

The Skegness Seathorne Primary School

Count Alan Road, Skegness, PE25 1HB

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not achieve well enough. A legacy of weak progress and depressed standards in reading, writing and mathematics over several years has not been fully eradicated.
- Governors have not held the school to account with sufficient rigour to prevent weaknesses in pupils' achievement, particularly for those pupils eligible to receive support through the pupil premium, over several recent years. Some pupil premium money remained unspent in 2013.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 has been weak. Recent improvements have yet to show a sustained impact on pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and too often does not guide pupils towards what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers have not measured the progress pupils have been making with enough accuracy to plan consistently challenging work.
- Subject leaders do not check closely enough on the amount of learning taking place in those areas for which they are responsible.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and her recently appointed deputy have very quickly identified areas requiring improvement and have moved swiftly to initiate much needed change.
- Teachers have responded well to clear and rigorous guidance from new leaders, so that teaching and achievement are improving.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils Key Stage 1 make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are well motivated to learn.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. They get on well together, they are friendly, and their behaviour is consistently good. Pupils feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 29 lessons, four jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. All classes were observed learning at least once. Three small groups withdrawn from classes were also observed.
- Inspectors looked at many examples of work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, subject leaders, the co-chairs of the governing body, the school's external adviser, and both informally and formally with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of additional evidence. This included the school's websites, the school development plan and self evaluation documents, governing body records, the school's emerging assessment and tracking records, various policies and documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered 54 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), and 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Terence McDermott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Vondra Mays	Additional Inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well-above average.
- The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has experienced significant disruption to leadership, including governance, over recent years.
- The school is working with a National Leader of Education and a Specialist Leader of Education from Ellison Boutlers Primary Academy.
- A new headteacher was appointed at Easter 2013, and the deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching, in order to sustain the current acceleration in progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers can accurately assess what pupils know, understand and can do
 - teachers consistently plan work that will be challenging for all pupils, and will fill in the many gaps in their existing knowledge and understanding.
 - the quality of marking of pupils' work, some of which is excellent, is consistently replicated across subjects and classes.
- Improve leadership and management throughout the school by providing opportunities for subject leaders to directly observe and measure the quality of learning in those areas for which they are accountable.
- Improve governance by ensuring that:
 - governors have the skills necessary to effectively support and challenge the school for all aspects of its performance
 - governors have the necessary understanding to effectively manage and deploy the school's finances, particularly pupil premium funding.

A full external review of the school's governance, and of the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of the school's leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not good because they do not make enough progress at Key Stage 2 in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils join the school in Nursery with skills and understanding that are much lower than is typically found in children of that age.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been weak for several years. This has resulted in pupils often leaving Year 6 around a year behind where they ought to have been.
- In 2013, as in the two years previously, pupils' standards and their progress in Key Stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, were weak.
- In 2013, pupils left Year 6 a year and a half behind the national average in mathematics, over a year behind in reading, 6 months behind the national average in writing, and almost two years behind the national average for knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- In 2013, pupils receiving support from the pupil premium grant were even further behind, particularly in English.
- The presentation of pupils work is variable, with a particular untidiness in laying out work in mathematics. However, a marked and consistent improvement is readily apparent in pupils' books, beginning around November 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made progress broadly in line with the national average for similar pupils.
- High attaining pupils made comparable progress to similar pupils nationally.
- Because provision and teaching are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress, from whatever their starting points may be, but still leave the Reception classes with standards that are below average.
- This good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils' standards in mathematics, reading and writing are usually close to the national average when they leave Key Stage 1. In the 2013 Year 1 national phonics check, (measuring how well pupils understand the relationship between letters in words and their sounds) pupils reached standards a little above average. Those Year 1 pupils who were heard reading made swift and confident progress sounding letters to read words, whilst the Year 2 pupils tackled the words in front of them with enthusiasm, and read aloud with expression and understanding.
- Work in pupils' books and observations of lessons shows that the very large majority of pupils are now making good progress. Some older pupils are making extremely rapid progress as they catch up earlier missed opportunities. Progress in mathematics is currently particularly impressive.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Although teaching is improving, it still requires improvement because it is too variable in quality across the school. This is because teachers plan work for pupils that is sometimes pitched at the wrong level, and measures of what pupils know and can do are insufficiently accurate. As a result, some pupils struggle with work that is too hard, or coast with work that is too easy.
- Inconsistencies in assessment in the past led teachers to make incorrect assumptions about what pupils knew or could do. They did not ensure that pupils had enough opportunities to learn new things. This was particularly true of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the acquisition of skills to solve problems in mathematics. This has created large gaps in the knowledge and understanding of older pupils.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants is variable. Some are deployed very effectively to give good, but nonetheless challenging, support to pupils with special educational needs. On other occasions they sit and watch the teacher, and make little contribution to pupils' learning.
- The most recent monitoring records show that teaching is improving. Though good learning is now going on in reading, writing and mathematics across all years in the school, the impact of previously weak teaching in Key Stage 2 will take some time to eradicate.
- The relationships between adults and pupils in the school are excellent. The level of trust founded on these relationships means that teachers can set pupils off to work independently on a problem, knowing that they will try hard and sustain their concentration well. This was seen to outstanding effect during a paired observation of a Year 4 mathematics lesson. In this lesson, the staff circulated around the room in a very low-key manner, guiding, encouraging or quietly supporting pupils in their learning. Pupils worked collaboratively, largely independently, helping each other to overcome difficulties through sharing their knowledge. They all made significant intellectual efforts to work their way through calendars, with not a single pupil disengaged. The high expectations of the teacher were rewarded by pupils enthusiastically motivated to seek answers for themselves. Their concentration was total, their learning was excellent, their sense of achievement clearly obvious
- Examples of excellent informative marking were seen by inspectors, which strongly supported pupils' progress, but this was not always the case. Sometimes variations in the quality of teachers' marking results in pupils learning at different rates in different subjects
- New programmes to support the teaching of mathematics, reading and writing have been positively applied by teachers and are very well received by pupils, helping them to make accelerated progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are attentive and listen closely to guidance without the need for repetition, they settle down to work promptly, and they work hard. All this helps their improving progress. Classrooms are clean and tidy, there is no litter, and all pupils wear their dark green uniforms with pride.
- Pupils say there is no bullying, though they understand what it is and what to do if it happens.
- They speak about their new school building, their new headteacher, and their new mathematics,

