

# Elm Road Primary School

Elm Road, Wisbech, PE13 2TB

## Inspection dates

25–26 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently strong across the school.
- Pupils do not do as well in writing as in reading because they have too few opportunities to write at length and cannot practise their spelling and punctuation skills sufficiently.
- Teaching requires improvement because the work given to pupils is sometimes too hard for some pupils or too easy for other, more-able, pupils.
- Additional funding from the government to support specific pupils (the pupil premium) has not been used well enough to narrow the gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and the others in either English or mathematics.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured fast enough improvement since the previous inspection. Until recently, leaders have not set teachers targets that are challenging enough to bring about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- There have been many changes in staffing over the last two years. Consequently, many middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, are new to their role and do not yet play a big enough part in ensuring consistent improvement across the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in learning about letters and the sounds they make (phonics). These skills are taught well.
- Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. They learn important values such as trust and respect and they get on well together.
- Parents are pleased with the school and how it looks after their children.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their smiling faces each morning are a testament to the commitment of the headteacher and other staff to providing a welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and happy.
- Newly-arrived pupils from abroad settle quickly and soon become competent at speaking English.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made some short visits to lessons.
- Discussions were held with pupils, members of the governing board, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- There were too few responses (three) to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be taken into account. The inspectors read letters from parents, looked at the comments in the school's own parental surveys and talked to some parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, heard some pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors analysed 22 questionnaires from staff.

## Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils with English as an additional language has almost doubled since the previous inspection. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but around a fifth are Eastern European. About a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported through school action, is below 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 given to the school for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are in the care of the local authority and children from service families) is broadly average. Virtually all pupils are in the first of these categories in this school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching so that both are at least good by:
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of the information they hold on pupils so that they set work that is pitched at the right level of difficulty, both for more-able pupils and for those who find learning difficult.
- Improve attainment in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills by writing at length in different subjects
  - sharpening the support for pupils whose spelling, punctuation and use of grammar are known to be weak.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that targets for helping teachers to improve are clear and challenging enough to secure the necessary improvements
  - developing the ability of middle leaders to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring that the pupil premium is used effectively to support eligible pupils and to close the gap between their attainment and that of the others
  - ensuring governors hold leaders to account for their effectiveness in improving the school.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should also be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because they do not make consistently good progress throughout the school. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 dipped sharply in 2013 due the impact of a high number of pupils with limited spoken English who arrived close to the time of national testing. This level of low attainment is not usual. In most years, attainment typically remains broadly average from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 2 and then to the end of Year 6, reflecting steady progress for pupils from their different starting points.
- Pupils' attainment is weaker in writing than in reading. Pupils enjoy writing but they do not always spell or punctuate accurately. Pupils enjoy reading and improve their reading skills steadily.
- No group, including those from different ethnic backgrounds, including Eastern European families, does significantly better or worse than any other. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make similar progress to others at the school, but the additional support they receive has not closed the attainment gap between them and others. In 2013 national testing at the end of Year 6, eligible pupils were about a year behind their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving this year as some of the additional activities introduced by the school begin to take effect. It is not yet good because not all pupils do as well as they should from their starting points. Similarly, more-able pupils do not achieve well because they are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons.
- When children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school's assessments show that most pupils are working at the levels typically seen at their age. Children make steady progress in acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills. They make good progress in personal and social development because this aspect of their learning is supported more effectively.
- Although inconsistencies remain, there have been recent improvements in pupils' achievement. In the current year, the sharper focus of leaders on raising attainment is beginning to reap benefits. Better teaching as well as improved behaviour and attitudes means that more pupils are making good progress than in the past and attainment is beginning to rise in all year groups.
- Pupils with English as an additional language, who have been in school since the Early Years Foundation Stage, reach the same levels of attainment as other pupils by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. These pupils make particularly good progress in learning spoken English, even if they have been in school for only a short time.
- Pupils develop a good knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Skills are taught well and the percentage reaching the expected levels in the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1 was higher than average in 2013.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching does not ensure that pupils, including the most-able, learn new skills and knowledge quickly all of the time. Teachers have a wealth of information about how well pupils are doing in

a subject but do not draw on this when planning their work. This means that there are occasions when work is too hard or too easy for individual pupils and groups.

