

Weldon Church of England Primary School

Chapel Road, Weldon, Corby, NN17 3HP

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

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' achievement, although accelerating rapidly, is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Not enough pupils are working above the expectations for their age in mathematics, and standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are lower than in reading and writing.
- Although teaching has improved recently, it has not been sufficiently good for long enough to enable all pupils to achieve well in all subjects.
- At times, the pace of learning in lessons is too slow and learning activities are not challenging enough for pupils, particularly the most able.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their mental arithmetic and tables skills across the curriculum.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have not yet taken the action needed to ensure that teaching is consistently good and all groups of pupils make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the high-quality support provided.
- Since the last inspection, a rigorous new system has been introduced to track pupils' progress. This has significantly improved the accuracy of teachers' assessments, and has informed and improved their planning of lesson activities for pupils of different abilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, during lunch and as they moved around the school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was reviewed by the inspection team, including records of the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress, the school's own view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire received during the inspection.
- Following the inspection days on 4-5 December 2013, Her Majesty's Inspectors identified that some additional inspection evidence was required. Jeremy Spencer HMI visited the school on 24 January 2014 to gather this evidence. As a result of the visit, the inspection grades remained unchanged. However, some changes were made to the text of this report.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

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 from minority ethnic groups is well below average and only a very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) is well below the national 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?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that they are consistently at least good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools and sharing best practice more widely
 - ensuring that teachers move lessons forward at a brisk pace and that learning activities are always sufficiently challenging for pupils, particularly the most able.
- Improve standards in mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their mental mathematics skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the school's recently revised calculation policy is fully embedded across the school to ensure consistency of teachers' expectations.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - recent improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are sustained through frequent, carefully planned monitoring activities, which include governors
 - the governing body evaluates the performance of the school more rigorously and holds leaders to account for pupils' attainment and progress
 - An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start in the Reception class with skills that are below those typically found for their age. They achieve well in all areas of learning due to the nurturing environment, a curriculum that meets their needs effectively, and a clear focus on extending their vocabulary and developing spoken language. However, the good progress made in Reception and in Key Stage 1 has not been maintained in Key Stage 2.
- Recent significant improvements in the quality of teaching, planning and the use of assessment and tracking data have yet to work their way through to improved results at the end of Key Stage 2. The school's detailed tracking information shows that pupils in all year groups are making more rapid progress than they have in the past. This is confirmed by lesson observations and work in pupils' books.
- Although significant improvements have been made, standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 are not yet high enough. Until very recently, more-able pupils have not been sufficiently challenged, and as a result the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics remains below average. Despite some recent improvements to the curriculum, pupils are not consistently provided with enough opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Regular activities to develop skills in phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and guided reading sessions are helping pupils to make good progress in their reading.
- Those who are eligible for support from the pupil premium generally make similar progress to their classmates. The small numbers in each year group mean that it is not possible to give meaningful comments about gaps in attainment without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. This ensures that work is set at the right level for them, enabling them to make small but progressive steps in their learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires further improvement because, over time, too many pupils have not achieved well enough in their time in Key Stage 2. Until recently, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has not built on the good-quality learning that children experience from Reception to Year 2.
- There is not enough consistently good teaching to accelerate pupils' learning. Although much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, there is still too much variation. In some classes, the pace of learning is too slow; it frequently slows after a brisk start. In others, teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough. As a result, teachers plan learning activities that do not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise using their mental calculation skills, or to use the knowledge gained in mathematics lessons to solve problems and to apply their knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. Teachers have recently begun to implement the school's revised calculation policy, which is designed to ensure greater consistency in their expectations of how and when pupils learn to calculate numbers. However, this is at an early stage of implementation and it is too early to judge the impact it has on improving the quality of teaching.

