

Westoning Lower School

High Street, Westoning, Bedford, MK45 5JH

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Standards fell in 2013 at the end of Year 2. Pupils do not make good progress by the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is inconsistent across the school. Teachers are not always clear what they want pupils to learn and expectations are not high enough in some classes.
- Some more-able pupils are not given hard enough work to do in mathematics and this slows their progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills by writing at length.
- Higher-level teaching assistants have not been equipped to help pupils make good progress when they are taking half the class.
- The quality of marking varies and this means pupils do not always know how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.
- Checks by senior leaders on the quality of teaching and learning have not been regular or rigorous enough for them to form an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- A minority of parents are not happy with the leadership of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching in Year 1 and Year 4 is consistently good.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe.
- The governing body has responded very well to a recent external review and has increased its capacity to hold senior leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, many jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, and a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector considered the 69 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, several emails from parents, and spoke informally to parents on both days of the inspection.
- The inspector considered the staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The headteacher returned to school on a part-time basis in January 2014 following maternity leave during which the school was run by the assistant headteacher.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good, especially in Year 2, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve
 - teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn in each lesson
 - higher-level teaching assistants are equipped to help pupils make good progress when they are taking half the class.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics, especially by the end of Year 2, by:
 - making sure all pupils have opportunities to write at length
 - the quality of marking improves so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work, especially in mathematics
 - ensuring that more-able pupils have hard enough work in mathematics.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management so that:
 - checks on the quality of teaching and learning are regular and rigorous leading to accurate judgements about how well the school is doing
 - more parents are fully satisfied with the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2013 standards by the end of Year 2 fell to average in reading, writing and mathematics. While these pupils made good progress when they were in Year 1, they were not given demanding enough work to do in Year 2 and their achievement slowed.
- Although pupils generally make expected progress in Key Stage 1, too few exceed expected progress. In particular, not enough pupils attain the higher Level 3 in mathematics. This is because more-able pupils are often given work to do that is too easy for them.
- Children join Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. In 2013 they made the expected progress in most areas of learning, although they did not have enough opportunities to practise their writing which slowed them down.
- In 2013 attainment by the end of Year 4 was a little above expected in reading, writing and mathematics, but too few pupils made better than expected progress over the key stage. Pupils from this year group entered Key Stage 2 with above average standards, so their overall progress was not good enough.
- This year progress for Year 4 pupils has been better and attainment is two terms ahead of what is expected. This is because teaching in Year 4 is consistently good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They receive effective support from teaching assistants to help them keep up with the others.
- The school has introduced focus groups in mathematics which means that half the class is with the teacher learning a new skill while the other half is with a higher-level teaching assistant working in the computer suite. While pupils benefit from the increased attention of the teacher in smaller groups, the progress of pupils in the computer suite varies because higher-level teaching assistants are not all sufficiently equipped to accelerate their progress.
- The quality of writing varies across year groups, because not all pupils have enough chance to practise their skills in extended pieces of work. While there are some good examples, for example when Year 4 pupils wrote letters as wartime evacuees trying to persuade their mothers to let them return home from the countryside, this is not consistent. Careful attention is paid to making spelling, punctuation and grammar accurate.
- Pupils make expected progress in reading. They can use phonic skills (the sounds that letters make) to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books and authors they enjoy.
- There were too few pupils supported by the pupil premium to comment on their attainment in 2013. Effective support for these pupils means that gaps are narrowing to around a term behind the others.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good enough for pupils consistently to make more than expected progress. While there is good teaching, particularly in Year 1 and Year 4, its quality varies too much across the school. In Year 2 in particular expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are not always high enough and this slows their progress.
- In Reception, children settle quickly into school and benefit from a stimulating classroom and interesting things to do outside. The quality of the provision has improved since the previous inspection. Children enjoy learning and participate in activities, such as a pretend wedding, enthusiastically. For this event children decorated their own festive arch and made and decorated a wedding cake.
- Where teaching is weaker, teachers are not sufficiently clear about what they want pupils to learn. For example, the objective for one lesson was 'find out about other countries' when in fact pupils were supposed to be learning about African animals. This made the lesson muddled and lacking focus.
- In some classes more-able pupils are not given hard enough work to do and they become bored. For example, pupils on the computer finished the task they were given quickly and had nothing to go on to until they had printed off their work, and had to wait for a higher-level teaching assistant to tell them what to do next. This wasted their time.
- In the best teaching, work is set at the right level for pupils and gets them excited about learning. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed estimating how much water they would need to fill different containers and using a variety of scales to measure the capacity. Year 1 pupils wrote extensively on the theme of 'The Great Sandwich', having first designed their own great sandwiches.
- Every half term teachers meet individually with pupils to discuss their progress and set targets for them to improve their attainment in helpful target books. This means that pupils are clear about what they have to do to make better progress, but it is not always followed-up in marking in their books. While there is often useful guidance about improving writing, this is seldom the case in other subjects including mathematics.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good in class and around the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to improve their work. They work hard and are friendly and polite. Older pupils get on well with younger ones, for example when they read together and share games.
- Pupils are sensible and considerate, for example when avoiding floodwater that appeared overnight. They play together cooperatively and look out for one another.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at school and bullying is not an issue for them. They are confident adults will help them with any concerns. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying, such as through social media, and know how to keep safe when using computers.
- Pupils who attend the before- and after-school clubs enjoy a wide range of activities and begin and end their school day well. Pupils of all ages socialise together in safe and well-run facility.

