

Gamston CofE (Aided) Primary School

Stanboard Lane, Gamston, Retford, DN22 0PE

Inspection dates 26–27 February 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The progress that pupils make in writing and mathematics is not yet good.
- Work in writing, and especially in mathematics, is not always set at the right level of difficulty for different ability groups, particularly to challenge the more-able pupils.
- The themes and topics that pupils study are not planned or taught well enough to ensure that pupils develop a wide range of skills as they progress through the school. Reception children do not have enough opportunities to learn through play.
- Subject leaders and teachers in charge of other aspects of the school's work do not have enough opportunities to lead and manage, or to develop their own expertise. As a result, they are unclear about how to make improvements in the areas they are responsible for.
- The plans drawn up by the headteacher and governors to improve the school do not focus sharply enough on important weaknesses. This is restricting their impact on improving achievement and teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- Pupils show respect and courtesy for adults and each other. Their moral, social and spiritual development is good.
- Pupils read well and make good progress in this aspect of English.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, and briefly visited each class during a period when all pupils were learning about spelling and grammar. Four of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons, at lunchtimes and at playtimes. He also interviewed a group of pupils, and listened to a number of pupils read.
- The inspector looked carefully at pupils' work and the 'learning journeys' of children in the Reception class.
- The inspector read a wide range of school documents, including information about pupils' current and recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, as well as with senior leaders. The inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 16 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspector also took account of additional comments made by parents he met informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by seven members of staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. There are four classes: Reception class children and Year 1 pupils are in one class together, Years 2 and 3 pupils form a second class, Years 4 and 5 a third, and Year 6 pupils are in a separate class.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who come from a minority ethnic group or speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is low. This is additional government funding for particular groups of pupils, including in this school pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low.
- There have been a number of staff changes in recent years.
- 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 teaching and pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers know how well all of their pupils are doing
 - work in lessons is demanding, especially for more-able pupils
 - good use is made of teaching assistants when the teacher is talking to the whole class
 - all teachers follow the agreed practice when marking pupils' work, so that all pupils know how well they are doing, and how they can improve.
- Improve achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - insisting on a consistently high quality and quantity of work from pupils
 - strengthening pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - encouraging pupils to use a wide variety of styles when writing for different audiences and purposes.
- Improve the curriculum to increase the range of pupils' skills and knowledge by:
 - giving Reception children more opportunities to learn through play to develop their self-confidence and their positive interactions with other children
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply and develop what they have learnt in English and mathematics lessons in new situations.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of subject and other leaders in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning, and using the results to plan effectively for improvements
 - ensuring that plans for improving the whole school are based on a rigorous analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress requires improvement in the Reception class and in mathematics and writing across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The standards pupils reach fluctuate from one year group to the next because of the small numbers of pupils in each one. However, taking the starting points into account, progress is not consistently good across subjects or year groups.
- There is no significant difference between boys and girls in how well they progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make progress that is broadly in line with that of their classmates, as do the most able pupils.
- Following previously low scores in the Year 1 national check on pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make), the teaching of phonics has improved. As a result, all pupils, including less-able readers, have skills to read previously unknown words, and pupils' spelling is more accurate. The current Year 2 pupils did not make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics in Year 1. Their achievement has accelerated in Year 2, but they still have ground to make up, especially in mathematics.
- In 2012 Year 6 pupils underachieved in mathematics. This situation was rectified to some extent in 2013, when progress was close to the national average rates. Even so, pupils made slower progress in mathematics than they did in reading or writing. The progress in mathematics of current pupils in Years 5 and 6 requires improvement. Two factors contribute to this: pupils do not have enough experience of problem-solving, or practising their number skills, so they are weaker at applying what they know.
- Information about the progress in English of pupils now in Key Stage 2 indicates that they are making good progress from the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, but their progress requires improvement in writing. Pupils do not get enough practice in writing for different audiences or purposes, so they do not express themselves consistently well.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium made progress over the last five terms in line with that of their classmates. Overall, their progress in reading was better than their progress in writing or mathematics. There were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to permit a judgement on their attainment and progress in English and mathematics without the risk of identifying them.
- The small proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, but their progress in writing and mathematics is weaker.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the school now has good information as to how well pupils of different abilities are doing, not all teachers use this consistently to set tasks in lessons at a suitable level of difficulty.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged enough to apply their learning by undertaking new problems or tasks.

