

Spalding Primary School

Woolram Wygate, Spalding, PE11 1PB

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Rapid action taken by leaders since the previous inspection has significantly improved teaching and raised pupils' achievement.
- Pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure that work matches the range of ability in the class. They have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe. There is a strong sense of community, where pupils and staff are valued.
- Leaders, including governors, make sure that training given to staff meets the needs of the school well.
- Leaders check rigorously the progress made by every pupil to identify those whose progress needs to speed up.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking is better in English and mathematics than it is in other subjects.
- Leaders do not check how well topic work develops pupils' skills.
- Leaders have not yet devised ways to check the impact of primary sports funding on improving pupils' physical well-being.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons. They carried out six lesson observations jointly with the headteacher and the head of school. Inspectors also observed some teaching of groups of pupils. In all, 20 members of staff were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school leaders, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to them read.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of written responses.
- Inspectors analysed responses from the 48 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, evidence of the monitoring of teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector
Mike Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British and other White backgrounds.
- The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs 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 by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has become part of a collaborative partnership with a local primary school. In January 2013, the partnership headteacher was appointed as executive headteacher and the acting headteacher became head of school. There are separate governing bodies for the two schools.
- The school shares its site with a privately-run nursery and there are before- and after-school clubs. As these facilities are not managed by the school's governing body, they are subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - give pupils the same clear guidance on what they need to do to improve in other subjects that they have in English and mathematics
 - adopt outstanding practice already in the school that motivates pupils to write extensively and make the best possible progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders check how well pupils' skills in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed when they use them in other subjects and topic work
 - devising effective systems to check how well the primary sports funding helps staff to develop their expertise and benefits pupils' physical well-being.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Rapid improvements in teaching this year are leading to accelerated progress and rising standards throughout the school.
- The school's data tracking assessments of how well pupils are doing, and work in books, show that pupils, including the more able, make good progress. Those who previously underachieved in reading, writing and mathematics are catching up because they receive extra help. In Years 5 and 6, more-able pupils now make good progress because they work in groups where work is well matched to their ability.
- The attainment of children on entry to the Reception classes varies from year to year. Language, reading and writing skills are lower than expected, as increasing numbers start school speaking little or no English. Children achieve well from their starting points so they are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Pupils in Year 1 do well in learning about letters and sounds (phonics). Their attainment was above average in the screening check in 2013. Their success in learning phonics is having a positive effect on raising their attainment in reading and writing. Achievement in writing is improving strongly, although the good progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 has not yet filtered through to higher standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils read regularly. They know about various authors and use books to inspire their writing because these aspects are well promoted by teachers. Well-maintained home and school reading records give parents an opportunity to be involved in their children's learning. In mathematics, pupils add, subtract, divide and multiply competently and they use these skills well in other subjects.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of other places, cultures and eras. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 identified flags from around the world and located countries on a map. Pupils in Year 4 compared a day in a Victorian classroom with their own experience and named the kings and queens of England. Pupils use computers competently to gather information and present their work in a range of ways, including presentations and animations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Leaders are eliminating previous variations in how well these pupils were doing. Pupils receive extra help in lessons and in small groups, and work is well matched to their ability. As a result, they make small steps towards their individual targets.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 6 who were known to be eligible for free school meals were nearly six months ahead of their classmates in reading. They were slightly ahead too in writing. In mathematics, they were nearly two terms behind. The school's current information on pupils' progress shows that gaps are closing and these pupils are catching up in mathematics.
- Leaders check that all pupils are doing well enough. They have greatly improved systems for checking pupils' progress and provide extra help for those in danger of falling behind, reflecting a clear commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often join classes midway through the academic year. They are welcomed by staff and pupils, and they settle quickly. They make good

progress in learning English because of the well-targeted support they receive. Because they often join midway through a key stage, and with low starting points in English, this affects the overall standards attained in the end of key stage tests. Despite their good progress from their low starting points, these pupils were an average of two years behind their classmates at the end of Year 6 last year. The lower attainment of this group of pupils was a key factor depressing the overall attainment in 2013 of pupils at the end of Year 6.

- Pupils' raised achievement was not reflected in the 2013 Year 2 and Year 6 test results. In part, this is due the impact of pupils joining the school during the key stage and with low starting points. It is also because, after a period of weaker teaching and underachievement, these pupils had insufficient time to fully catch up. The inspection found that, since the previous inspection and the appointment of the new headteacher, pupils' achievement has risen and current pupils in the school are doing well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved greatly since the previous inspection and is now good. Staff adopt a unified approach to planning and classroom organisation. They make sure that pupils make good progress because work is well suited to the range of ability in the class.
- In the Reception classes, good teaching provides children with interesting activities. During the inspection, children worked on a range of tasks linked to the story of *The Gruffalo*. They counted cakes eaten by the Gruffalo, painted pictures and imaginatively made up their own play ideas.
- Staff develop pupils' language skills well, giving them frequent opportunities to discuss ideas and listen to others. For example, during the inspection, Year 2 pupils described the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes to their classmates. They made good use of mathematical language such as vertices during a lesson on symmetry. Pupils in Year 5 discussed what makes a good advertising slogan and made good progress in an English lesson in understanding alliteration and persuasive writing.
- Teachers use stimulating resources to capture pupils' imaginations and make the most of their keenness to learn. For example, in Year 6, outstanding teaching used a television advertisement to stimulate discussion before writing. As a result, pupils made good progress in structuring and improving their own writing. The teacher expected more-able pupils to produce complex and descriptive sentences, resulting in the use of the words 'plethora', 'myriad' and 'luxurious'.
- Teachers make good links between subjects and real life to spark pupils' interest. For example, a topic on chocolate linked learning in several subjects. This resulted in pupils learning about the Aztecs, and developing skills in designing and 'marketing' a chocolate product. Furthermore, pupils talked keenly of an anticipated visit to a chocolate factory to enhance their understanding further.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they should achieve. They set good examples and make sure that lessons start promptly. They give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do by the end of lessons. They make sure that pupils understand their work and skilfully ask the right questions to check pupils' learning. As a result, any misunderstanding is picked up quickly.
- Since the previous inspection, methods of marking pupils' work have improved significantly. All staff follow the same approach, which is clearly understood by pupils. They give pupils targets to work towards in English and mathematics, and indicate in their marking how pupils can improve.

