

# Rectory Farm Primary School

Olden Road, Rectory Farm, Northampton, NN3 5DD

**Inspection dates** 13–14 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Improvements in leadership and management are too recent to have had a full impact on school performance.
- Although teaching has improved, progress is not consistently good because of remaining variations in the quality of teaching.
- The work that teachers set in some lessons is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities. The most-able pupils are not always given work that is hard enough.
- Standards in English and mathematics are not rising fast enough because of ongoing weaknesses in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils do not always respond to the advice given through the marking of their work and so do not learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. A few pupils do not concentrate well enough on their learning and slow the learning of others. Not all teachers fully implement the school's behaviour policy.
- Not all adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage make the most of opportunities to develop children's language skills.
- The school website does not provide parents and carers with the required information.

### The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher, with strong support from governors and senior leaders, is tackling inconsistencies and improving the quality of teaching.
- The governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school.
- The school provides a secure environment in which pupils feel safe.
- Pupils enjoyment of school is enhanced by a good range of after school clubs and sporting activities.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors observed the breakfast club and one assembly, and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the interim headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- The inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be made available to inspectors.
- Inspectors met with some parents at the start of the school day and during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Phillips

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rectory Farm is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start school in the Reception Year and attend full-time.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. About four pupils in every ten are from other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Just over one-fifth of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is above average.
- Around a half of the pupils are supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in care). This is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at around one-third, is well above that found in most schools. A small number of pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2014 and three new teachers joined the staff at the same time. The deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2015.
- The Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in July 2014. The governing body was reconstituted at the same time.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

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

- Make teaching consistently good and better by making sure that:
  - expectations of the progress that all groups of pupils can make in lessons are raised and that work is well matched to pupils' ability levels
  - pupils capable of reaching higher levels are given tasks that makes them think and work hard
  - through the more effective use of questioning, teachers check the progress pupils are making in lessons and move them on to more demanding work as soon as they are ready to tackle it
  - teachers ensure that pupils respond to the advice given through the marking of their work
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics by ensuring that there is consistent attention to the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills in all years and in all subjects.
- Enhance language development in the Early Years Foundation Stage by making sure that adults make the most of the opportunities that arise to develop children's language skills.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
  - all school policies and plans are being implemented consistently, particularly the school behaviour policy
  - the school website is up-to-date and provides all of the required information.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the action taken to improve the school's performance is too recent for the impact to be seen in pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum has not placed sufficient emphasis on the progressive development of basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, weaknesses in these aspects affect standards across the school and preparation for the next stage of education requires improvement. The school is about to introduce a new curriculum which will place greater emphasis on the development of basic skills and combine learning in more than one subject in more interesting and meaningful ways for pupils.
- Aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well through, for example, art, music and the belief in mutual respect and tolerance the school strongly upholds. However, a small minority of pupils have difficulty in accepting clearly defined boundaries of what is right or wrong behaviour. As a result, this aspect of pupils' development requires improvement.
- Links with parents have been strengthened and parents are encouraged to play a greater role in their children's education. Regular newsletters have helped to keep parents aware of what is happening in school. However, the school's website is not up-to-date with the required information for parents.
- The interim headteacher is providing strong leadership. Senior leadership has been strengthened and firm action has been taken to eradicate inadequate teaching, raise standards and improve behaviour. Staff have been given clear guidance on what is expected from their performance. Although inconsistencies remain, there is more good teaching, pupils are making better progress and behaviour has improved. This demonstrates that the school has the capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have created a positive atmosphere in the school. With good support from the local authority, the introduction of new teachers has been successful and staffing is now more stable. There is a shared sense of purpose and parents spoken to during the inspection expressed confidence in the direction the school is now taking.
- School improvement plans are based on accurate evaluations of teaching and pupils' progress, and identify the correct areas for improvement. Information from checks on teaching are helping to develop teachers' skills and promote more good teaching. Teachers' performance is linked to their pay and targets are set in line with the national '*Teachers' Standards*' and priority areas of the school. Teachers and support staff confirm that they are well supported through training to improve their skills and achieve their targets.
- Extensive work has been done to ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments and measures of pupils' progress. These assessments are used well to identify weaknesses and to check the effectiveness of any support provided for pupils who need extra help. Following the removal of National Curriculum levels, the school is collaborating with other local schools to implement a common approach to assessment.
- Most subject and other leaders, including the literacy and numeracy coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, joined the school in the present school year. They have checked the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility and are implementing well-constructed action plans to tackle weaknesses and support the drive for improvement.
- The curriculum places sufficient emphasis on helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. They are taught about the importance of respecting people from different faiths and cultures. Aspects of topic work help pupils to appreciate the influence of famous Britons on British heritage and through elections, for example to the pupil forum, develop an understanding of representative democracy.

