

Waterbeach Community Primary School

High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9JU

Inspection dates

3–4 December 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

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their progress is not consistently strong across the school.
- Teaching does not always match pupils' abilities. Work is sometimes too easy for more-able pupils. In some lessons, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs rely too much on adult help because work is too hard for them.
- Pupils do not always pay enough attention in lessons, especially when teachers do not make expectations clear or work does not motivate or inspire them fully. They are overly boisterous at break-times because there is little for them to do.
- Leaders and governors do not use pupil-premium funding to best effect. Consequently, the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of others is not closing quickly enough.
- The system leaders use to check the quality of teaching is not implemented rigorously enough to bring about sustained improvements. It does not check closely enough on how well pupils are learning. Teachers who are in charge of subjects play too small a part in driving improvement.
- The governing body is supportive but it does not yet do enough to hold the school rigorously to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress accelerates significantly in Years 5 and 6 because of good teaching.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They are polite and courteous and behave sensibly.
- Children settle quickly when they start school in the Reception classes. Their understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) develops rapidly.
- The school is emerging with renewed energy from a period of considerable turbulence due to the closure of a nearby army barracks.
- Leaders have identified the most important priorities for school improvement. As a result, teaching is improving and pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is rising.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons. Around half of these observations were done jointly with the headteacher or one of the deputy headteachers. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 77 parents who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View. The inspectors also talked to some parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, heard some pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors analysed 25 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Mike Capper, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Linda Baily | Additional Inspector |
| Nicholas Rudman | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen since the previous inspection due to the closure in the last two years of the army barracks close to the school.
- Most pupils are from White-British backgrounds.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for 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, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is broadly average. All three groups are represented in school with the majority being in younger age groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the inspection, there was an acting Chair of Governors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and the progress of all pupils so that it is consistently good by:
 - making sure that teachers always provide enough challenge for more-able pupils
 - providing work in lessons for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs that is more closely matched to their needs so that they do not become too reliant on adult help
 - giving teachers the opportunity to learn from good or outstanding practice in other schools.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - making sure that teachers set out their expectations for behaviour clearly in all lessons and always plan work that inspires and engages pupils fully
 - providing more for pupils to do at break-times.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that checks on teaching focus more closely on how well pupils are learning
 - using the outcomes of checking on teaching to set challenging targets for improvement and then following these up to ensure that they are being implemented and sustained
 - giving subject and other leaders more involvement in analysing data on pupils' performance and improving teaching
 - increase the level of challenge provided by governors, including in making sure that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively to improve the attainment of all eligible pupils.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, 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' achievement requires improvement because they do not make consistently good progress throughout the school. The school does not promote equality well enough because there are too many variations in the rates of progress between classes or groups. Consequently, while there have been some recent improvements in pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2, it typically remains broadly average from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 2 and then to the end of Year 6.
- Although there are too few pupils known to be eligible for pupil-premium funding to comment on their attainment by the end of Year 6 without identifying them, performance data for this group across the school shows that they do not always make enough progress. Support to help these pupils has mainly been additional help in class or the funding of access to activities outside lessons. This support lacks focus and has not proved effective at closing the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and the others in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same uneven progress as others in lessons because work is sometimes too hard for them. These pupils make the best progress when supported by teaching assistants who work with pupils in small groups.
- In Years 5 and 6 pupils improve their skills quickly. Pupils' workbooks show that writing improves well and, in mathematics, pupils become more confident about solving complex calculations. The more-able are challenged well and this helps their skills to improve quickly. However, elsewhere in the school the progress of more-able pupils is uneven because their needs are not always met well enough.
- When children start school most are working at typical levels for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make steady progress in acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills. They make good progress in developing personal and social skills because this aspect of their learning is supported particularly well throughout the day.
- An area of significant recent improvement in the last year in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has been the pace at which pupils' knowledge of phonics has improved. Phonics are taught systematically and the percentage meeting or exceeding the expected level in the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1 improved to above average levels in 2013.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Pupils do not always learn quickly enough in lessons. Teachers do not use information on what pupils already know to make sure work is not too hard for the less able or too easy for the more able. Work does not always inspire pupils, and when teachers do not make their expectations clear, pupils do not concentrate well enough.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often work with teaching assistants rather than the teacher. While teaching assistants are enthusiastic and hard working, pupils rely too much on adult support to complete their work and skills are not always secured before they move on.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers plan exciting activities indoors and outside that

engage children's interest well. Children are given sensitive support and this helps them to settle quickly. However, as elsewhere in the school, work is not always pitched at the right level of difficulty for all pupils, with the more able in particular not always challenged well enough.

