

Barkston and Syston CofE Primary School

Church Street, Barkston, Grantham, NG32 2NB

Inspection dates 27–28 February 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The staff, senior leaders and governors work well together as a strong team and have succeeded in improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, so that pupils develop as well-rounded individuals.
- Parents and carers are unanimous in their agreement that the school is caring, supportive and that their children are kept safe.
- The experiences provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage enable the children to have a very good start to their education.
- Achievement is good. Most pupils make good progress across the school and some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in reading.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make lessons interesting. As a result, pupils are motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and their confidence are good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils are known as individuals by all staff.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because staff consistently check that they are improving their skills and support them well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding across the school.
- The guidance given in the marking of many books is not consistently followed by pupils.
- In some mathematics lessons, work is too easy for some pupils and, in others, they get stuck because they do not have the knowledge or skills to complete the tasks.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and two part lessons taught by four teachers, all of which were joint observations with the interim headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and letters from and informal meetings with parents.
- The inspector also took account of the 15 responses completed by the school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own self-evaluation and records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, information relating to pupils' progress, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding, school policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- A group of pupils were heard reading and opportunities were taken during lessons to look at work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Linda Phillips, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this inspection

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for children in the care of local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- During the inspection, the substantive headteacher was absent due to illness. The school has recently appointed an interim headteacher who has just begun to work at the school for two days a week, supported by a senior teacher in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to raise achievement by:
 - making sure that teachers use what they know about pupils' prior learning in mathematics to set work that challenges them at the right level
 - ensuring that pupils act on the advice they are given when teachers mark their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 6 has been above average. In 2013, standards were well above average in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. More-able pupils achieved well and attained very high standards. In mathematics and writing, standards were above average. Both boys and girls attain well.
- Children's experiences and skills when they start the school are broadly similar to expectations, although in areas such as communication and language some are below. They all settle well and make good progress, and, with the improvements to teaching since the last inspection, the percentage reaching a good level of development exceeds national averages.
- School data show that pupils in all year groups continue to make good progress. Standards vary because numbers in each class are small and the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs differs widely. For example, the current Year 6 contains just under half of such pupils.
- Pupils make a good start to reading because the daily teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Reception and Key Stage 1 is good and is targeted to their abilities. When reading to the inspector, for example, pupils tackled new words such as 'personality' systematically by sounding them out. Good progress in reading continues throughout Key Stage 2; pupils read widely and are happy to discuss their favourite books. By the time they reach Year 6, they confidently locate information in factual books and enjoy reading their work to an audience.
- Pupils are able to practise their reading and writing skills in a range of subjects alongside their work in English, and this contributes to their good progress. They do not use mathematics as much in work in topics that bring different subjects together.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and often better progress as a result of the well-focused support from teaching assistants and the effective use of practical resources.
- Across the school, the small number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make at least as good progress as other pupils in the school. Funding is used very well by the school to provide additional support through frequent one-to-one or small-group work. The school also uses a proportion of the money allocated to ensure that these pupils can join in all of the extra activities provided. It is not possible to comment on the attainment of eligible pupils in Year 6 last year without risk of identifying individual pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time ensures that pupils make good progress. All lessons have clear learning objectives so that pupils understand what it is they are aiming to learn and how they may succeed. However, achievement in mathematics is somewhat restricted because teachers sometimes set work for pupils that is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities to work together and learn from each other. This was seen in a lesson where pupils were learning about decimal places. Pupils worked very well together in pairs and, through investigation, negotiation and discussion, they made good progress in their

mathematical understanding. A key factor here was the way in which they weighed up and refined each other's ideas to build complicated number lines.

- Teachers are skilful in encouraging pupils' interest and imagination. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the outstanding quality of teaching provides experiences that enable children to have a very good start to their education. Teachers make effective use of the outdoor environment to stimulate children's curiosity and enjoyment in learning. In the forested area, children learn to link their indoor learning, for example, about the three little pigs to their local environment, successfully building wooden houses with twigs, sharing natural resources and developing confidence outside the classroom. This is outstanding teaching.
- The relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Teachers and teaching assistants support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make consistently good progress and achieve well. Several parents and carers praised the way in which the school has supported their children's learning.
- Phonics teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is carefully adapted to suit different levels so that pupils learn quickly. They are able successfully to transfer this phonics knowledge into their reading and writing skills.
- Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across different subjects. For example, in a history lesson, clear links were made with the literacy targets taught that week and this gave pupils the chance to find a practical application for the grammatical skills they had recently encountered.
- Although teaching is good, the marking of pupils' work does not always provide pupils with a clear idea of how to improve. Where teachers do provide guidance, they do not always ensure that pupils act on their advice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' good behaviour in lessons makes a particular strong contribution to their learning.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils interact harmoniously at break and lunchtimes.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View confirmed that behaviour is good, and that any bullying is effectively dealt with. Inspection findings support this view.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet all current requirements. Parents and carers unequivocally state that the school takes great care over their children, not just academically, but emotionally and socially too.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They know about different forms of bullying, such as verbal, physical and cyber-bullying. They report that they get on well together and that they like coming to school, which is reflected in their high attendance. They said that if any problems arise they could talk to staff, who would take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils are very accepting of each other's differences. They demonstrate their pride in their school through the taking on of responsibilities to serve and help others, not just in school but

within the wider community through fundraising.

- Pupils respond well to the school's strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They make a considerable contribution to making the school a welcoming and friendly place in which to learn. They enthusiastically embrace new experiences and are curious about the world around them.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and the school's governing body are ambitious for the school's further improvement. Together they have the support and confidence of the staff to improve teaching and learning and raise pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and leaders have drawn up and follow a clear plan for improvement. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.
- Established subject leaders check the quality of planning of lessons on a regular basis. Relatively new subject leaders are keen to take on extra responsibilities and supportive plans are currently being introduced to enable them to fulfil their new responsibilities.
- The range of subjects taught at the school is varied. The school provides exciting and rich opportunities for pupils to apply their skills through themed days and celebrations; for example, Chinese New Year.
- There is a wide variety of extra activities for pupils to participate in. A range of clubs, such as gardening club, and enrichment activities encourage pupils to become involved in their local community. They also help pupils to develop personal skills that prepare them well for their next school. The excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a strong contribution to the positive attitudes and good behaviour around the school.
- The school provides outstanding pastoral care for all its pupils. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils are known very well by staff. The school's very good relationship with parents and carers and its good links with the local community contribute significantly to pupils' achievement and well-being.
- The school makes good use of the additional primary sports funding. This has been spent on enhancing the range of opportunities available to pupils, and uptake in sport has increased. There are appropriate systems in place to evaluate the impact of this provision.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling any kind of discrimination lie at the heart of the school's work. It is an inclusive school where pupils get on very well together.
- The school has strong potential for continued success; because of this, the local authority's support is appropriately light.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a wealth of experience that it uses effectively to support the school. Governors know in fine detail how well the pupils are doing in comparison to pupils nationally. They understand the school's strengths and are clear about the areas that need development in order to further pupils' achievement. Governors actively inform themselves about the school's day-to-day work through regular visits. This enables them to hold the school to account. They know how the pupil premium and the sports funding are spent and the difference these make. They understand the need for high-quality training for staff and for

themselves in order to move the school forward. The headteacher's annual performance management is undertaken responsibly and rigorously. Oversight of the school's finances is rigorous, so that pay awards are appropriately linked to teachers' performance.

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	120689
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	431218

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Anderson
Headteacher	Sally-Anne Caunter
Date of previous school inspection	March 2009
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