

Mattishall Primary School

Dereham Road, Mattishall, Dereham, NR20 3AA

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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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

- Standards are too low in writing by the end of Year 6. Teachers' expectations of how much and how well pupils can write vary across the school, and are not always high enough.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects. Their handwriting is not always neat enough.
- The progress of different groups of pupils is patchy. Last year, the gap in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and the others in Year 6 was too great.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils are not routinely encouraged to act upon the guidance they are given in some classes.
- The work is sometimes too hard and sometimes too easy for the pupils.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not been rigorous enough in checking the school's work. This has led to over-generous assessments about its effectiveness and reduced the drive for improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well cared for. They behave well and say they feel safe in school.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception.
- The school's extensive grounds provide good opportunities for learning outdoors.
- The creative arts are promoted well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, including four jointly with the headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team heard pupils read and looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with: senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff; the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors; and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents in the playground. They also considered a letter from a parent.
- The inspectors considered the 24 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Aleksander Szwagrzak

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- There have been no changes of teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good across the school by:
 - setting work at the right level for all pupils , so that it is not too hard or too easy
 - using marking to show all pupils how to improve their work
 - giving pupils the opportunity to act upon the comments in their books to accelerate their progress.
- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of the amount and quality of writing pupils can produce
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length across different subjects
 - improving the consistency of neat handwriting.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - checks on the quality of teaching and learning are frequent and rigorous
 - judgements about the school's performance are accurate
 - governors hold senior leaders fully to account, especially over the impact of the spending of the pupil premium.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress varies too much in Key Stage 2 because teaching is inconsistent. This is particularly evident in writing, where standards have fallen this year.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 were well below average in 2013. This year standards have improved in reading and writing but remain well below last year's national average in mathematics. The school has introduced some new practical methods for teaching mathematics and these are beginning to have a positive impact.
- This year, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 6 has risen in reading and mathematics. It is similar to last year's average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing has fallen and is too low. This is because, across the school, teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' writing vary too much. Pupils are not always encouraged to write legibly with a neat script, and so take pride in their work.
- The present Year 6 pupils have made good progress over time in reading and mathematics, but have not made good progress in writing. Progress has accelerated in reading because pupils are encouraged to read and there are numerous reading volunteers who support them. The school's library is imaginatively staged as a fantasy castle, complete with Norwich dragons, and is a very attractive space for reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading and mathematics, but underperform in writing. Groups of pupils are well supported by teaching assistants, who work from personalised learning plans that are written together with the pupils. This is a new way of working for the school. Training for teaching assistants has increased this year but it is too early to see the impact of this new approach.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is inconsistent. Some do well and gaps in their attainment with others in the school are closing. However, other eligible pupils do not make the same progress as their classmates. There is insufficient scrutiny of the impact of the spending of the pupil premium by leaders and governors.
- In 2013, a combination of factors, including some eligible pupils also having special educational needs and/or joining the school late, meant this group greatly underperformed compared with their peers in Year 6. Their attainment was behind that of their classmates by two years in reading and mathematics, and by two and a half years in writing.
- More-able pupils make good progress when they are given activities that stretch them. However, this is not always the case and sometimes the work is too easy, so their progress is too slow.
- Children join Reception with skills typically a little below those typical for their age. They make good progress because they are given a rich diet of exciting activities to inspire them, both inside and outdoors. For example, children were testing rafts they had built to see if they would float, and learnt a great deal.
- Year 1 pupils use their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words) to read unfamiliar words. In the 2013 national phonics check, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard was average. The proportion is similar this year.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school. As a result, progress over time is not always good. At times, work is not set at the right level and is too easy or too hard for some pupils. The quality of the feedback given to pupils in their books varies, and does not always help them to improve.
- While the school has a clear marking policy, this is not being consistently followed by all staff. There are examples of good marking that show pupils how to improve their work, and include comments by pupils and the actions they have taken in response to the guidance. However, at other times, pupils are given little advice about what to do better, nor given the opportunity to act upon it. At such times, they do not improve their work.