- The school is in the process of carrying out an audit of the quality of the support programmes provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is to ensure that all are provided with the support needed for these pupils to make the best possible progress from their starting points and demonstrates a determination to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate any obstacles to learning and discrimination.
- The substantial additional funding the school receives through the pupil premium is used to provide additional staffing and resources to meet the needs of pupils for whom this funding is intended. The most recent test and assessment information shows that the use of this funding has led to a narrowing of the attainment gap between these and other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sport funding to enhance teachers' skills and to extend the range of after-school clubs and competitive sports. As a result, pupils' participation in sporting activities has increased as has their understanding of the importance of physical activity to health and well-being.
- The local authority has provided the school with very good support in tackling the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. This support has been particularly helpful in strengthening school leadership and governance, and improving the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- With support from the local authority and the guidance of a very effective Chair of the Governing Body, the work of governors has been made more effective. All sub-committees have clear terms of reference and more effective use is being made of governors' expertise. Governors are more directly involved in monitoring the school's performance and collecting independent evidence. Although in an early stage of development, governors are now better informed to challenge senior leaders about their effectiveness and the rate of improvement.
- Governors fully understand how pupils' attainment and progress compare with performance in other schools and check the use of pupil premium spending and its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They set and review the interim headteacher's targets for improving the school. Governors have worked closely with the interim headteacher to put in place a robust system for managing the performance of staff. They draw on information from checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress by school leaders and the local authority to guide decisions relating to teachers' pay.
- Governors have carried out detailed reviews of key policies in relation to the safety and safeguarding of pupils. As a result, the school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet requirements.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils**

**requires improvement**

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are not consistently good. In a few lessons, behaviour deteriorates because a small minority of pupils lose interest and chat to their classmates rather than getting on with their work. This is most likely to happen when the work set for them is not stimulating or engaging.
- Much has been done to improve pupils' behaviour. Parents spoken to during the inspection said that behaviour has improved and commented favourably on the procedures that have been put in place to support good behaviour. As a result, incidents of misbehaviour are far less frequent and very few pupils have been excluded from school this academic year.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on jobs and responsibilities within the school, for example, as members of the pupil forum or as school prefects. Those spoken to during the inspection could not think of any way in which the school could be improved.
- Attendance is average and the overwhelming majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

## **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because they are well cared for by adults. This view was shared by parents spoken to by inspectors.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying, including physical bullying and persistent name-calling. Those spoken to by the inspectors said that there have been incidents of bullying, but were not aware of any current concerns. Pupils are confident that they could approach an adult if they had any concerns.
- Good arrangements are in place to support children whose needs are sometimes complex and make them potentially vulnerable. These include the targeted use of specialist support and close links with external agencies. Parents appreciate the good quality of care that the school provides.
- Pupils display a reasonable understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Displays and lessons on e-safety have ensured that pupils are particularly aware of the risks posed when using the internet. Pupils are clear about what they would do if they found something untoward on computers.
- Pupils are well-looked after in the breakfast club. This makes a positive contribution to the good quality of pupils' care and support.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Because of previous weaknesses in teaching, pupils generally made the progress expected of them, but too few made the more rapid progress necessary to raise standards. Although teaching has improved, and there is much good practice, its quality across Key Stages 1 and 2 is still too variable.
- Where teaching requires improvement, the same work tends to be given to all pupils without regard for different ability levels. As a result, pupils do not always work at the right level to secure faster rates of progress, particularly pupils capable of reaching higher levels.
- In a few instances, teachers do not closely check the progress pupils are making in lessons. The use of questioning is not always sharp enough to check pupils' understanding and identify the points at which learning can be moved on more quickly.
- There is inconsistency in teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour during lessons. Occasionally, teachers do not insist that they have the full attention of every member of the class when they are explaining or reviewing learning with the whole class.
- A new policy has been introduced to improve the marking of pupils' work. This is having a positive effect and there are many examples of good quality marking which provides pupils with advice on how the work can be improved. However, pupils' books show that they do not always respond to the advice given and so do not learn from their mistakes.
- The school is in the process of introducing a new scheme for the teaching of phonics. All teachers and teaching assistants have been trained in the scheme so that there is a more consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics than in previous years.
- The most effective learning occurs when teachers' expectations are high and tasks are carefully planned to challenge pupils of different abilities. An example was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Here, good progress was made in the manipulation of fractions and decimals because rapid progress was made in understanding equivalent decimals and fractions. This was because the teacher constantly asked pupils to explain the reasoning that led to their answers and checked that all understood before moving on. In this lesson, very effective use was made of the teaching assistant to drive the learning of the most able pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is used to enhance teaching support and resources for pupils for whom the funding is intended. This helps to make sure that disadvantaged pupils' progress is at least comparable to that of

