

Lutton St Nicholas Primary School

Marriots Gate, Lutton, Spalding, PE12 9HN

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- Not enough pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in English or mathematics to reach their full potential.
- More-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to gain the higher levels in their work.
- There are some classes where teaching is not yet good. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding or match the work to pupils' ability.
- Marking is not yet consistently effective across the school. It does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Absences and problems with recruiting staff have slowed down the rate of improvement.
- Subject leaders are not fully effective in checking and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects.
- The performance targets for individual teachers are not specific enough to improve identified weaknesses in their teaching.
- Leaders and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but have not yet done enough to ensure sustained improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils start well in the school and make good progress in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes.
- Pupils behave well. They feel very safe, are polite and attend school regularly.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The improvements made so far show that leaders and governors have the capacity to improve the school further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, four additional governors, the education adviser, the numeracy leader and a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils.
- The inspector met regularly with the lead inspector of Gedney Church End Primary School, which was being inspected at the same time.
- The inspector took account of the 15 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector examined a range of evidence, including the school's analysis of its own performance and resulting single school improvement plan, the systems to track pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour and attendance. He also looked at records of lesson observations by senior leaders, staff performance information, safeguarding documentation and a wide range of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Stephen Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with Gedney Church End Primary School. The schools have the same headteacher and governing body. All leadership and management roles allocated to staff are across the federation.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school, serving families living in Lutton village and the surrounding rural areas.
- There are presently 20% more boys than girls in the school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. So, too, is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Rising pupil numbers have led to an additional class as from September 2013. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now taught in the Reception class. Other pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes in Years 1/2, Year 3/4 and Years 5/6.
- The school has experienced some problems with the recruitment of teachers and senior leaders.
- There have been a high number of teacher absences within the federation over the last year.
- 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 in Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics, by making sure that all teachers:
 - plan and adjust work in lessons so that it is at the right level of difficulty for all pupils
 - check carefully in lessons that all pupils are clear about their work
 - use marking effectively to show students how to improve their work and gain the higher levels
 - challenge and support the more-able pupils to achieve the higher levels in their work.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
 - the actions on the single school improvement plan are leading to sustained improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching
 - subject leaders are effective in checking and improving the progress of pupils and quality of teaching in their subject areas
 - the performance targets set for individual teachers include details of the areas for improvement in their teaching which have been identified by senior leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school and they have not attained as well as might be expected, particularly in English and mathematics. Although there are clear signs of better progress this year, they are not yet making sustained good progress.
- Children join the school with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. The majority make the progress expected nationally during their time in the school, but too few exceed expected progress and reach the levels they are capable of in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils make a good start in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, but progress slows down in Key Stage 2 and pupils leave school with broadly average standards.
- Pupils have challenging attainment targets in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, but not enough are achieving them. The work in books and school data indicate that the teachers are not pushing the pupils enough to make better progress. Consequently, those who start Key Stage 2 with higher attainment levels make slower progress than the other pupils. Too few gain Level 5 or 6 by the end of Year 6.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class because of well-planned and purposeful activities, led by the teachers and teaching assistant. Better use of the improved inside and outside resources is having a big impact on children's personal development, as well as encouraging the development of their number and language skills. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and many are now exceeding the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is making better use of the systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers identify underachieving pupils quickly and give them effective additional support. However, not enough more-able pupils in Key Stage 2 are being identified as having the potential to do better, or helped to do so.
- Reading is a key focus in the school, and pupils read regularly in school and at home each day. The school is active in ensuring that there are suitable reading books for both boys and girls. Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. A well-thought-out approach to teaching phonics (the sounds represented by letters) is used across the school.
- The school is improving the quality of writing, particularly for boys, by providing pupils with structured plans that help them understand how to organise their writing and key words to help them with their stories. The greater emphasis on speaking and listening in class is also supporting the improvement in writing skills. Leaders acknowledge that the more-able pupils are not challenged enough with their extended writing.
- The school has revised its course in mathematics with a greater emphasis on key skills and problem solving, which is leading to some improvements across the school. Leaders actively engage parents in mathematics training so that they can support their children with their numeracy development. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are now broadly average, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with the other pupils. More are making good progress this year due to the effective work from adults to help them overcome barriers to learning.