reading and writing programmes with enthusiasm.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Though a minority of parents feel that behaviour is not as good as it could be, inspectors found the behaviour of pupils to be consistently good. Not a single untoward incident was seen during the inspection. The school's records confirm that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have fallen dramatically as the quality of teaching has improved. Pupils confirm this is the case.
- Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. In classes, pupils often reflect thoughtfully on the positions others might find themselves in. They show great respect for the views of others. They take on responsibilities as school councillors, as tuck shop assistants, or simply providing a helping hand, with great diligence.
- Attendance is rising and is now broadly average as the relentless work of the recently appointed learning mentor is showing a measurable impact.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils to whom inspectors spoke could describe why this was so. They are aware of the dangers that may be around them, particularly in respect of the internet and chemical substances. They say they are confident that any adult would look after them should the need ever arise.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because governance has been ineffective in ensuring that outcomes for pupils have been good enough during times of recent disruption. Governors have not challenged the school with sufficient rigour for its performance. They have not ensured that staff have the skills to measure how well pupils are learning, nor have they deployed pupil premium funding with enough focus to close gaps in performance.
- The curriculum has not been properly used to develop pupils' knowledge for some time. It is now being focussed and applied correctly to motivate pupils to rapidly develop their reading and writing skills, and to build the necessary skills to solve higher level mathematical problems.
- The skills of subject leaders in measuring the progress pupils are making have not been maintained. This has allowed underachievement to grow unchecked under some years.
- The experienced and recently appointed headteacher and her capable new deputy have quickly identified what needed to change inside the school, and have set about implementing those changes with gusto. Neither is under any illusion about the scale of the task facing them in sustaining recent improvement over time.
- A new subject leadership structure has been quickly created, with support from an outstanding academy being recruited to help this new team to build their skills of assessment and evaluation of learning. This is already enabling teachers to plan their work more accurately and thus help pupils to learn faster.
- New learning programmes and methodologies have been successfully and rapidly brought on stream to help teachers to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The positive impact is starting to be seen in lessons.

- Staff morale is rising. All adults in the school now know what is expected of them because of the rigorous application of systems to manage teachers' performance, dealing promptly with any problems, and rewarding teachers for success.
- School self-evaluation is accurate since it ties directly to provable outcomes for pupils. It is a little modest in its evaluation of the quality pupils' behaviour and safety.
- Primary sport funding is being used to improve pupils' skills and to put on more specialist classes, for example in early gymnastics, or in Key Stage 1 swimming. This funding is being used as a start up, and firm plans are in place to sustain staff's new skills through redeployment of the school's own funding in the coming years.
- The support currently being provided by the local authority is helping the headteacher to move the school forward. This has not always been the case.
- Support from the outstanding academy is working well in building the assessment skills of middle leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not held the school to account for the weak achievement of pupils over at least three years. The governing body has been at odds with itself. Internal strife has distracted it from its first priority of ensuring a good education for the pupils. Though a great deal of the work of the governing body has fallen on just a few of them, this does not justify their ineffective practice. Governors do understand data on pupils' performance, but this has not been used to address deficiencies in learning. The management of teachers' performance has not been carried out with sufficient rigour to tackle underperformance at any level.

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	120476
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	430707

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Leeman and Pete Tong
Headteacher	Mandy Cherry
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2012
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