

# Discovery Primary School

Mountsteven Avenue, Walton, Peterborough, PE4 6HX

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good progress from starting points which are often well below those typically found. Attainment has risen since the last inspection.
- The school has successfully narrowed the gap in achievement between pupils entitled to additional government funding and their classmates.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English, and those who are more able, are making above average progress.
- The good curriculum has very effective enrichment opportunities that support pupils' learning in a range of subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well in and out of lessons. The school ensures they are safe and well cared for.
- The school successfully manages the high numbers of pupils who leave or join at other than the usual time through effective mentoring and induction systems.
- The headteacher has provided strong leadership since the last inspection, particularly in improving teaching.
- The school has sought support and advice from experts when needed. There is a strong culture of continually improving the skills of staff and the governing body.
- The school has very successfully worked to develop staff's leadership skills.
- All leaders, governors and staff in the school share a clear commitment to raising standards and improving teaching and learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' spelling is not good enough and they do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work.
- Pupils are not given enough time to build effective mental mathematics skills.
- Too many pupils miss school regularly.
- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they are expecting them to learn.
- The recording of pupils' targets does not always make clear when these have been achieved.
- Teachers are at an early stage in developing their understanding of the different types of questions they can ask to extend pupils' learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, staff, governors, pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books with the inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress and attainment produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and the plans for raising attainment.

## Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Discovery Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A very high proportion of the pupils join or leave the school at times other than are usual. Many of them are at the school only for a short time.
- The school has an above-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, especially from Eastern Europe. Many are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium grant. In this school, this provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils.
- There is a privately-run pre-school on the school site. This is inspected and reported on separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by:
  - improving pupils' spelling
  - ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to practise their skills in longer pieces of writing
  - providing more activities designed to improve pupils' mental mathematics skills.
- Make more of the teaching consistently good and outstanding by:
  - providing increased opportunities for teachers to learn from the existing outstanding practice in the school
  - ensuring that pupils are clear about the learning they are expected to do in lessons
  - making better use of pupils' targets by ensuring it is clear when they have been fully met
  - improving the ways in which teachers ask questions that extend pupils' learning.
- Strengthen the procedures intended to reduce the amount of persistent absenteeism.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start school, children's knowledge and understanding are well below those typically found at their age. Children often have reading, writing and communication skills that are very low. Many of them find it difficult to work and play together. They make good progress in the Reception Year because of the very well-organised and effective provision. Even so, their achievement remains below that expected when they enter Year 1.
- Standards in the 2013 national tests at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this represented a good improvement from the levels attained in 2012. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen since the last inspection and in 2013 was broadly in line with the national average.
- These rising standards are the result of good and improving progress from pupils' low levels on entry. It also reflects the school's success in dealing with the extremely high numbers of pupils arriving at or leaving the school during the course of each year. For example, a third of pupils in the Reception classes and in Year 2 have left or joined the school since the start of the year.
- The school's data show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach at least the levels attained last year. More of them are reaching the higher levels in mathematics because of the school's targeted teaching of the most-able group of pupils. In addition, pupils produce some high quality art and design work. The use of computers and other technology shows many pupils have information and communication technology skills that are often above those expected.
- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) show standards in 2013 were slightly below the national average but this represented a huge improvement over the previous year. This was due to improvements to the way phonics is taught. The current standards in early reading skills show a good level of knowledge and understanding, and a growing enjoyment of books and reading.
- Standards in writing, together with the progress pupils make, remain slightly below those in reading and mathematics. The school has recognised this and has plans in place to help raise standards through, for example, improving the opportunities for more focused small group teaching of skills. Pupils' spelling skills are poor and there are not enough opportunities for them to write at length.
- Currently, the progress made by the pupils at an early stage of learning English is above average. This reflects some very effective support for newly arrived pupils and their families, and good teaching which provides many opportunities for speaking and listening skills through practical activities such as cooking. However, the turbulence caused by these pupils joining and leaving the school, together with their often persistent absenteeism, acts as a barrier to their learning. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective extra help, especially when supported in small groups. Their progress is often in line with that of other pupils. There is a high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to close the gap in their achievement when compared with their classmates and the latest data show they often make more rapid progress than their classmates.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. A small but growing proportion of the teaching is outstanding and the school is keen to ensure more is of this quality. Teachers are very positive about their work and about the opportunities provided to develop their professional skills and expertise. One wrote, 'I thoroughly enjoy working here and have been very well supported.' Support staff are also largely positive about their roles and one also commented on the encouragement she had received in beginning training to be a teacher.
- The school is continually seeking to improve practice in teaching and the headteacher has encouraged staff to be innovative. For example, the development of opportunities for teachers to plan lessons together, and to observe and comment on each other's practice, is already having a positive impact on their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Even so, the inspection found that the school could do more to spread existing outstanding practice.
- Teachers create a very positive and purposeful climate for learning in classrooms. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy lessons and how their teachers help them learn new things. When sharing their books with inspectors, older pupils talked positively about their learning in mathematics, especially through activities involving practical work and problem-solving rather than simple calculations.
- The current practice in the Reception classes is very strong with some outstanding teaching, and is visited by teachers from other schools who wish to observe best practice. Excellent planning ensures a balanced mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The outdoor areas are especially well used for learning. For example, one boy, dressed as a pirate for World Book Day, used construction materials to build a pirate ship. He talked animatedly about how he was finding it difficult to solve the problem of getting the flag high enough up the mast.
- At times, teachers do not make clear to pupils the link between activities and what they want pupils to learn. Although they share objectives and success criteria with pupils, they too often describe what pupils will do rather than being precise enough about what they expect them to learn. Pupils have target sheets in their books, but these are not always clear about if and when the next level has been achieved or clearly linked to examples of work in the books.
- The school has carried out some recent training to improve the way teachers question pupils to extend their learning as well as to assess what they have learned. This work is yet to be fully evident in teachers' practice or to be evaluated by leaders. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and pupils have time to respond to their helpful comments. However, the marking is not always focused on helping pupils know exactly what they need to do to reach the next level.
- Most teachers use time and support staff well to ensure that all pupils stay attentive and on task. This especially helps the most-able pupils. For example, in a well-taught lesson in Year 3, the teacher extended pupils' learning about the characters in a story by building extra challenge in for the most able. She encouraged them to use the characters to devise some imaginative similes.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of the parents spoken with during the inspection were positive about how happy and safe their children are at school. One talked about how she had kept her child at the school even though they had moved a distance away. Pupils are polite and friendly. During the inspection they were happy to talk to the inspectors about their work and life at school.

