

Millfield Primary School

Grange Lane, Littleport, Ely, CB6 1HW

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

- The achievement of many pupils, especially boys, is still not as good as it should be in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing is not yet as strong as it should be because there is not a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling and grammar in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers do not always identify enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Teaching is not consistently good and where teaching is weaker the progress made by pupils slows.
- Teachers do not check to see if pupils follow the advice they are given in the comments made when their books are marked.
- Information on pupils' progress is not collected regularly enough to support teachers in planning precisely what pupils need to learn next.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has closed the gap between the standards reached by those pupils eligible for extra government funding and others.
- Pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) well when reading because teachers teach this aspect well.
- Senior leaders and governors are clear about what has to be done to improve the school further.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive improvement very well. Together with the subject leaders they have rapidly improved teaching.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are confident that adults in the school help them learn and keep them safe.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher during two of these observations. They looked at pupils' work in lessons and also separately with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and observed pupils whilst they were working in small groups.
- Inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils about their experiences of school and the standards of behaviour. Inspectors spoke with other pupils and their parents at social times and at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's own view of its performance and standards, monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, improvement planning, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and attendance, the school website and records relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Account was taken of the 62 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 18 questionnaire responses from staff.

Inspection team

Sue Rath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Bone	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- At the start of the spring term three new teachers will join the school to replace three that are leaving.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement is above average.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - ensuring that pupils follow the advice they are given on how to improve their work
 - making sure that all pupils settle quickly to tasks
 - gathering information on pupils' attainment more frequently so that teachers can use this information to plan for different abilities
 - ensuring that teachers who are new to the school quickly adopt the school's guidance on effective teaching.
- Accelerate the progress that pupils, and particularly boys, make in writing by:
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling and grammar in Years 3 to 6
 - ensuring that every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' writing across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good because pupils' attainment is currently low at the end of Year 6 in all subjects and, particularly, for boys, middle-ability pupils and more-able pupils in reading and writing.
- The progress that pupils made across Key Stage 2, although broadly in line with that seen nationally, was still not rapid enough to make up ground and help enough pupils be fully ready for the next stage of their education. However, school data indicates that good progress was made, in reading and mathematics, by these pupils when they were in Year 6.
- Current information on the achievement of all groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 indicates that a higher proportion is on target to make or exceed expected progress in reading and mathematics. In particular, the progress in reading for Year 6 pupils is accelerating rapidly. However, pupils' writing is less developed and boys, in particular, are making slower than expected progress. This is because previous teaching did not motivate boys to want to write or help them to develop the skills necessary to write effectively.
- Pupils' progress during Key Stage 1 is improving. More pupils are learning well and are on track to reach higher standards. This is particularly the case in Year 1 where, as a result of at least good teaching, pupils have made rapid progress and are working at or above the level expected for their age.
- Across the school, improvements to teaching have quickened the pace of learning and the information that the school keeps on progress shows that, where teaching is consistently good, pupils are making quicker progress.
- The school's focus on improving achievement in reading is proving effective. Evidence gathered during the inspection and the school's own information show that pupils are now making better progress. The particular focus on motivating boys to read has been successful, with boys now making faster progress. A particular example of this is the reading challenge that is run by a group of Year 6 boys who encourage more boys to read for pleasure. This has resulted in boys now making good progress in reading.
- Pupils are doing well in using their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to help them with their reading. By the end of Year 1, pupils are using these skills to a standard in line with that seen nationally. This is because teachers provide clear and consistent approaches and teach this aspect well.
- Most children join the Reception class with skills that are typically below those for their age. Last year, children made expected progress, moving to Year 1 with skills below those expected for their age. Recent improvements to provision have ensured that children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of well-planned activities that are particularly focused on developing their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, they are expected to move to Year 1 with the knowledge and skills that are typical for their age.
- The school has been highly successful in removing the gap between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and all other pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because provision is tailored very well to their needs. Additional support provided by teaching assistants and the 'numbers counts' teacher help individuals and small groups of pupils to catch

