

# Pitsford Primary School

Moulton Road, Pitsford, Northampton, NN6 9AU

## Inspection dates

3–4 December 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		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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not have a well developed understanding of how to tackle mathematical problems and this slows their progress.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers do not make sure that pupils are always given work that is at the right level for them. They sometimes give them too much time to complete a task.
- Not all members of staff correct pupils when they mispronounce letter sounds.
- Some of the tasks that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given to choose from are not inviting or purposeful enough.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have improved their work as a result of marking.
- They behave well socially, but their attitudes to learning require improvement because they do not always take enough care with their work resulting in frequent avoidable mistakes.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning require improvement because leaders, including governors, do not provide teachers with sufficiently specific guidance to secure rapid improvement. Information on how well groups of pupils are doing is not fully understood by all leaders.
- A minority of parents are not happy with aspects of the school's work, and a few do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and enjoy taking part in practical activities.
- Pupils do best in English. They enjoy writing stories, read with expression and do well in spelling tests.
- Members of staff are caring and use praise well to develop pupils' self-esteem.
- The school is improving steadily and leaders and governors know what to do to make it good in the future.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, so that pupils become thoughtful and considerate.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in nine lessons, all jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account 25 responses to the online Parent View survey, letters from parents and held informal discussions with a random sample of parents.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in survey responses from seven members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well 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.
- There have been several changes in governors since the previous inspection.

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

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching and learning, by:
  - making sure that work is at the right level for pupils of differing ability and they are given the right length of time to complete it
  - ensuring that all members of staff correct pupils when they mispronounce letter sounds
  - always providing purposeful and inviting tasks for children when they are making choices about what they are going to learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - checking that pupils have improved their work as a result of teachers' marking, so that they try their best and correct avoidable errors.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics, by:
  - making sure that all pupils, including the more able, are challenged during whole-class discussions
  - providing greater support for pupils in learning about the best way to solve mathematical problems.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders at all levels, including the governors, by:
  - checking information on how well groups of pupils are doing so that their progress can be compared and swift action taken when they are doing less well than they should
  - giving teachers more specific development points following on from checks on teaching
  - working more effectively with the minority of parents who are unhappy with aspects of the school or who do not make sure that their children attend school regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Attainment on entry to the Reception year varies from year to year. This year the majority of children were working within the levels typical for their age when they started school.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Children do not always learn quickly enough when working on activities they have chosen for themselves because some activities are insufficiently inviting or lack a clear sense of purpose. Children develop confidence well and persevere when working with an adult or independently, because adults are caring and have established clear routines.
- Pupils in the recent Year 1 national phonics screening (which tests the knowledge of letters and sounds) did less well than pupils in other schools nationally, because learning was not well enough structured and expectations for progress were too low. Nevertheless, improvements have been made since that time, and pupils currently in Year 2 have improved their skills and use them well to help them to improve their reading.
- Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is broadly average. Pupils' achievement requires improvement because expectations have been too low in the past and progress is uneven across the school and between subjects.
- Pupils do better in English than in mathematics. In mathematics, pupils do not have a clear understanding of how to go about solving mathematical problems and frequently choose inefficient methods to find the right answer. For example, older pupils added on the same number many times rather than using multiplication, and were not aware of how they could use an approximate answer to help check if their answer was likely to be correct.
- The progress of the more-able pupils requires improvement, because they do not always learn quickly enough during whole-class mathematical discussions and when completing simple worksheets. This is because the subject matter is not challenging enough for them.
- Pupils do not consistently do their best work and while they do well in spelling tests and their writing is often interesting, they make careless errors, especially in spelling.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is too few to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Progress is better in writing and mathematics than in reading. Leaders have not checked up on these differences soon enough to ensure that progress is consistent.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not consistently good. Some special additional support has been more successful than others. In lessons, pupils' specific needs are not always being met in full and when this happens they do not understand what they are to learn.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in physical activities that help to develop healthy lifestyles, improve their physical well-being and enable them to reach the physical performance levels of which they are capable. For example, at playtime pupils organised their own energetic games.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- While teaching is improving steadily it is not consistently good because teachers do not always expect pupils to work quickly enough and allow too long for some tasks to be completed. In addition, work is not always judged well enough to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils in the class. At times, it is too easy for the more able pupils and at other times, too difficult for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils say that mathematics is not always explained to them well enough. As one pupil said, 'Teachers think we know stuff but we don't.' Leaders have developed a new whole-school mathematics policy so that pupils can learn skills at a faster rate and are not confused by differences in methods used, but it is only just being introduced.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, not all activities that children have chosen for themselves are purposeful and inviting, and consequently learning is not always extended enough. At other times, members of staff ask good questions that involve children in thinking about what they have learned.
- Between Years 1 and 6, teaching is best in English, and consequently pupils enjoy this subject most and are especially enthusiastic about writing stories and reading. The teaching of phonics is improving rapidly following staff training, but not all members of staff are insisting that pupils pronounce letter sounds accurately to make it easier to sound out words.
- Across the school, teachers foster good relationships with the pupils and set the right example by demonstrating good manners. One pupil spoke for others by saying, 'Teachers are kind and help you'.
- There are more practical activities than at the time of the previous inspection and these are greatly enjoyed by the pupils. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 enjoyed moving to different points of the compass and older pupils were keen to work in groups organising their end-of-term party.
- Teachers manage pupils' social behaviour well and there is very little disruption in class. However, pupils do not always concentrate well enough when work is not well suited to their needs and they do not consistently try hard enough to do their best.
- Following a whole-school development, teachers' marking is improving. Pupils' work often includes worthwhile advice on how they can make it better next time. However, teachers do not always check that pupils have improved their work.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good enough to help them to make rapid progress. The large majority of parents and the pupils agree that behaviour at the school is good. While pupils behave well around school and are not disruptive in class, they do not always try as hard as they should to do their best, and as a result, they make avoidable errors and their work varies in quality.
- Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about practical activities. They are keen to help each other when working in pairs and take responsibility for tasks around the school such as when acting as play leaders. As one pupil said, 'We help each other if we get stuck'. Pupils' attendance

