

Avenue Primary School

Avenue Road Extension, Leicester, LE2 3EJ

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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

- In some year groups in Key Stage 2, the achievement of pupils requires improvement. Pupils do not make good enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because too much of the teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make as much progress as other groups. This means that the standards they achieve by the end of Year 6 are lower than they should be.
- Where teaching requires improvement, marking is not as helpful as it should be, mathematical problem solving is not taught well enough and teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils effectively enough to move pupils forward.

The school has the following strengths

- By the end of Year 6, the proportion of more-able pupils gaining the higher Levels 5 and 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. This is because the teaching in Year 6 is outstanding.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is good. Pupils work hard in lessons and try their best, regardless of the quality of teaching. Anti-bullying is promoted very successfully and, consequently, nearly all parents and all pupils spoken to feel that the school provides a safe environment for learning.
- The very effective headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, have driven improvements to teaching and achievement across the school.
- At the last inspection, teaching was inadequate, now it requires improvement and with much that is good. The achievement of pupils overall is far better than it has been in previous years.
- Most of the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 17 teachers.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, met with them to discuss their lessons, and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and a partner school, staff, and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- School assessment data, self-evaluation information, procedures for teachers' performance management and the school's improvement plan were scrutinised.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Tim Bristow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Approximately half of the pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic heritages. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are new to English.
- The proportion of pupils that leave or start school during term times is unusually high. This term, 43 pupils arrived and 28 left.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils 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.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils that is privately managed.
- In the last year, the school has gained the Community Anti-bullying Award and the Energy Management Audit Scheme Award (EMAS) that encourages pupils to protect the environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 to make the rate of progress good in all years by:
 - strengthening the marking so that pupils gain from more helpful advice and that teachers check that pupils have responded to it
 - using the knowledge teachers have about pupils more effectively so that the work they plan helps pupils to improve their rate of progress
 - teaching problem solving in mathematics lessons more effectively to better develop pupils' reasoning skills and fluency with numbers.
- Improve the achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals by:
 - carefully matching the teaching and extra activities to meet the needs of those pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - ensuring that the induction procedures for those who have recently arrived and are new to the English language are effective in swiftly providing the right help so that they learn English quickly
 - keeping a careful check to ensure that the gap between the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the others continues to close rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Between Years 3 and 5, progress in reading, writing and mathematics requires improvement. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. They are not above average because the rate of progress they make in Years 3 to 5 is slower than the rapid progress that they make in Year 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make slower progress than other groups. This means that the gap widens between their standards and those of other groups in the school.
- The growing numbers of pupils who arrive at the school unexpectedly do not gain sufficient help that specifically meets their needs as quickly as they could. Procedures for induction are strengthening and assessment of the learning needs of newly arrived pupils is now accurate, but school leaders and governors agree that there is more that could be done to strengthen the arrangements for induction.
- In Years 5 and 6, there remains a gap between the standards achieved by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the rest. This is due to inadequate teaching in the past. National assessments shows that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals left Year 6 with standards in English and mathematics that were approximately half a year behind the others in the school.
- Even though some years and some groups of pupils make slower progress than others, overall all pupils' achievement has improved strongly since the last inspection. By the time they leave Year 6, the majority of pupils, regardless of their ethnic background, have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Assessment information shows that last year, for the first time, the proportion in Year 6 that exceeded the expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared favourably with national expectations.
- An impressive proportion of Year 6 pupils gained the high Level 6 in mathematics in 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making better progress than in the past. This matches the progress made by the majority of other pupils in the school.
- The majority of children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are lower than is typical. Assessment information shows that, in 2013, children make good progress in most areas of learning.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 have risen and are average overall. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals gained standards that were much higher than similar pupils nationally and were in line with pupils who are not eligible for free school meals. This represents good achievement and shows that the pupil premium funding was used effectively.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Marking requires improvement. Teachers give pupils advice, but it is not helpful enough in consolidating their learning or addressing misconceptions. Pupils do not always respond to the marking nor do teachers check if they have.
- In lessons that require improvement, teachers do not use the information and prior knowledge

of pupils well enough to promote good progress. At the start of lessons all pupils tend to have to listen to the same information, even though parts are not relevant as they are embarking on different work; in addition, for some pupils, the work is either too hard or too easy, which slows the progress that they could make.