- Teachers plan work which is meaningful and interesting for pupils, and this helps to ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and show a good attitude to learning.
- The new assessment system is used particularly effectively in mathematics lessons. This involves pupils, at the start of the lesson, attempting three questions at different levels based on the lesson objectives. From these results, teachers assess pupils' understanding and move pupils across ability groups. At the end of the lesson, the three questions are asked again and both the teacher and the pupils can measure their own progress towards the lesson objectives. This facilitates good learning, a very high level of motivation and faster progress as more pupils are starting to work at a higher level than in the past.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, and are effective in supporting the learning of individuals and small groups of pupils who need extra help or challenge.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to develop pupils' thinking, and to ascertain how well they are learning. In the best lessons, teachers ask questions that probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to really think hard about their responses.
- Constructive feedback in lessons helps pupils understand how well they are doing. The whole-school marking policy is being used effectively to provide pointers for pupils to improve their work, and time is provided, typically at the start of each day, for pupils to read and respond to teachers' comments in their books.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are well-mannered and polite to each other and to adults and visitors. School records show that there are very few instances of poor behaviour, and that the school responds quickly and effectively on the rare occasions when a pupil misbehaves.
- The school has a calm, well-ordered and positive atmosphere. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and say they want to do well. As a result, lessons typically proceed smoothly and without interruption. They have good relationships with their teachers, and behave well even when the pace of learning slows. This good behaviour makes a very positive contribution to the progress made in lessons.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say there is no bullying in the school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are well looked after. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when crossing roads and when using the internet.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Changes to teaching staff and weaknesses in the assessment systems have slowed school improvement, and governors have not been as actively involved in holding the school to account as they might have been. As a result, leaders have not been able to secure consistently good

teaching and good progress over time, but now all staff are eager to ensure that they contribute fully to improving pupils' achievement.

- Following the previous inspection, the headteacher, with the strong support of the local authority, implemented a number of new systems to strengthen the school's effectiveness. Teachers' performance is now closely checked and supported. Leaders' responsibilities have been redistributed and strengthened, and the rigour of assessment and tracking systems has been significantly improved. However, these new systems have not yet bedded in or had a sustained effect on pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now checked rigorously. Regular, half-termly meetings are held between the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and individual class teachers about pupils' progress to discuss the information gained. These meetings ensure that teachers now have a good understanding of how well pupils in their charge are doing, and the action they should take to support them and help them to reach their challenging targets.
- Leadership roles, particularly in English, the Early Years Foundation Stage and in special educational needs, are developing well and are contributing strongly to pupils' improving progress.
- The school provides a broad range of subjects for pupils to study. Some improvements have been made in planning for the use of key skills across subjects. However, not enough has yet been done to ensure pupils are provided with regular opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The headteacher works well with the other schools in the locality in sharing ideas on leadership, checking the accuracy of assessments of pupils' work and widening the range of extra activities provided for the pupils.
- Fully supported and monitored by the governing body, the school makes effective use of the pupil premium to employ additional support staff to provide small-group and one-to-one work. This is having a positive impact on the progress of pupils being supported.
- At the time of inspection, the school had yet to receive the additional government funding to improve physical education in primary schools. However, it has already employed additional coaching staff and has made suitable plans to evaluate the impact of the enhanced provision.
- The local authority has provided wide-ranging support for the school since its previous inspection, including assessing and improving the quality of leadership and teaching, and checking the accuracy of the judgements made on the standards of pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive, but until very recently it has not challenged the school's leaders strongly enough, or held them to account for pupils' attainment and progress. A number of enthusiastic new governors have recently joined the governing body and the level of challenge and their knowledge about all aspects of the school are steadily improving. However, governors tend to rely on reports and information they receive from school leaders, and do not monitor the effectiveness of the school for themselves often enough. Governors understand what is being done to tackle any underperformance, and to recognise and reward good teachers. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet current national requirements. It ensures that teachers only receive pay increases if their performance is at least good.

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	121996
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	425018

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Chenery
Headteacher	Lynne Wildman
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
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