- The quality of teaching in the past did not enable pupils to make good enough progress. In recent months, teaching has improved so that pupils now frequently make the progress expected of them, and sometimes better than expected progress. However, the improvements have not yet helped pupils to fully catch up.
- The activities provided in the Reception class do not give children enough opportunities to learn for themselves through play in line with what the government's Early Years Foundation Stage framework says. This restricts the development of their self-confidence and their ability to interact positively with other children. Checks on how well Reception class children are doing do not give the adults enough detailed or up-to-date information about how to help each child make good progress.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics varies. Some enables pupils to make rapid progress, but other teaching does not challenge pupils enough to make good progress.
- The quality of pupils' work in their writing and mathematics books varies because teachers show differing expectations about the quantity of work and its presentation. As a result, pupils produce work of high quality in some classes, but this is not the case everywhere.
- When pupils are working on their own, teaching assistants are effective in supporting individuals and small groups, usually the less-able pupils. However, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, the assistants are not used to explain ideas more simply to these pupils, or to engage them in suitable alternative tasks. As a result, these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers now have an agreed policy about how they should make comments on pupils' work so that pupils understand how they can improve it, but not all teachers apply the policy consistently. However, many pupils can talk about their learning targets and how they can make their work better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show pride in their work and achievements. Pupils respond quickly to requests made by adults. For example, during one lesson, groups moved quickly and without fuss to a new place to work when asked to do so by a teacher.
- There is hardly any disruptive behaviour, and pupils show respect and courtesy to each other and to adults. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good, and this creates a settled, calm environment in which learning can take place.
- The school manages behaviour well. Teachers and other adults now apply the behaviour policy consistently, and the system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by pupils. As a result, behaviour has improved over time and this is contributing to improving rates of progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. In surveys carried out by the school with parents and pupils, a few concerns had been raised about how the school dealt with bullying. The school responded promptly and successfully to these concerns, and rectified this issue.
- Pupils agree that there is very little bullying and say that, on the very few occasions when bullying occurs, the school deals with it well. Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying may take, and understand the advice given to them about how to deal with being bullied.

- Pupils say they feel safe at school, in particular because they correctly have confidence that the adults will ensure their safety and well-being. Pupils learn about some aspects of how they can stay safe when they are out of school, such as road safety and drugs awareness.
- Attendance has improved since the school introduced more effective strategies for dealing with absence. Attendance is now above average. Pupils are rarely late for the start of school, and during the day pupils are in class punctually to begin their lessons.
- There are extremely few serious incidents logged in any of the records kept by the school. There have been no racist incidents recorded, and interviews with pupils confirm that there is no racist or prejudice-based abuse. There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement are improving, but have not yet done enough to make sure they are consistently good.
- The headteacher has introduced suitable procedures and systems to make pupils' achievement better. He has set appropriate targets for teachers to improve their work, and he checks on the progress that pupils in each class make. This also means that extra help can be given to teachers and pupils who need it. As a result, teachers have much better information about the attainment of their pupils, and are aware of their accountability in making sure that all pupils make as much progress as they can. The policy he has introduced for marking pupils' work and setting them targets is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of how they can improve, though its use is inconsistent.
- The school's leaders have a good understanding of its strengths, but have underestimated its weaknesses. As a result, their plans for improvement have not focused with enough urgency on making sure that pupils do much better in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school's work do not have enough opportunities to check on the work of their colleagues and give them support, or to develop their own expertise and plan for improvements.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of topics and themes. However, pupils' awareness of the moral, social and cultural aspects of life is adequately developed. Assemblies and lessons in religious education promote pupils' spiritual awareness well.
- The school uses its primary school sport funding to offer pupils a wider range of sporting experiences. It is not being used to develop teachers' skills so that they themselves can give better sports lessons.
- The local authority has offered support and guidance, and has encouraged links with a local outstanding primary school. This arrangement has given teachers the opportunity to see good practice and develop their own expertise.
- The school has good relationships with parents, who have a high regard for the education provided for their children.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors contribute to the way in which the school checks how well it is doing. They recognise their responsibility to challenge as well as support senior leaders.
- They take note of the achievement of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They have developed their own skills so that they may challenge leaders about the school's performance in this respect. They have high aspirations, expressed in the words 'outcomes for pupils are still not where we want them to be'. However, they have not shown enough urgency in challenging school leaders to improve rapidly the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors know how teaching is being developed by the school leadership team. They now ensure that teachers' pay is linked closely to their performance and impact on achievement. They are aware of how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and the impact these are having.
- Governors are keen to support the school by using their own expertise. For example, one governor has undertaken an analysis of the costs and benefits of installing photovoltaic cells to improve energy efficiency and sustainability.
- They ensure that policies and procedures are up to date, including those relating to safeguarding, and ensure that these are followed consistently by all staff.

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	122801
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	430725

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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Brown
Headteacher	David Fotheringham
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2012
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