teachers and always try hard to please them. Pupils help each other willingly in lessons and enjoy working together in pairs and groups showing interest and enthusiasm. They develop independence and grow in confidence as they progress through the school.
- Pupils are well aware of the school's behaviour policy and say that lessons are rarely disrupted by 'silly behaviour'. When occasionally incidents do happen, they are well managed by teachers and teaching assistants and are quickly resolved. Pupils are courteous, friendly and keen to talk about their enjoyment of learning. This is confirmed by their above average level of attendance and their positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying, including teasing, cyber bullying and homophobic name calling. Anti-bullying week employed drama well to raise pupils' awareness. Pupils say that

if an incident of bullying does occur, the school swiftly deals with it. The school's record of bullying confirms this and all staff say that bullying is dealt with effectively although a few parents who responded to the online questionnaire 'parent view' say this is not always the case.

- Pupils said they felt safe in school; parents and staff agree. They are aware of unsafe situations and know, for example, how to keep themselves safe whilst working on the internet. They apply what they learn in school to their lives outside for example when riding their bicycles.
- Pupils are happy to take responsibility in school and volunteer willingly to work as buddies to support younger children at lunchtime in the canteen and to participate as school councillors.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and outlines many useful strategies for improvement. However the plan is overly complicated and individual actions do not have clear steps to success. This makes the evaluation of progress towards meeting goals more difficult. The plan is not sufficiently ambitious because success criteria do not relate consistently to pupils making good rather than expected rates of progress.
- Some subject leaders are new to their post and as a result do not yet have a clear picture of teaching. Despite this, they are settling into their leadership roles and articulate a clear plan for improvement. The leader of special educational needs only works in the school for six hours per week which is insufficient time for her to bring about the changes needed and to tackle the underachievement of some pupils effectively.
- The leadership of teaching is rigorous and the headteacher has challenged weaknesses in teaching and brought about improvement in the practice some teachers requiring improvement. Performance is well managed. Her efforts have been affected by high proportions of staff arriving and leaving the school at regular intervals. This has been beyond the school's control but has nevertheless adversely affected the overall quality of teaching. However, the support programme in place to help new teachers hit the ground running is appropriate.
- Some support from the local authority has been appropriate and has resulted in improvement, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage where leadership is good. However, the support for mathematics has been less effective and requires further improvement.
- The headteacher, teachers and Governing Body are fully committed to bringing about more rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders have a clear understanding of where the school currently is on its journey towards becoming good.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development although there is work to be done to ensure that it meets the mathematical needs of pupils' more effectively. There is insufficient time given to developing pupils' deeper understanding of mathematics or to ensuring that they use efficient methods to be able to calculate quickly. Pupils have ample opportunity to join extra-curricular clubs and to visit places of interest.
- Some of the new funding for sport is being targeted at improving the skills and confidence of teachers to teach dance and gymnastics. Funding is also being used to enable all children to take part in competitive sporting events and out-of-hours sports clubs. This is already having

some impact. Pupils already compete in competitive sport and have for example won trophies for tag rugby and football. This contributes well to their healthy lifestyles and physical well-being. There are well directed plans to develop this further and to link with other schools nearby.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The ability of the governing body to drive through improvements alongside leaders is strong. Governors are knowledgeable and have a good understanding of the information about how well pupils are doing which enables them to provide appropriate challenge and support for the school. They focus effectively on improving the progress of the pupils in the school. For example, they are fully aware of the improved performance of those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding and how this has come about.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the importance of linking teachers' pay with the progress of pupils and do not award pay increases unless rates of progress are positive. They participate fully in evaluating the quality of teaching and know how well each teacher teaches.
- Safeguarding currently meets 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110791
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425207

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Malkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Bramley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2013
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