

Mawsley Primary School

Scholars Row, Mawsley, Kettering, NN14 1GZ

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and typically attain standards that are well above average in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Children in Reception develop skills quickly because of good teaching, and they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- All staff teach letters and sounds well. They give lots of attention to developing reading skills so pupils read confidently and well.
- The headteacher is inspiring staff and the school is improving, particularly its teaching.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well in lessons and behaviour around the school is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and well looked after by staff.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff identify the right priorities for improvement by regularly checking on teaching and pupils' progress.
- Governors have considerable expertise to offer. From their monitoring visits, they are well aware of the school's strengths and areas to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as consistently good as it is in reading. In some lessons, pupils do not write enough down to practise the skills they have learnt.
- Through keenness, pupils sometimes rush their work in their English and mathematics books, so it is not always neat enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the pupil parliament, six Year 6 pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, the headteacher, assistant headteacher and teachers responsible for different aspects such as the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A discussion took place with a representative from the local authority about the support and advice it gives to the school.
- There were 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. The inspectors took account of these and also sought the views of parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s own information on pupils’ recent and current progress, planning for school improvement, and records of governing body meetings, checks on teaching and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Joseph Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Isobel Randall

Additional Inspector

Deborah Whittle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils mostly come from the recently created new village.
- The school opened in 2004 with 87 pupils and has expanded continuously as the village has been developed. The latest of three major building phases since the school opened has recently been completed to accommodate the rising numbers.
- There are two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium is well below average. In this school, it mostly applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing for pupils of all ages by ensuring that:
 - pupils write more in literacy and other subjects
 - pupils write neatly in all subjects
 - senior leaders and staff take more effective action to accelerate the progress of any group or individuals identified as making slower progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School data show that almost all pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because teaching is consistently good. Typically, progress is good for each year group and attainment is well above average by the end of both key stages.
- Attainment on entry to the Reception class sometimes varies but is typically in line with the level expected for children of this age. They come from various different nursery settings, and some children have reading, writing and mathematics skills that are lower than usual. Good relationships and routines develop quickly because of the supportive and caring staff. The good teaching results in children making good progress in all areas of learning. Children are well prepared for the next phase of their learning in Year 1. However, early writing skills remain weaker than other skills.
- The good start children make to school is due to effective planning for indoor and outdoor activities. All children use modern technology confidently to listen to stories and develop reading skills.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics (the sounds that individual and groups of letters make). They work in small groups with others of a similar ability and, after each session in which they are taught phonics, they move on to a session that promotes reading and writing skills. This strategy has significantly improved children's phonic skills, and standards are rising this year.
- Read and write sessions for Key Stages 1 and 2, which supplement learning in phonics sessions, plus parental support for home reading, mean that reading skills are particularly strong throughout the school. The school has appointed a reading assistant specifically to boost the attainment of lower attaining pupils. As a result, some pupils are making exceptional progress in reading. Writing skills are not improving at the same rate.
- In Key Stage 2, more-able pupils do particularly well in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who reached the highest possible level in these subjects was well above average by the end of Key Stage 2. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, this year, pupils are again on track to reach high standards. Most are making at least good progress throughout. This is even the case in writing, where overall progress is not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Tasks in mathematics are challenging for pupils' different ability levels. Pupils in Year 6, for example, responded well to their teacher's high expectations and were able to illustrate the probability of events in diagrams or in percentages.
- Teachers are beginning to provide more frequent exercises to improve grammar, spelling and punctuation. These are helping to accelerate progress in writing. However, pupils are not writing regularly enough or sufficiently long pieces to consolidate skills in these areas. Pupils are very interested in what they do, and, often as a result of keenness to record results or answers, some of their work in English and mathematics books is untidy. Staff are discussing the use of lined books for English and books with squared paper for mathematics to improve neatness.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs usually make good progress in mathematics and English. They benefit from the expertise of skilled teaching assistants who work closely with individuals or small groups in lessons.

- The school uses the additional pupil premium funding well to provide individual help for the small number of pupils known to be eligible, and school records show that this helps to improve their attainment in English and mathematics. Virtually all make the same good progress as their classmates. No report is made about attainment of eligible pupils in the 2013 Year 6, as numbers were very small.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, most pupils make good progress in lessons. 'Teachers push us to the limits and it is satisfying because we feel we do our best' was a typical comment from pupils.
- The characteristics of the outstanding teaching seen by inspectors were teachers' exceptionally high expectations of pupils, their infectious enthusiasm and the high quality of the support provided by skilled teaching assistants. These resulted in pupils' enthusiastic engagement and positive attitudes. In a Year 1 philosophy lesson, for example, pupils grappled very well with difficult ideas about when 10 was a lot and when not enough, and Year 6 worked very hard on a challenge to produce diagrams to illustrate the probability of a family having two boys and a girl.
- In the Reception class, children benefit from the close support of adults as they work indoors or outside on an interesting range of well-planned activities, such as building a pirate ship or finding out about the planets. They particularly enjoyed the role-play about gravity as they pulled one another off planets to counter the force of gravity. It took many more of them to pull someone off the sun because of its size.
- The revisions to teaching and daily sessions of phonics, where pupils are taught in smaller groups with others of similar ability, have been effective. These phonics sessions lead into activities to promote reading and writing skills using a published scheme. This emphasis on immediately making use of new learning is raising standards and ensuring that most make good progress. However, progress in developing writing skills is less consistent than in reading. In some classes, pupils are not writing enough in their books, using instead individual whiteboards or large sheets of paper. This is not developing the ability to present work neatly, as pupils hurriedly scribble down their bright ideas.
- Teachers accurately assess pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics on a termly basis, giving them a clear picture of each pupil's progress. For example, recent assessments have highlighted slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics in some year groups.
- Staff manage pupils' attention and engagement exceptionally well. There is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning in lessons. Any rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are handled immediately and effectively by staff.
- There are few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teachers know them well and are fully aware of their particular needs, and so plan tasks that are relevant to their ability level. Well-trained teaching assistants support these pupils' learning effectively in lessons.
- More-able pupils do well in all subjects because teachers plan appropriately challenging tasks for them and they show good ability to work without direct supervision. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. In mathematics, for example, teachers plan challenging, problem-solving tasks to engage and interest pupils. All are highly motivated and show a strong