- The best teaching is seen in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, expectations are good and teaching fosters positive attitudes towards learning because it is purposeful and engaging. This was seen to good effect in a literacy lesson where pupils worked together well, showing good perseverance as they devised scripts for a radio play.
- There are strengths to teaching across the school. Teachers get on well with their pupils and make sure they are happy at school. They make good use of modern technology to introduce new learning, especially in phonics where skills improve quickly. The use of targets has improved and pupils say that they now have a clearer understanding of the next steps in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because they do not always have positive attitudes towards learning. This is seen in the lack of care they sometimes take with their work and in the way that they too easily become distracted when work does not engage them fully.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes the school provides very little activity for pupils to do. As a result, pupils do not always use their common sense or behave well when playing outside. For example, they slide on the playground even though they know they should not do this, which puts their own safety and that of others at risk.
- Despite this, pupils enjoy school. They are unerringly polite and courteous and in many lessons they behave well. This is most evident in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils work hard and try their best all of the time as they respond well to their teachers' high expectations.
- The school promotes good relationships and tackles discrimination robustly. As a result, pupils from differing backgrounds get on well with each other.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that there is occasional bullying or 'falling-out' but it is tackled well by adults. A recent anti-bullying week has meant that the potential dangers of the internet are well understood by older pupils.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the pace of change has slowed due to a focus over the last two years on ensuring a smooth transition for pupils who were moving to other schools when a near-by army barracks closed.
- Leaders are doing the right things to improve teaching but they do not follow up rigorously whether improvements are being sustained. When checking the quality of teaching, leaders do not focus on how well pupils are learning and this means that some weaknesses are not sufficiently well provided for. Subject and other leaders have limited experience of analysing data or visiting lessons. Neither do teachers have sufficient opportunity to learn from good or outstanding practice in other schools.
- Leaders and governors are not using the pupil-premium funding to bring about improvements in provision or close the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and the others. Planning for

the use of this funding is vague and does not make success criteria explicit so that impact can be checked and pupils' achievements measured accurately.

- Leaders have the capacity to improve the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and plans for improvement are focusing on the right priorities. Consequently, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is rising and measures to improve phonics and handwriting are already bearing fruit, especially in Key Stage 1. The local authority is now providing the right level of support to ensure that recent improvements are built-on more quickly.
- The curriculum supports the steady development of basic skills as well as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, in lessons, work does not always inspire and engage pupils. Activities such as the 'Children's University' (focused blocks of work where pupils learn a range of skills) bring subjects alive. Learning is also enriched well by clubs and visits.
- The school focuses well on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils enjoy physical activity and sports clubs. Although not yet fully implemented, the school is in the process of spending the new primary school sport funding on additional training for teachers and on new resources so that opportunities for physical development are extended even further. Plans are in place to measure the impact of this work once fully implemented.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors in the past have not made sure that the school has improved quickly enough. They are developing an increasingly secure understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to others. This is through training on how to analyse information on pupils' progress as well as visits to school to talk to leaders or to see lessons. These initiatives are helping them to provide greater challenge to school leaders. They know where teaching is stronger or weaker and what is being done to improve the quality of provision. For example, they monitor arrangements for improving teaching carefully and make sure that only good performance is rewarded financially. However, monitoring of the use of the pupil premium is not thorough enough and governors are not ensuring that support has sufficient effect. Governors are diligent in making sure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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

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| Unique reference number | 110621 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 425409 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 315 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sara Noel (Acting Chair) |
| Headteacher | Jane Green |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 October 2007 |
| Telephone number | 01223 718988 |
| Fax number | 01223 718989 |
| Email address | office@waterbeach.cambs.sch.uk |

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