up with other pupils in the school. The school is fully committed to ensuring that every child has equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Substantial efforts to improve teaching, through effective support and rigorous monitoring and performance management, have been successful in securing a higher proportion of good and at times outstanding teaching. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated, although too much still requires improvement.
- Work in books is marked regularly. Feedback and guidance on how pupils can improve their work are evident. Where marking is especially effective, pupils are given opportunities at the start of a lesson to practice what they need to do differently to improve further. This also helps them to deepen their understanding. However, this is not a consistent feature throughout the school.
- Although tracking and assessment of what pupils can and cannot do is accurate, information is not collected regularly enough so that teachers and senior leaders can use this to check on how well pupils are doing and plan what they need to learn next.
- All teachers give pupils clear instructions on what they have to achieve in a lesson and pupils are encouraged to use these to measure their own success. On occasions, all pupils have the same guidance, however, which means that higher attaining pupils are not helped to extend their thinking whilst lower attaining pupils are given work that is too hard.
- The best lessons are characterised by high expectations, effective questioning and the use of regular assessments of pupils' learning to adjust work and identify where pupils need additional support. Where teaching requires improvement, time is wasted when pupils do not settle quickly to tasks.
- Teachers provide a good range of practical learning opportunities across the curriculum and pupil benefit from exciting activities which enable them to make good progress. An example of this was in a Year 2 and 3 class art lesson where pupils were excitedly making puppets for a show they were doing for the Year 1 pupils. However, not enough opportunities are found within other subjects such as history, geography and religious education for pupils to practise their writing skills.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively and make a significant contribution to the learning, particularly for lower attaining pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good behaviour is evident in all areas of the school. This is because the school promotes a calm and ordered atmosphere and has high expectation of pupils' politeness and respect for one another. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and pupils know that they can always go to any adults for help. Pupils help and support one another and older pupils look after younger ones on the playground and recognise the importance of being a good role model.
- The school works very effectively to support pupils with social and emotional difficulties. They are determined in their approach to gaining external support, where necessary, and the behaviour mentor provides tailored support to individual pupils. As a result, pupils are able to

work effectively within their class.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively in lessons and work hard. The work in their books shows that they take a pride in their work and always try their best.
- On the occasions where the work in lessons is too hard or too easy, some pupils can become distracted and need adult support.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and most parents who responded to the survey agreed with this. Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying and readily talk about how they have been helped to protect themselves from cyber-bullying when using computers. They say that bullying happens occasionally but that it is always dealt with quickly by the school. Some parents felt that bullying was not dealt with effectively by the school. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view during the inspection.
- Attendance is broadly average. Effective procedures exist to follow up any attendance issues and these have resulted in improvement attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Determined leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has led to rapid improvements in teaching and achievement throughout the school. High expectations for pupils' attainment are shared by all staff and there is a strong commitment to raising standards still further.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and plans for improvement are linked to the priorities that leaders have identified. Clear progress is being made against the priorities detailed in the school improvement plan.
- Subject leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and, since the last inspection, have taken an active role in monitoring and evaluating their subject or area and driving forward improvements in pupils' progress.
- The school is tracking the progress of all groups of pupils across the school. This is enabling leaders to identify when pupils are falling behind and to question the performance of individuals. However these checks are not undertaken regularly enough to support teachers in planning precisely for the individual needs of all pupils.
- There are systems for supporting new teachers who join the school but these have yet to ensure that teaching is quickly up to the standard expected at the school.
- The school's curriculum has been well planned to meet the individual needs of the pupils and provides exciting opportunities for pupils to learn across the full range of subjects. The theme 'changes over time in Littleport' has been used to support learning in history, geography, art and poetry. Pupils value their involvement in planning the topic through the questions that they want to explore and feel that this makes learning relevant to them.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils runs through all areas of school life. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of enrichment activities. Their cultural development is supported by exchange visits with an inner-city partner school along with learning about faiths as part of the religious education curriculum. They are encouraged to take

an active role in school life through play leaders, the school council and the eco council.

- The school has very positive relationships with parents. The online survey and discussions with parents indicate that parents are satisfied with most aspects of the school. The school works hard to support parents of vulnerable pupils by providing them with personalised support.
- A strong partnership with local schools is supporting the school in its drive for improvement through shared expertise and skills.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully in place, regularly reviewed, and meet current statutory requirements.
- The newly introduced primary school sports funding from the government is being used effectively to provide professional development of staff and to offer opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in a range of sporting activities. For example during a physical education lesson taught by a coach, Year 5 and 6 pupils rapidly gained new skills when playing hockey.
- The local authority provides effective training opportunities for governors and offers further assistance, but the level of support provided since the last inspection has not supported the school sufficiently in its drive for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively including safeguarding.
 - They have a clear and accurate view of teaching and achievement across the school and provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders.
 - Governors use available data to evaluate how well the school is doing and frequently monitor the effectiveness of the school.
 - Ongoing training both on courses and as a whole governing body ensures that they continue to develop their ability to challenge and support the school.
 - Governors are fully aware of staff performance, including that of the headteacher, monitor the targets that are set for them as part of performance management and check the links that are made to pay progression.
 - Governors monitor spending and use pupil premium funding well to raise standards.

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	110776
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	425141

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Gunbie
Headteacher	Deborah Hannaford
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2012
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