- The school is using additional funding appropriately to support individual pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Money allocated for additional help in reading, writing and mathematics is supporting improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. The very small number of eligible pupils means that it is not appropriate to comment on their attainment without identifying individual pupils, but they are making progress in line with other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements in teaching, it still varies too much across the school and requires improvement in some classes. School data, the work in pupils' books and observations of pupils' learning show that teaching is not yet strong enough in Key Stage 2 to lead to sustained good achievement.
- Teachers do not always check thoroughly in lessons that all pupils are clear about their work. As a result, some pupils are not clear enough about the tasks in lessons and what they have to do to succeed. In the lessons observed, some pupils were not making as much progress as they could have done, because they were stuck and waiting for the teacher to help them with their work.
- Not all teachers use information about what pupils already know and can do to set work at the right level for different ability groups. Some pupils are not challenged enough because the work in lessons is sometimes too easy for them, while some are held back in their learning because the work is too hard and they need more guidance and support.
- The marking of work does not always provide enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and gain the higher levels. Some good examples seen gave clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, and they had clearly responded well to the comments. This does not happen enough across the school.
- Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning and are eager to improve their work. They behave well in all classes and this provides a positive environment for learning. Teaching assistants are used well and support pupils who need additional support effectively with their work.
- In lessons where pupils make good progress, teachers prepare a range of well-planned activities which fully engage the pupils and challenge them in their learning. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils made good progress when planning their story using emotive language. The teacher asked questions skilfully to check their understanding and encouraged pupils to apply and extend their knowledge. The task was modified for the different groups so that pupils of all abilities were able to make rapid progress in their use of new and exciting words.
- Some teachers have developed attractive displays of work in their classrooms which provide a stimulating environment for learning. They celebrate good work, support learning during lessons and provide examples of expected levels of work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This contributes to a calm and orderly environment for learning and personal growth. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils meet the school's expectations and, typically, respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement to promote high standards of behaviour.

- Parents and carers commend the good behaviour in the school. There are clear expectations of behaviour and consistent systems to deal quickly with any misbehaviour. Pupils want to learn and this has a strong impact on their progress in lessons. The occasional challenging behaviour from a very small number of pupils is dealt with well by teachers and is not allowed to disrupt the learning of the other pupils.
- Pupils respond well to the school's strong emphasis on caring for one another. The daily assemblies greatly support the positive atmosphere because they engage the pupils and foster commitment. They are respectful towards each other, so every pupil feels valued in the family atmosphere of this village school. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous to staff and each other and this contributes well to their learning.
- Parents, carers and pupils confirm that bullying is very rare in the school. Pupils say that any unkind behaviour, such as name-calling and teasing, is dealt with quickly and effectively. They are developing their awareness of the different forms of possible bullying such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The governors make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding fully meet current national requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. Pupils feel safe and display a good understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as crossing the road, cycling in the village or talking to strangers. Older pupils confirm that the school provides them with helpful information on sex education and the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- Pupils are proud of their school, adhere to the uniform regulations and ensure that there is no litter in the school grounds. Attendance has improved over the last year and is presently above average, reflecting parental support for education and pupils' enjoyment of school. There have been no exclusions over the last two years.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although the school is improving, leaders have not yet done enough to speed up pupils' progress and tackle teaching that requires improvement. The 'single school improvement plan' is based on an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but has not led to enough improvements.
- The headteacher is providing clear leadership which has already brought about higher attendance and better teaching. He has been active in distributing leadership responsibilities among senior teachers and subject leaders. All teachers now have a 'coach' within the school to support improvements in their teaching. However, these recent improvements have not yet had a marked impact on teaching or pupils' progress.
- Progress since the last inspection has been slowed down by the high number of teacher absences during the last year and the problems of recruiting suitable staff. This has particularly affected literacy and numeracy. Subject leaders are developing their supporting and monitoring roles, but have not yet been fully effective in checking and improving the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- The system of setting performance targets for teachers is rigorous in ensuring that they are held to account for the achievement of their pupils. Nevertheless, the targets for individual teachers are not specific enough in seeking to tackle identified weaknesses already identified in their

teaching.

- The curriculum now has a greater focus on English and mathematics as well as an imaginative use of topics across the other subject areas. A wide range of outside visits and out-of-school activities, including a residential visit to Frieston Education Centre, increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. The range of experiences, including daily assemblies, contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Primary school sports funding has enabled the pupils to benefit from additional sporting activities. Teachers have also received sports coaching to help them with their teaching in physical education. There is a clear emphasis on developing more healthy lifestyles and better physical well-being for the pupils, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of the additional funding.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well and is improving rapidly. The new leader has revised the schemes of work and extensively developed the use of the outdoor area. The vast majority of children are now making good progress in the Reception class.
- The school has developed positive relationships with parents and carers. Leaders show a strong commitment to welcoming pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, and giving them all an equal chance to succeed.
- The school is well supported by the local authority and external consultants. The education adviser has been involved in helping leaders with long-term planning and developing strategies to improve the quality of teaching. The school has good links with neighbouring schools through South Holland Collaborative Partnership. Good transition arrangements with local secondary schools ensure that pupils are well prepared for their new schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a better awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement since the previous inspection. Its members are more involved in monitoring progress and holding leaders and staff to account. They regularly visit the school to check progress and make recommendations for improvement. The headteacher ensures that governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in relation to other similar schools. This will allow them to make confident decisions on future pay rises and promotion for staff. Governors have effectively overseen the use of the pupil premium funding and ensured that it is spent only on supporting eligible pupils. Governors are developing their roles and are highly aware of the need to monitor the effectiveness of key actions and initiatives to ensure they are quickly leading to improvements in teaching and achievement. There are still three vacancies on the governing body.

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	120421
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	441961

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Howard
Headteacher	Luke Whitney
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2013
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