- In the last year, teachers have improved the guidance they give pupils on how to improve their work. Although this is still not yet consistently good, it is already helping pupils to understand what to teach next.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide calm and sensitive support to help children improve their social and personal skills. They plan work carefully but, as elsewhere in the school, there are occasions when the more-able should be asked to do more so that their learning moves on more quickly.
- There is some good teaching across the school and teachers have strong relationships with pupils. Pupils progress well when teachers make learning interesting through the good use of resources, helping to promote good attitudes towards learning. They expect pupils to behave well and they help them to take pride in their work by displaying it in the classroom to show that it is valued. Teachers are very aware of the need to check that pupils with English as an additional language understand new vocabulary, and do so. This helps them quickly to improve their speaking skills.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. There has been a successful recent focus on improving pupils' behaviour. The number of exclusion has been reduced to zero in the current year. The school's records show that incidents of misbehaviour have become increasingly rare. This is contributing well to pupils' improved progress in the current year. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'We are all trying harder this year.'
- Parents and staff also agree that behaviour is typically good. In lessons, pupils have consistently good attitudes towards learning across the school. They are keen and enthusiastic and take pride in their work. They listen carefully to the teacher and the overwhelming majority of pupils try to do their best at all times.
- The school successfully promotes good relationships and ensures that there is no discrimination. Pupils are polite and courteous and get on well together. Newly arrived pupils settle quickly into school because as they say, 'We soon make new friends and everyone is kind.'
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Rates of attendance have been improving and are now broadly average. The school does its utmost to reduce absence by offering a wide range rewards to motivate pupils to come to school, and this is helping to secure improvements.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are very few recorded incidents of bullying and pupils say that if it does occur it is 'sorted out very quickly.' Pupils know that there are different types of bullying. They talk knowledgeably about cyber-bullying and how to avoid other dangers when outside school.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because the pace of change since the previous inspection has been steady rather than rapid. Until recently, leaders have not focused sharply enough on raising attainment. A high turnover of staff has slowed developments. Many middle leaders such as teachers in charge of subjects are new to their role and do not play a big

enough part in driving improvement by, for example, being more involved in analysing data or visiting lessons.

- Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra teaching support for pupils and to pay for activities outside lessons. However, planning for the use of this funding is too vague and does not make explicit what success is expected from different initiatives so that the impact can be checked. Consequently, although eligible pupils do no worse than others, their attainment is not improving quickly enough.
- Leaders have demonstrated in the current year that they have the capacity to improve the school. They are doing the right things to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They are being supported well in this by the local authority, as well by a strong partnership with other local schools. Recent developments such as the improved use of information on pupils' attainment have ensured that teaching and pupils' progress are improving more quickly in the current year. However, the targets that are given to teachers to manage and improve their performance are still not challenging enough to ensure that all teaching becomes consistently good.
- Visits and visitors enrich learning and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Work in class supports the steady development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. It also successfully fosters their creativity, especially through art and music, but pupils rarely write at length in literacy or other subjects so that their writing skills do not improve as quickly as they need to.
- The school focuses well on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils participate keenly in physical activity. The new primary school sports funding is being used to good effect to enhance the skills of teachers and to provide coaching in different sports such as athletics as well as taster sessions in new activities including tennis. There are clear plans to check the impact of spending once initiatives have been in place longer.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The effectiveness of the governing body has been affected by difficulties in recruiting new governors. This means that the skilled chair of the governing body has carried too much responsibility and too few governors have played their part in holding the school to account. There is now a full complement of governors and a review of governance is recommended to ensure that responsibilities are fully understood and to identify where further training is needed. Nonetheless, despite these problems, governors have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison to others. They use information on pupils' progress carefully to see what needs improving and are knowledgeable about where teaching is stronger or weaker. They know what school leaders are doing to tackle weaker teaching and they ensure that only good teaching is rewarded through pay rises. Governors monitor spending thoroughly but have not done enough to check that the pupil premium is helping to close the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and others. Governors ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110650
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440516

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.

<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>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Lockwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 584591
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