

# Gotham Primary School

Kegworth Road, Gotham, Nottingham, NG11 0JS

**Inspection dates** 8–9 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children in the Reception class and pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, those eligible for additional funding (pupil premium), disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
- Teaching is good and, sometimes, outstanding, which leads to pupils' good achievement. Teachers manage their classes well and mostly set challenging work that ensures pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are particularly effective in devising activities that engage pupils' interests.
- Pupils have many memorable experiences, including those in art, music, religious education, science and sport, which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are keen to take a full part in the wide range of opportunities the school provides for them. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well and say that they feel safe in school.
- The headteacher provides the school with clear vision and purpose to improve. This strong sense of purpose and the good work of leaders, managers and governors have improved teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are very supportive and have successfully improved the learning environment and helped the school to expand.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school and recognise the good quality of care for their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always use information about the achievement of pupils, especially the most able, to make sure that they set work which is demanding enough for them.
- Subject leaders do not check the quality of teaching frequently enough or with sufficient rigour to help teachers to improve further.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils apply advice about how to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine teachers and visited 13 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, and other subject leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' work, looked in their exercise books, listened to them read and observed them in one assembly.
- A range of documentation was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' progress, documents related to safeguarding and key reports and policies.
- The inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also analysed 27 questionnaires returns completed by staff.
- The first day of the inspection was a transition day. Year 6 pupils were visiting the local high school and all other pupils were taught in their age groups by their teacher for next year.

## Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Hopkins

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Gotham Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils come from the village and the surrounding area.
- More pupils than usual have joined the school this year other than at the usual times of admission.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for children in one Reception class. There are mixed-age classes from Years 1 to 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action are above average, and those supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school works in a collaborative partnership, the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance, and has links to both the cluster of local primary schools, and the local secondary school.
- The coordinator for special educational needs was appointed in September 2010. Two new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection, one in September 2011 and the other in September 2013.
- The school is undergoing refurbishment to provide one extra classroom to cater for the increased number of pupils at the school.
- There is a pre-school group on the school site that is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, in order to raise pupils' achievement, by making sure that teachers:
  - use information about how well pupils, particularly the most able, are achieving so they make work consistently challenging for all
  - check that pupils understand and have applied teachers' advice about how to improve their work.
- Strengthen the rigour and increase the frequency of the checks made by subject leaders on the quality of teaching in order to support teachers to improve further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class ready to learn. However, their skills and knowledge, especially in literacy and numeracy, are typically below those expected for their age. Children make good progress and enter Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities that are usually similar to, and often exceed, those expected for their age.
- In both key stages, most pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive. However, teachers do not always challenge the most-able pupils enough. Consequently, although the most able make good progress, they do not yet make the rapid progress necessary to make their achievement outstanding.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is usually ahead of national results in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in writing were impressive in 2013. Attainment has improved since the previous inspection and indicates that pupils are well prepared to move into secondary education.
- Pupils achieve well across the school. All groups make good progress. The school focuses on developing pupils' enjoyment of learning with exciting activities and experiences that fully include everyone. The school speedily integrates those pupils who have joined the school recently at times other than the usual, and they quickly achieve in line with their classmates. This action reflects the way the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any discrimination.
- Pupils supported by additional funding achieve as well as their classmates. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, there was a gap in attainment of about three terms in reading, writing and mathematics between eligible pupils and the standards of their classmates. However, the school has addressed this issue successfully. School records show that the progress of eligible pupils across the school is, currently, at least similar to that of their classmates. The gap in attainment between eligible pupils and their classmates is rapidly closing with most year groups recording, at least, a halving of the gap this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. These pupils achieve well because of the well-planned support they receive.
- The 2014 results of the Year 1 check on pupils' understanding of phonics (the sounds letters make) were greatly improved from those of 2013. The improvement followed successful training for staff, carried out by the subject leader for English. Pupils' ability to read with confidence reflects this success. The school encourages pupils to read widely across a range of literature and to demonstrate a clear understanding of what they have read.
- Almost all parents and carers who completed the online survey or who had discussions with the inspectors said that their children made good progress.
- More pupils are taking part in the wide range of sporting opportunities available to them. The primary sports funding is helping support pupils to access sport, both in and after school. This is leading to more pupils developing their sporting skills to a higher standard and gaining in fitness and personal well-being.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics, and some aspects are outstanding. Pupils in most classes benefit from the challenging learning provided. For example, following a recent visit to a local site of special scientific interest, pupils were challenged to evaluate the growth of plants that grew in soils of different acidities. Similarly, in Year 6 the teacher used the poem, *The Highwayman*, to help pupils identify linguistic techniques to use in their writing about different characters.
- Teachers foster very positive relationships with their classes, and pupils are eager to learn. Pupils respond well when answering questions. They learn well in all situations. Pupils told inspectors that they thoroughly enjoyed their lessons and have respect and affection for their teachers.
- Teaching is not outstanding because there are still some variations in quality. Occasionally, teachers do not always assess how well pupils have understood the learning provided and work is not made challenging enough for all pupils – particularly the most able. However, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books show that, over time, teaching has been securely good in enabling them to achieve well.
- There is particularly effective teaching in some subjects. For example, in music, Year 6 pupils demonstrated their skills when they joined with other Year 6 pupils from the cluster of local schools to produce a concert of songs. Similarly, pupils in the mixed-age Years 2 and 3 class learnt a song that supported their learning of calculation skills and they demonstrated their achievements in applying their skills to solving mathematical problems. Free lessons in how to play the recorder are available, encouraging all pupils to learn an instrument.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils supported by additional funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school provides extra support for some of these pupils, depending on their learning needs. This support is helping to improve their skills in English and mathematics.
- There is a strong focus on teaching pupils to read and on reading for enjoyment. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. Consequently, reading has improved considerably.
- In the Reception class, teaching ensures that children experience a wide range of stimulating activities. These are planned well to make good use of both the inside and outside spaces. This teaching helps pupils to develop their skills and abilities quickly.
- Pupils say that they know how well they are learning and understand what they have to do in order to achieve well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give pupils feedback on how to improve it. However, not all teachers follow up the guidance they give to pupils to check if pupils have responded by making the improvements requested. Teachers' failing to check whether pupils' have acted on advice restricts some pupils from making even better progress.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the quality of teaching at the school. Almost all who expressed a view think that their children are taught well and make good progress.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. In lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to participate in all subjects. They cooperate extremely well with adults and with each