- In all lessons observed, pupils were well behaved and showed very positive attitudes to learning. This has a major impact on their learning and progress, and they thoroughly enjoy their work. Children in the Reception classes start the day happily and productively, quickly settling into routines.
- The quality of the presentation of their work, especially in the younger classes, is good and shows the pride pupils take in their efforts. Even so, the quality is more inconsistent higher up the school. Pupils can talk about their targets and which levels they are trying to achieve, although the recording of this makes tracking their learning less clear. At times, teachers encourage pupils to assess their own learning, but this practice is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils say examples of misbehaviour or bullying are rare but they are confident these would be dealt with well if they occur. They are aware of the different types of bullying, such as through the use of computers or mobile phones. There have been no recent exclusions of pupils; where these occur, appropriate records are kept.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They say they feel safe in school and their views are supported by parents. Pupils benefit from the work of a learning mentor who supports a number of the most vulnerable children and their families.
- The school is extremely effective in supporting newly arrived pupils, especially those at an early stage of learning English, through a system of mentoring and small group activities that help them rapidly settle into school life. This is very effective in helping pupils to develop learning and social skills that prepare them for their future education.
- The breakfast club provides a very supportive and encouraging atmosphere that makes for a calm start to the day. Pupils behave well at the club and say they enjoy going to it. Food is provided and the breakfast promotes social skills.
- The school has worked hard in a number of ways to improve attendance but the high turbulence of families in the area makes this very difficult. Attendance is slowly improving but there remains a high proportion of families who do not appreciate the importance of regular attendance and who persistently do not ensure that their children attend. This has a negative impact on these pupils' achievement.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has led the school well since the last inspection. Her clear vision is shared with the school community. Standards have continued to rise, even while the school has grown rapidly and with a highly mobile population. The issues raised at the last inspection have been effectively addressed and this has resulted in pupils' good and improving progress.
- A major strength of the leadership has been the development of a range of senior and middle leaders. Their skills have been grown, partly through support and training with the local authority. The school now has a knowledgeable and proactive leadership team who share a strong ambition to turn Discovery into an even more successful school in the future. Responsibilities are well devolved and this is already having a positive impact on provision and improving standards in English and mathematics.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest and shows a good awareness of what

remains to be done to improve the school further. The use of a training day to bring the whole school community together to celebrate successes and start the next year's improvement planning is a popular and successful way of action planning for further improvement. The local authority rightly recognises the growing strength of school leadership in the limited support and challenge it provides for the school.

- Funding available through the pupil premium is used extremely effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life. It also provides, where appropriate, specific resources such as time with a learning mentor and additional help from adults, especially with reading and mathematics. The good progress made by these pupils is monitored closely, including by the governing body.
- The primary school sport funding is used appropriately with a focus on increasing participation in a number of sporting activities. It is also used for further training for teachers and buying in external expertise.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of interesting activities which are clearly directed at ensuring their learning and progress across all subject areas. During the inspection, World Book Day gave the school the opportunity to build more links with parents by inviting them to stay and read with their children, for pupils to read with other pupils from different year groups, and to dress as and talk about their favourite book characters. Topics bring learning to life and enable pupils to use skills in different situations. This, alongside links such as those with a school in China, leads to some good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a good range of clubs and out-of-lesson activities, and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and demonstrate independence.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge. This has improved since the last inspection and governors are able to talk knowledgeably about the impact of the school's work on pupils' performance. For example, governors have improved the ways they monitor data to check pupils' progress and have undertaken training to enable them to improve their understanding. Governors check on the school's work through a range of visits, the frequency of which has increased since the last inspection. They have meetings with staff, the headteacher and detailed reports from the school, such as those on the impact of pupil premium funding.
- Members of the governing body have a sound understanding of the system used to determine teachers' effectiveness in enabling pupils to make progress. Governors check how effectively these systems are applied to improve the quality of teaching. Decisions about teachers' pay are closely and appropriately linked to performance and responsibilities.
- Governors track finances well and assist the school in deciding how to spend additional money to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium and to extend sports and physical education opportunities.
- The governing body makes sure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current national 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135196
<b>Local authority</b>	Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	430790

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	499
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Siggery
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Hampson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 325001
<b>Fax number</b>	01733 325001
<b>Email address</b>	office@discovery.peterborough.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