determination to do well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe and that 'Teachers are always ready to help us.'
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as shown by their attendance, which has been above average for the past three years. There is hardly any persistent absence.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, such as name-calling and misuse of mobile phones or emails. They say that bullying is not an issue in the school, a view backed up by school records, but know what to do if they should experience any form of bullying. They are confident that staff will help them, and also say they help each other. 'We always try to sort out our arguments ourselves' was a typical view of pupils in the pupil parliament.
- Pupils also have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe. School rules and assemblies promote good conduct towards one another. From information provided sensitively by staff, all pupils are aware of the danger from strangers and the internet.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond straightaway to teachers and other adults. In the dining hall, an assistant raised her hand to attract the attention of her colleague with the water jug. Immediately, silence fell as pupils thought it was the signal to pay attention.
- In lessons observed during the inspection, there were no interruptions of any kind because of pupils' determination to listen carefully and do well. All join in enthusiastically in the tasks set for them and are very keen to complete work. 'I think we should come to school for longer' was a typical comment from pupils.
- The one weakness, in pupils' sometimes untidy written work, is a result more of the ways of working – of the frequent use of other ways of recording which mean that work in books can be rushed - rather than the result of any problem of attitudes.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well and deal with the rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour immediately and effectively. Very, very few pupils have had fixed-term exclusions.
- In Reception, pupils settle in quickly and appear grown-up and very sensible for their age. Their behaviour is excellent and they thoroughly enjoy challenging activities, such as finding the line of symmetry in shapes and creating their own symmetrical patterns.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's experience and vision to create a safe, happy, motivating environment inspires staff to focus fully on improving the school. Subject leaders and other staff are working effectively as a team and, having identified where improvements can be made, are working together to eliminate weaknesses. The effectiveness of teaching has improved significantly because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are much higher.
- There is a well-established system for collecting and analysing pupils' progress. The assistant

headteacher meticulously collates data and analyses in depth how well pupils are performing. This is shared with staff, parents and governors regularly. It has been effective in focusing support for any individuals or group who were not doing as well as expected and raising attainment in reading and mathematics, but it has not been so effective in writing. Improving progress for all in writing is a current priority, as the analysis has identified inconsistencies in some year groups.

- All three teachers in Reception share the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their collective expertise ensures that children have a good start to school.
- The school makes good use of a wide range of outside specialists to support the few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs from entry and right through the school.
- National standards are used effectively to judge the quality of teaching, so accurate judgements are made on how well teachers are doing their jobs. These assessments are linked to teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is well planned and learning opportunities beyond the normal timetable, such as the sewing club, secret writing club and residential visits, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Innovative approaches, such as the teaching of philosophy, are providing pupils with good opportunities for thinking and discussion. However, teachers do not all make the most of opportunities for pupils to write and record conclusions in these sessions or to do longer pieces of writing in some topic work.
- Staff are already working together to prepare and implement the new curriculum, which is due in September. Learning about ancient civilizations and the study of different faiths give pupils a good understanding of cultures different to their own and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are keen to raise funds for the disaster in the Philippines and had a healthy tuck shop sale to raise funds during the afternoon break.
- The additional funding allocated to increase sporting opportunities is being used to train staff and enhance the quality and breadth of physical education and sports provision. Pupils are enjoying the coaching skills of a basketball coach. The school received its funding comparatively late, so it is too soon to identify any impact other than increasing pupils' participation in sporting activities.
- Parents and carers generally hold positive views about the school. They rightly think that staff treat every pupil equally, their children are safe and looked after well, and that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are well prepared for life in Britain and a global society. Almost everyone said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority recognises the skills and abilities of the headteacher and senior leaders and judges Mawsley Primary to be a good school. The expertise of some senior staff is being used to support other schools and colleagues. Other than periodic checks on performance data, the local authority support is only light touch for this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are deeply committed to creating an outstanding school for their community. They draw on their varied and considerable professional expertise to support and challenge staff. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving in comparison with others nationally. They have the knowledge of data and the confidence to hold the school to account for the performance of different groups of pupils. An effective system is well established for governors to check how well staff are tackling aspects

identified for improvement. Governors review the performance of the headteacher and ensure that of other teachers is reviewed carefully each year to determine pay increases. The governing body ensures that all current national requirements relating to safeguarding are met. Governors scrutinise in depth the impact of the pupil premium funding and are ready to analyse the impact of the funds allocated to provide additional sporting opportunities on the achievement, healthy lifestyles and well-being of pupils.

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	134211
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	431222

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	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Downing
Headteacher	Elaine Wright
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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