other. They are polite, friendly and very considerate.

- Pupils are well motivated, attend regularly, settle to work quickly and enjoy coming to school. They arrive at lessons promptly, ready to learn, organise the equipment they need quickly and quietly, and engage with their work. They are keen to take part in all activities on offer and are very proud of their school.
- Around the school, pupils are extremely well behaved. This is due to the strong focus the school places on helping pupils recognise how to behave appropriately from a young age. Pupils quickly develop good social skills through their playing and learning. The atmosphere in the playground is happy and welcoming.
- The school has little need to use the behaviour policy, as incidents of poor behaviour are very few. However, behaviour is not yet outstanding because of occasional lapses in concentration in lessons by a few pupils when they fidget and waste time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure the building is secure and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. Pupils are positive about what the school does to keep them safe. This is a view shared by all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is rare, a view confirmed by school records. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They understand what they need to do if they encounter bullying, and say that teachers deal with any problems that they may have.
- Pupils are proud of their popular school and value every opportunity it offers them. Pupils talk responsibly about their involvement in the school, such as being a member of the school council, or their work in play areas to look after younger children.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The key strength of the leadership and management is the way in which all members of staff and governors share the same clear vision for the school's improvement. This shared sense of purpose helps them to operate as an effective team. The headteacher has strong commitment to ensure the school provides an effective education which aims to develop all pupils into responsible, young citizens. Staff, pupils and parents and carers all acknowledge the school's positive climate for learning.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders use information from the scrutiny of pupils' work, information on pupils' progress and lesson observations to check on teachers' targets and performance. However, subject leaders do not check teaching frequently enough, and their observations are not always rigorous in pointing out to teachers how practice could be improved. This limits teachers' opportunities to improve their professional skills. Nevertheless, teachers' salary progression is linked to improvements in pupils' achievement.
- The school recognises that teaching is not consistently outstanding to ensure that pupils' achievement is even better. The school evaluates its own performance well. Plans for the future involve suitable actions to tackle identified weaknesses in teaching and achievement.
- Leaders check pupils' progress regularly with teachers to ensure any underperformance is identified quickly. Leaders make good use of this information and take appropriate action to

ensure pupils receive the support that they need in order to make good progress. The school makes sure that the support for those pupils eligible to additional funding is effective and is raising their achievement.

- The range of pupils' learning opportunities across subjects are varied and memorable, and ensure pupils are interested to learn. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities, including visits to the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham and residential visits to Hathersage for pupils in Years 5 and 6. These complement the work done in school and contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is making good use of the primary sports funding by increasing the range of sporting experiences available to pupils. This includes gymnastics for all pupils, and dance. This additional provision has resulted in increased participation, and is extending pupils' skills in sport and promoting healthier lifestyles for all. Staff are developing their skills alongside the visiting sports specialists so that activities can be sustained in the future.
- The school works collaboratively with the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance to provide training for subject leaders, currently focusing on assessment systems for the new curriculum to be introduced in September 2014. The governors confirm that this work has benefited leaders and helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and recognise how well it is led and managed.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided recent helpful support to the school and is monitoring provision and pupils' progress. The local authority's assessments indicate that it expects the school to meet its challenging targets for this year.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school and have ensured that it has been successful since the previous inspection. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas where it should improve. Governors visit the school regularly and meet staff and pupils to check on how well pupils are being taught. They know what the quality of teaching is and the close link between teachers' targets for improvement and subsequent increases in pay. Governors are aware that the checks on the quality of teaching are not as rigorous as they might be, and are challenging the headteacher to improve this. Governors know how well the school performs when compared with other schools nationally. They recognise the value of the training they undertake to hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Many governors have professional expertise that they bring to their role and use well to support the school. Consequently, governors exercise, for example, effective control of finance. Governors challenge the school by checking on the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and that for sports, to ensure a positive impact on improving pupils' lives and achievement.

## 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>	122644
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431229

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Higgins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Lymn-Brewin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9149751
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
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