others in English and mathematics.

- The support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, either individually or in small groups, is generally suitably matched to their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that appropriate work is provided for these pupils, including the few with education, health and care plans.
- Teachers and teaching assistants take care to ensure that the needs of pupils with English as an additional language are met, particularly those in the early stages of learning English. Intensive discussion helps pupils to organise their work with the help of additional support. They are competent in spoken English by the time they leave the school.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Because of unevenness in the quality of teaching and high rates of teacher turnover, pupils' progress across the school has been inconsistent since the last inspection. As a result, standards are not as high as they should be and achievement requires improvement.
- In the 2014 national tests and assessments, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved to be close to average. However, while the proportions of pupils who made expected progress during Key Stage 2 were close to the national figure, the proportions making better-than-expected progress were below, particularly in writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils made the good progress needed to tackle the legacy of previous underachievement. This was the case for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language.
- School assessment information and reviews of pupils' work show that ongoing weaknesses in basic skills are slowing the raising of standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, preparation for the next stage of education requires improvement.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2014, standards in reading improved to average. Standards in mathematics, although below average, also showed improvement. However, standards in writing were below average, as they have been for the previous two years.
- Inconsistency in teaching is slowing the raising of standards. For example, because of good phonics teaching, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check in 2014 improved to match the required standard. However, a similar improvement is not seen in the current Year 1.
- Although improving from 2013, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was not as high as that seen nationally. The most-able pupils in Year 6 receive appropriately challenging work, particularly in mathematics. However, this is not a consistent picture across the school. As a result, some work is not hard enough to make sure that the most-able pupils are working at the levels of which they are capable.
- There has been an improvement in the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the Year 6 tests. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were around three terms behind others nationally in mathematics and grammar, two terms in writing and a term in reading. These gaps were narrower than they had been in 2013.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school was similar to the gap nationally in mathematics, writing and grammar, but they were about a term ahead of their peers in reading. There has been a further narrowing of these gaps. Currently, disadvantaged pupils are close to their classmates in reading and writing, and just ahead in mathematics. However, these improvements largely reflect cohort differences, rather than accelerated progress for these pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is comparable to that of their peers. They make good progress in some lessons but slower progress in others. As a result, they generally make the progress expected from their different starting points.

- The additional funding for sport is being used effectively to increase pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and their participation in a wide range of physical activities.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- The early years provision requires improvement because recent improvements are not yet fully embedded and the impact seen in children's academic and personal development. They have not obtained all the skills required for moving to Key Stage 1. However, the quality of provision in Reception is improving as a result of the action being taken by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to tackle weaknesses that existed at the time she took up her post.
- Children start in Reception with a wide range of skills and very few have those typically seen for their age. While both indoor and outdoor activities are carefully planned to promote children's development across all areas of learning, there is a strong emphasis on communication and language. These are areas of particular weakness. This is particularly helpful to those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. However, there are instances where adults do not take enough advantage of the opportunities that arise to develop children's basic language skills through, for example, questioning about the things they are doing.
- Strengthened links with parents and carers have helped to ensure that children are well known to adults. Children have settled quickly and feel safe and secure because they receive good care and support from adults. Because expectations of behaviour are clear and consistent, children have quickly learned to accept the established routines. This is laying a sound foundation for future good behaviour.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are provided with sensitive support that enables them take part in all activities.
- There are effective procedures for keeping children safe and regular checks are undertaken to make sure that equipment is safe.



## 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>	121940
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	453561

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ben Wesson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqui Grace (Interim Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 411820
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