- In some mathematics lessons, problem solving and reasoning are not developed well enough. Many pupils demonstrate that they are unable to solve problems systematically and some find the work too hard. In addition, there is insufficient practical equipment that would help develop their understanding of mathematical ideas and support the teacher when demonstrating the skills necessary for problem solving. In some years, this aspect of mathematics is taught extremely well. For example, the reason that more than half the pupils gained the higher Levels 5 and 6 in mathematics in 2013 is because of the very effective teaching in Year 6.
- At the last inspection, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 was judged to be inadequate. Most of it is now good. Work is pitched at the correct level for most pupils. Reading is taught well and standards have risen considerably.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now benefit from much improved teaching. Often activities are led by teaching assistants, which are proving to be effective in strengthening the quality of learning and fostering pupils' confidence.
- Though the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slower than others, the teaching and activities they take part in are much stronger than at the time of the last inspection, when they were inadequate.
- The overall improvement in teaching and the consequent acceleration in progress of all groups have strengthened equality of opportunity considerably. All pupils are now much better prepared for the next stage in their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Even where teaching requires improvement, nearly all pupils were observed working hard and cooperatively with each other and persevering to complete their work. Where teaching was good, their excellent behaviour was instrumental to the success of the lesson. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 English lesson, where pupils were taking part in drama activities to prepare them for writing.
- Pupils are well behaved around the school and make a strong contribution to the very harmonious and secure atmosphere for learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their love of learning and the exciting opportunities provided through the different subjects and extra activities, such as the trips that they embark on.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for aspects of school life. The Eco club, for example, has enthused pupils right across the school to take greater care of the environment by collecting litter and also saving power through the Switch Off Fortnight that they are currently taking part in. Year 2 pupils reported knowledgeably that it was possible to save up to 44% of electricity in the home if they turned off lights and equipment that was on standby.
- Anti-bullying is promoted effectively. Pupils report that bullying is very rare and that occasions that arise are dealt with effectively. Some pupils have the responsibility for acting as anti-bullying champions and help younger pupils to understand how to avoid bullying. The school has

ensured that pupils are kept safe by preparing them to understand the different forms that bullying can take. A consequence of this effective work is that the school has received the community anti-bullying award.

- Anti-discrimination is promoted well. For example, pupils that are new to the school are well cared for by other pupils who volunteer to buddy with them. Pupils report that there are very few incidents of racist behaviour.
- There are occasional fixed-term exclusions. The school manages these appropriately. Attendance is average.

The leadership and management are good

- The reason why teaching and achievement have improved strongly is because of the very effective leadership of the headteacher, backed up by the guidance of the capable governing body. After the last inspection, the correct priorities for improvement were identified and decisively acted upon. Weak performance has been dealt with swiftly.
- At the time of the last inspection, leadership at all levels was inadequate. The headteacher and governors have built an effective leadership team. The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in strengthening the achievement at the end of Year 6 and ensuring that procedures to check progress are accurate and effective. Less-experienced leaders are having increasing impact. For example, the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and for special educational needs are having a marked impact on teaching and learning.
- School leaders have successfully established a secure, happy, harmonious and exciting environment for learning. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Nearly all parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire believe that their children are happy in school and would recommend the school to others.
- Teachers and other staff now benefit from effective procedures to manage their performance. They are well supported by a balance of challenging targets to aspire to, and the necessary training to ensure that they achieve these targets. At the time of the last inspection, too many teachers were over rewarded for weak performance. Now, leaders and the governing body ensure that most are rewarded at the appropriate level for their performance.
- Additional activities provided by using the pupil premium funding, such as the on-to-one support for pupils, are becoming increasingly effective. While there still remains a gap in performance for the older pupils, this is no longer significant lower down the school. Nevertheless, school leaders are aware that, because of the differences between cohorts, they must keep a careful check on the performance of this group to ensure that the gap is removed completely.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in work across the different subjects. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about other religions and cultures. Pupils' well-being is also promoted well. For example, the school can already see the benefits of the additional primary school sports funding. Pupils of all ages reported enthusiastically that they can 'now go to loads of different clubs' at lunchtime and after school. Coaches are working alongside teachers to improve their skills in teaching physical education. Sporting excellence is promoted through the links the school has established with the local professional basketball team.
- The local authority has provided a good level of support and challenge to ensure that special measures are removed. The school has also benefited from the partnership with a headteacher

from a local high-performing school. This has had a good impact on strengthening the Early Years Foundation Stage and leadership in general.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The well-trained and capable governing body are very effective at strategically applying their good knowledge of achievement and the quality of teaching to ensure that actions taken by leaders for school improvement are the right ones. They have a thorough understanding of how leaders should manage the performance of teachers and check that this is done with rigour.
- Financial management is secure, as are the procedures for safeguarding all groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Governors are knowledgeable about the use and impact of pupil premium funds and regularly check to make sure that they are used appropriately.

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	131002
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	424234

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	510
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Brown
Headteacher	Nicky Kandola
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2012
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