- While pupils are very positive about their experiences, some parents expressed concerns about behaviour and safety. The school does not always communicate well with parents, and they do not find it easy to raise any concerns straight away. This means that some parents form negative perceptions about aspects of the school's work which could have been allayed.
- Attendance is average. Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because sometimes pupils become distracted when the work is too easy for them.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has been through a period of change with the headteacher away and the assistant headteacher covering her absence. Senior leaders have not been rigorous enough in driving improvement to raise achievement and making sure more pupils make good progress.
- While attainment is improving in Year 4 and pupils are making good progress, progress is not so rapid in Year 2 because teaching is inconsistent. Leaders and managers have not checked teaching robustly enough, or followed-up points for improvement quickly enough, to ensure all teaching is at least good.
- Staff are committed to the headteacher's vision and work together well as a team. Subject leaders are clear about what is working well and what could be improved, but have not done enough to check directly the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
- Whilst leaders have ensured that there is no discrimination within the school they are aware that teaching needs to be consistently good so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make good progress.
- The school's view of itself has been too generous, although the local authority has been helpful in asking searching questions of senior leaders. There is now a realistic acceptance of the need for rapid improvement in teaching and attainment, especially by the end of Key Stage 1. Because the school has effective systems to track how well pupils are doing, leaders are fully aware of those who are at risk of falling behind and need extra help.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum varies across classes. While all pupils enjoy interesting visits and special focus days, such as a Tudor day, or a day when they became wartime evacuees, other subjects are not all taught well. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development generally well. There are links with children in Cambodia and opportunities to find out about different cultures.
- The primary school sport funding is being spent on gymnastics coaching, training for staff and membership of a local sports partnership, which gives pupils access to a range of different sports and the opportunity to take part in tournaments. This work is at an early stage.
- The local authority has supported and challenged the school well, and commissioned a range of additional help, which is beginning to have a positive impact.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and those who spoke with the inspector expressed very mixed views about the school. While some were very happy with its work, others had serious concerns. Leaders have not communicated well enough with parents in the past, and this has meant some issues have not been dealt with to their satisfaction.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body have responded very well to a rigorous external review of governance, which has focused them on the school's key priorities for improvement. They have reorganised themselves to make sure they have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing and the quality of teaching. They ask more searching questions and take a keen interest in the management of teachers' performance. They see that salary progression is linked to teachers' performance, and that any underperformance is tackled promptly. Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	109490
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	440514

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ailsa Robertson
Headteacher	Jacqui Boyle
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 June 2011
Telephone number	01525 712994
Fax number	01525 715664
Email address	office@cbc.beds.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