- There is some outstanding provision in Reception. The quality of assessment is excellent and this is evident in the children's learning journeys, where their achievements are celebrated. Colourful scrapbooks full of photographs, comments on pupils' progress and examples of their work, show their good progress over time.
- Parents of Reception children are fully involved in supporting their children's learning. Every week they attend 'Look What I Can Do' sessions to look at what their children can do. One said, 'Early Years staff made a potentially worrying transition period a positive and very easy process.' when recalling how their child was welcomed into school.
- The creative arts are taught well. Pupils made impressive three-dimensional models of plants they had grown, for example. Many learn musical instruments and Year 6 pupils are relishing preparing their pantomime under the inimitable direction of the headteacher.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and cooperate well in class. They behave well around the school and usually show respect to one another and to adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils do not consider bullying an issue and know all about different types of bullying such as cyber bullying. Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils know how to keep safe around fire and water, for example, and how to protect themselves when using the internet.
- Pupils willingly take responsibility as members of the school council. They have submitted a bid to the 'Friends' of the school to fund improvements to outdoor play. They also represent their classmates on the eco-council and food council. They look after younger children. Pupils often raise money for charity, for example by selling home-made cakes.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, at times, pupils can become distracted, especially if the work is not interesting them because it is too easy or too difficult.
- Attendance has been rising and is now above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. The innovative reward that permits the best attending class to sit on benches in assembly for the week is highly desired.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders, including governors, are not rigorous enough in checking the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching is not yet consistently good, progress varies and standards in writing are too low by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders at all levels run checks on the quality of teaching. At times, however, feedback is not specific enough and checks are not frequent enough to make sure points for improvement have been taken on board. In some areas, the school's view of its effectiveness has been over-generous. Subject leaders have varying impact on their areas of responsibility, and are not always clear why writing, for example, has not kept up with reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has had a considerable impact on driving improvement for the Reception children. She runs a highly effective team. Aspects of the outstanding practice in Early Years are permeating through to the rest of the school, including staff reflecting on their practice and establishing links with other settings.
- The range of topics and subjects takes full account of pupils' interests and aspirations. Special events motivate pupils and fire their enthusiasm. These include 'crime scene investigation' day, when pupils returned to school after a holiday to discover a major incident taking place with emergency services in attendance. They also enjoyed 'airport day' when they 'travelled' to different destinations around the world. Such activities promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well.
- While the school makes links between topics, pupils do not write enough at length across a range of different subjects. This limits their ability to apply their literacy skills in a range of contexts.
- Leaders are committed to inclusion and discrimination is not tolerated. While the school promotes equality of opportunity, too many pupils leave unable to write to the required standard for secondary school.
- The headteacher has formed a close-knit staff team who share his vision to give every pupil the opportunity to succeed. Pupils are known well as individuals by all staff.
- The school is skilled at helping vulnerable pupils manage their difficulties. The school's attractive displays and superb grounds provide a stimulating environment for pupils to work and play. Pupils enjoy growing vegetables in the school's allotment, for example, and looking after the chickens.
- Many visits, visitors and clubs enrich pupils' experiences. The sports premium is being spent on coaching and training for staff and has created the opportunity for a new scheme of work in physical education to be developed. An enhanced range of sports has led to greater participation by pupils, with benefits to their health and well-being.
- Parents are mostly very pleased with all the school offers. They say their children go to school happy and find plenty to interest them.
- The local authority has offered additional support to the school but it has preferred to look mainly to its cluster of schools and a teaching school for outside help.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are supportive of the school and know about its strengths and areas to develop. They are becoming more involved in finding out first-hand how well it is doing. They have some understanding of how pupils are performing from relevant data, but were not aware of the significance of the large gaps in attainment between those supported by the pupil premium and the others in 2013. They know about the quality of teaching and how the performance of teachers is managed. They are clear that pay rises are not awarded unless staff performance merits it. Governors take steps to ensure value for money but have not rigorously sought to establish the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress of eligible pupils. For example, it is not clear how effective the support from teaching assistants has been in helping eligible pupils to make accelerated progress. Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements 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

Unique reference number	132213
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	442631

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Harrison
Headteacher	Tony Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
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