Pupils are not given the same clear guidance when teachers mark their science or topic work.

- Teaching assistants and support staff make a very positive contribution to learning. They work with a range of abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils at the early stages of learning English. They provide extra support during group work and for individuals in reading, writing and mathematics, so that pupils make good progress in developing basic skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils value the strong relationships they form with each other and staff. They say they enjoy playing their part in the school community which one described as 'friendly and family-like, and anyone is welcome'. They willingly take on responsibility to help the school and others. They are interested in those from different backgrounds and speak proudly of the 'language ambassadors' amongst them who act as translators for pupils who arrive with little English.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. It contributes well to the smooth running of this large school. Pupils respond in the same way to all staff because behaviour is consistently well managed. Pupils understand the rules and sanctions, which they say 'run really well'. They show tolerance to those who find it difficult to behave well. The school's logs show that these pupils make improvement over time.
- Pupils' good behaviour contributes strongly to the good progress they make in lessons. They are attentive and respond well to staff. Pupils of all ages, including those in the Reception classes, settle quickly to tasks and concentrate well. They share resources without fuss and work well with each other when they work with a partner or in a group.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel well cared for and that they are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe. They say they like taking on the role of 'junior police officers' under the guidance of the local community police force. They say, 'We don't really get bullying in this school', but recognise how the school helps them to deal with any issues that may arise through their learning in assemblies, personal and social education lessons and when using computers.
- Pupils say they appreciate the efforts made by staff to help them to do well. One pupil commented, 'Teachers don't give up but help us to catch up.' Pupils talk enthusiastically about the targets set for them by teachers and how these help them to work towards the next level. They are proud of their achievements and are keen to win the school's awards.
- Attendance has improved and is average. The school has strengthened its attendance procedures in order to make parents and pupils aware of the importance of good attendance. A range of incentives and rewards for pupils are successfully promoting better attendance and pupils say they like coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher puts his expertise from running the partnership school to good use. He is the driving force behind improvement. He has united staff at all levels in a common sense of purpose and they are fully involved in moving the school forward, reflected in the very positive response from questionnaires completed by staff.
- Leaders set targets regularly for staff to work towards and provide the right training to develop

good teaching and leadership skills. As a result, those staff with subject responsibilities are confident in their roles. They check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects in a variety of ways and contribute well to the development of all staff.

- Good partnerships with other schools are used to share expertise and working practices. The local authority has been instrumental in helping the school to improve. A good level of support has helped to develop leadership and teaching skills, leading to improvements in the teaching of mathematics and the outside areas in the Reception classes. Links with local secondary schools prepare pupils well for their move at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders make sure that subjects are taught in interesting ways. A new approach to linking subjects together is strongly promoting pupils' enjoyment and willingness to learn. There are some good examples of pupils writing extensively. However, leaders do not check how effectively pupils' skills in writing, mathematics and ICT are developed in other subjects and the topic work that links subjects together.
- Trips, visitors and themed weeks extend pupils' experiences and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on extra staffing and resources, with positive effect on individual pupils' well-being and academic achievement. The primary school sport funding is used to extend sports opportunities and develop teachers' skills. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils than previously are involved in a wider range of physical activities. Other than measuring the number of pupils taking up sports activities, the school has not yet devised a means to measure the effect of this spending on staff development and pupils' physical well-being.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Leaders make sure that indoor and outdoor areas are used well to motivate learning. There are good arrangements for children starting school and links with parents are well maintained. Staff track every child's progress through records of achievement which are shared regularly with parents.
- A small minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction over the information they receive on their children's progress. The inspection found that the school offers parents regular opportunities to be kept informed about progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has made marked improvements since the previous inspection. Governors know how well the school is doing because they have increased the ways in which they check up on the school's work and hold it to account. They visit the school regularly and have frequent contact with staff. Governors check that spending leads to improvements in the quality of teaching and that it raises pupils' achievement. For example, the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage offers wider scope for children to explore and discover things for themselves. Governors recognise how teaching has improved and make decisions about staff training and appointments. They make decisions on teachers' pay based upon a clear understanding that if teaching is good, it should be expected to lead to good achievement. Governors are familiar with information about pupils' progress and understand the impact of the pupil premium spending on achievement. The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively and ensures that safeguarding procedures meet current 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

Unique reference number	120678
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	431608

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Sharman
Headteacher	Tom Verity (Executive Head)
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
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