

Linchfield Community Primary School

Crowson Way, Deeping St James, Peterborough, PE6 8EY

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2014

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is inconsistent in reading, writing and mathematics. In some year groups, pupils make better progress than in others.
- Achievement dipped in 2013 and not enough pupils exceeded the expected rates of progress in writing and mathematics over Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and the impact this has over time are too variable. Some pupils, particularly the most-able pupils, say that work is sometimes too easy for them.
- Even when work is at a suitable level, pupils are not always clear about how to set about their tasks and this slows their learning.
- When teachers mark pupils' work, they do not always give them clear advice about how to improve it.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and senior leadership team have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their actions to improve the school have begun to have a marked impact.
- Teaching has improved and the dip in progress is beginning to reverse.
- Behaviour has improved and is now good. Around the school, and even in the less inspiring lessons, pupils are polite and courteous. They take pride in their work and in their school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They benefit from a wide range of special events, trips and visitors.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. High expectations of work and behaviour are communicated from the outset.
- Pupils are kept safe and feel very safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons, covering all classes. They carried out two observations jointly with the headteacher. They made brief visits to several other lessons. They closely examined the work in pupils’ books and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils’ progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- The team consulted the Parent View website, where 78 parents and carers had posted responses to the online questionnaire, and analysed the responses to a questionnaire completed by 24 staff.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Heyes

Additional Inspector

Shân Oswald

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from other ethnic groups is well below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding which applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are in local authority care, or who have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection the school has had five different headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- All members of the senior leadership team except one have been appointed to their roles since September 2013. Of the school's 14 classes, six have had a change of teacher during the current school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by:
 - making sure that all teachers consistently give feedback to pupils about their work which shows them clearly what they need to do next to improve it
 - creating more opportunities for teachers to improve and extend their skills by learning from each other, so that the existing good practice is more widely spread.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics so that more pupils exceed the nationally expected rates of progress by:
 - giving pupils, especially the more-able pupils, harder work to do
 - making sure that pupils always know exactly how to go about their tasks.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills in language and mathematics which are typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, they reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement declined during a period of instability in leadership and, while it is now improving, is still inconsistent across the school.
- The proportions exceeding the expected rates of progress during Key Stage 2 fell to be below average in mathematics and writing in 2013. Standards also dipped at the end of Key Stage 1. In some year groups, progress is not as good as in others. In some classes it is better in English than in mathematics. In others, the opposite is the case. This inconsistency is because pupils are not always given work to do which is hard enough. Sometimes, they find tasks too hard and are not clear how to go about them. In some classes, pupils are not sure what to do to improve their work because they are not given sufficiently clear advice when teachers mark their work.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make progress broadly in line with that of other pupils, given their starting points. In 2013, the standards they reached were just over two terms behind other pupils in reading and mathematics and two and a half terms behind in writing. These gaps were smaller than those found nationally in reading and mathematics, but larger in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates, as do the very few who speak English as an additional language. They respond well to the extra support they receive from teaching assistants and other adults.
- In the past, there have been differences in the progress rates of boys and girls. Inspectors looked into this closely. There is still some unevenness across different classes and different subjects but, in general, boys and girls are now making progress at the same rates.
- Achievement is starting to rise after a dip in the recent past, when instability in staffing and leadership led to major inconsistencies in teaching, which are now being addressed well. Most groups in both key stages and in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making faster progress this year than previously.
- Standards in the national check on phonics (the sounds which letters in words represent) for pupils in Year 1 were above average in 2013. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy reading. 'Books draw pictures in your mind', said one. Pupils are excited about using their new library which has just been installed. The most-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with good understanding, showing skills above those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years sometimes guess at words rather than reading them carefully. They could, however, show inspectors confidently how they cope with unfamiliar words using the techniques they have learnt at school.
- In the classes where achievement is good, pupils have many opportunities to relate English and mathematics to the outside world. A Year 3 class, for example, produced some very high quality writing in their online blogs. They were excited to receive live responses from people in different parts of the world. In a mathematics lesson, pupils were highly motivated as they did a traffic survey in a lesson combining mathematics and geography.
- In the Early years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from the outset. They respond well to the adults who look for every opportunity to develop their language,