is below average because a few families choose to take extended term-time holidays.

- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they know how to stay safe. Instances of bullying are infrequent and are mostly dealt with to the satisfaction of the pupils. Teachers promote equal opportunities well and discourage discrimination. Consequently, pupils are polite and friendly and are respectful of cultural differences. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, spoke sensibly about the different ways that Sikhs serve others.

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

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and managers at all levels have not secured consistently good teaching and learning. Leaders' capacity to improve has been demonstrated in recent developments such as the improvement in progress in English and tighter arrangements for measuring pupils' progress. However, teaching remains inconsistent and pupils do not all do well enough in mathematics.
- The headteacher, other members of staff and governors have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to make the school good, and clear plans for school development. There is abundant information on how well pupils are doing, but it is not in a clear enough format to make it easy to compare the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Teaching is being checked more rigorously than in the past and suitable training is helping to tackle aspects of teaching that are not good enough. Pointers given to teachers on how to improve their work are appropriate but are not always sharply focused so that success can be measured accurately and rapid progress made.
- The curriculum provides a range of activities including art and music, but work is not always well enough pitched for all pupils in some lessons. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and supports pupils in becoming caring and socially responsible. Assemblies are used well to put across important values such as the importance of not being selfish.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and members of staff are checked for suitability for working with pupils and receive training to help care for them.
- The local authority has provided the right level of support for this steadily improving school. Parents have mixed views about the school. They find members of staff to be approachable, but are not all happy with aspects of leadership, teaching and the amount of progress pupils make. They are right in their views that these areas require improvement, but inspection findings are that the school is tackling these weaknesses.
- Pupil-premium funding is spent appropriately on individual teaching support and access to clubs and visits so that these pupils can take part in the same activities as other pupils and are catching up with them if their learning lags behind.
- The school has not received the primary school funding for sport yet, but has advanced plans to spend this in partnership with other small schools in the area and to extend resources at the school. It has plans to measure the impact of this work.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There have been several changes to the governing body, and governors are currently taking part in an external review to help identify ways they can increase their impact on how well the

school is doing. Governors are aware of how well the school's performance compares with other schools and how good teaching is. Systems for helping to improve teaching have become more robust and governors know how good teaching is to be rewarded and how weaknesses in teaching are being tackled.

## 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>	121850
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425009

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil James
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Cartlidge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 880866
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