mathematical and observational skills. They enjoyed a mathematics-based role-play in which they bought and sold food.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is inconsistent across different classes and subjects. Pupils told inspectors that teachers sometimes set work which is too easy. At other times, it is sufficiently demanding but teachers do not always show pupils clearly enough how they should set about their tasks, and this slows progress.
- In a mathematics lesson, for example, a game at the beginning which was intended to give a fun and snappy start to learning became slow and laborious because pupils were not entirely clear what to do. Time was lost as their misunderstandings were cleared up. On another occasion, a teacher's untidy handwriting on the board reduced the clarity of what was being taught.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. The comments teachers make on pupils' work do not always show them clearly enough what they need to do next to improve it. For example, the comment 'Remember to use capital letters at the start of sentences' gives the pupils very clear guidance on how to improve their writing. However, a comment such as 'you struggled with the word fact' did not make clear to pupils what to do next to make progress.
- Teachers give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants know pupils' needs well. They work effectively with individuals or small groups, either in the classroom or close by. When the teacher is talking to the whole class they do not simply sit and wait but they look for opportunities to support anyone who needs it.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It provides an appropriate balance, both indoors and out, between tasks led by adults and task chosen by the children themselves. Adults interact well with the children, taking every opportunity to develop their skills and their understanding of the world.
- Teaching has improved this year and is often good, particularly when teachers set work which is neither too easy nor too hard. In the best practice, they give feedback which shows pupils very clearly what they need to do next to improve their work. Their explanations are clear and they use a range of imaginative techniques to make sure that pupils learn thoroughly. They choose topics which appeal to both boys and girls.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost without exception, pupils are polite and courteous. The school is a calm and very well-ordered community where teachers can teach and pupils can learn without interruption. Pupils and parents told inspectors how much behaviour, particularly in lessons, has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, sometimes exceptionally well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. From the Early Years Foundation Stage they respond quickly and readily to teachers' instructions. Even if they find teachers' explanations unclear, or they are given work which is too easy, they respond without fuss and do what is asked of them. Most pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work. They keep their books neat and tidy.
- The schools' work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents say either that

there is no bullying or that, if it has occurred, it has been swiftly and securely dealt with. Pupils learn about the different forms that bullying can take and are well informed about how to keep themselves safe from it. Older pupils, for example, learn about internet-based bullying.

- Pupils are proud of their school. They willingly take on jobs and responsibilities. They serve, for example, on the school council, as carbon ambassadors, play leaders, or junior police academy ambassadors. They help people less fortunate than themselves through charity fundraising.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors saw convincing evidence that this support has helped pupils play a full part in the life of the school and make progress in line with other pupils.
- Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to reflect on life and its deeper questions and to experience a sense of wonder. Reception children were awestruck during the inspection when their chicks hatched out. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. They know about the backgrounds and beliefs of people from communities different from their own.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the arrival of the new headteacher in September 2013, there has been a marked upturn in the school's fortunes. A new leadership structure has already had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement. Staff, including those newly appointed this year, share the headteacher's vision. They display drive and enthusiasm to see further improvements for the benefit of the pupils.
- A programme to check the quality of teaching, which had fallen into disuse, has been re-launched. Staff told inspectors how effective this has already been in helping them pinpoint areas where they need to improve their skills further. Leaders have been swift to tackle inadequate teaching, which has been almost completely eradicated, and more teaching is now good.
- Rigorous new procedures for recording pupils' progress in all classes, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, have already been successful in enabling teachers to spot any pupils who are falling behind and to put support in place to help them catch up. This has led to faster progress for most groups of pupils in the current year, compared with previous years.
- The way the pupil premium is used and the impact this is having are also now closely watched, as a result of changes brought in since September. The gaps in attainment between pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils are narrowing.
- The range of subjects taught has been reviewed and now provides pupils with many interesting activities that help them to make better progress, and generates great enthusiasm. There is a well attended range of out-of-school activities. Visits and visiting speakers, along with special events such as the Roman Day bring learning to life for pupils. Just before the inspection, pupils had made a professional recording of a song specially written for the school. They found this deeply inspiring.
- The school is using the new primary school sport funding to extend the range of sports it offers, and to allow more pupils to take part in sport, including competitive sport. Leaders are checking the impact and effectiveness of these new initiatives carefully to make sure that the money is well spent.

- The school engages well with parents and carers. Several went out of their way to tell inspectors how much they felt the school had improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. They feel their children are now making better progress, and they say communications between home and school are now good.
- The local authority has given valuable support and training to teachers and governors during the period of unstable leadership and since the arrival of the new headteacher. The local authority checks that the standards teachers apply when they mark pupils' work are in line with the standards applied nationally. As a result, teachers know that their pupils' levels in reading, writing and mathematics are accurate.
- Classroom teachers also receive good support from senior and middle leaders in developing their skills. Opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and thus spread good practice consistently across the school are too limited, however.
- Leaders ensure that no pupils are denied access to anything the school offers on any grounds whatever. They ensure that the legal requirements for safeguarding pupils and child protection are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- At the request of governors, an external review of governance was carried out in the autumn term 2013. As a result, the governing body now has a much clearer view of its role in checking and overseeing the work of the school and shaping its strategic development. Governors have become rigorous in holding the school to account and asking penetrating questions about pupils' achievement. Already this has had an impact in raising achievement.
- Governors have a very accurate and detailed understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. They know how its performance compares with that of schools nationally. They make formal visits where they talk with staff and agree areas for improvement. They understand how teachers' pay increases are awarded and how these link to the impact on pupils' achievement. They understand how the pupil premium funding is used and the impact this has had. They can give good examples of how they have challenged leaders in order to shape the direction of the school.

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	120499
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	430711

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Henderson
Headteacher	Andy Fawkes
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2012
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