

Hawthorn Tree School

Toot Lane, Boston, PE21 0PT

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teachers do not always present work at the level that will challenge all pupils, especially the most able, to help them to achieve their best.
- Pupils do not consistently make good progress or achieve well over time in writing and mathematics. Teachers of younger pupils do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers' marking is not sufficiently detailed or precise to accelerate pupils' progress in a range of subjects.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is not closing fast enough.
- Leaders, including governors, do not check carefully that funding, such as the pupil premium and the primary sports funding, is used effectively.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not identify precisely what needs to be done or show how success will be measured.
- Leaders do not check carefully the achievement of all groups of pupils. Consequently, their views on how well the school is performing are too optimistic.
- Not all subject leaders have a good enough grasp of the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- The school website is not regularly updated and does not include all information required by law.
- Although the school has improved since the previous inspection, significant changes in staffing have meant that recent innovations are not yet embedded or fully effective.

The school has the following strengths

- Children achieve well in the early years because teaching is consistently good.
- The performance of Year 1 pupils in the national phonics (letters and sounds) screening check was well above average in 2014.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English make good progress in their speaking skills.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behaviour is good.
- Pupils from a range of different backgrounds and ethnicities show respect and tolerance towards each other and towards adults. Pupils are kept safe in school.
- School leaders have been successful in improving some aspects of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms, two of them with the headteacher and two with the deputy headteacher. Pupils’ work was scrutinised in all year groups and inspectors spoke with pupils about their work, their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety. Inspectors heard pupils read and spoke to older pupils about their reading habits.
- Meetings were held with leaders and managers, four representatives of the governing body and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. The questionnaires completed by 25 members of staff were analysed. Inspectors spoke with many pupils, in groups, in lessons, and around the school.
- The inspectors checked the 47 responses on Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day, and took account of two letters written by parents to the lead inspector. The results of the school’s own questionnaire to parents were also considered.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s development and action plans, policies, records relating to the support provided by the school to individual pupils, records relating to the pupils’ behaviour, the school’s information on the pupils’ achievement and attendance, safeguarding, and records of the meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Ward	Additional Inspector
Peter Strauss	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school has grown in size since the last inspection, increasing from 302 to 335 pupils. It is a larger than average-sized primary school and most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (16%) is average. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- At 18%, the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The proportions of pupils who come from a minority ethnic groups, and those whose first language is not English, are above average.
- Early years provision is full time in the two Reception classes.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant staffing changes over the last two years, and since September 2014 seven new teachers have joined the school. This includes four newly-qualified teachers. A new special educational needs coordinator started at the school in January 2015. The deputy headteacher, since January 2015, no longer has a class responsibility.
- The school works in close partnership with nine other local primary schools. Its focus is on the development of high quality professional development opportunities and effective monitoring and evaluation activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and thereby accelerate pupils' achievement by ensuring:
 - teachers of younger pupils have higher expectations of the level of skills pupils should aim for, especially in writing and mathematics
 - the most-able pupils are given more challenging work during all parts of lessons
 - the needs of disadvantaged pupils are identified more quickly and better support provided, so that they catch up with the other pupils
 - teachers' marking is sufficiently detailed in all subjects to show pupils exactly how to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - school improvement plans contain clear actions and measures so leaders and governors can regularly check that changes are fully embedded and are having the impact intended
 - leaders' evaluation of the school is more rigorous and better related to evidence of pupils' achievement
 - all subject leaders have a secure overview of provision in their areas of responsibility so they are able to influence pupils' learning
 - governors and leaders check that the additional funding for primary sport and for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to accelerate eligible pupils' progress and thereby raise their level of attainment
 - there is better communication with parents and the school's website is brought up to date and meets statutory requirements.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have taken appropriate action to improve standards in the early years and to improve pupils' grasp of phonics (letters and sounds). However, they have not ensured that teaching and learning are consistently good across the rest of the school, or that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The school improvement plan identifies the key priorities needed to improve teaching and achievement. However, the plan does not state clearly the actions to be completed and how success will be checked. For example, it is not clear by how much the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others is to narrow.
- Self-evaluation by leaders is overly generous as it does not take enough account of the achievement of all groups of pupils. Leaders do not evaluate the impact of their actions, for example, the use of pupil premium funding, well enough. In addition, there is no clear indication of what changes have been made to the support plans for the current year to improve achievement of eligible pupils. The school website does not make this information available for parents.
- The subject leaders responsible for English and mathematics are enthusiastic about their work. They are increasingly involved in scrutinising the quality of work in pupils' books and reporting on this. However, their work to improve the quality of teaching and to check and report on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, is not fully developed. Subject leaders, for example in mathematics, do not have a secure overview of provision and progress in learning in all year groups.
- Performance management is used to hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils. Targets are clear, linked directly to the standards set out nationally for judging the quality of teaching and to the progress pupils should make across the year. These targets are reviewed during regular meetings. As yet, performance management has not ensured that all teaching is good or better.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity requires improvement. This is because, although the school tackles discrimination well, the achievement of different groups of pupils is not adequately checked or promoted.
- As yet the curriculum does not ensure pupils consistently make good progress. For example, while pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, the most-able pupils are not consistently given work that deepens their understanding.
- Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through a range of activities throughout the wide and varied curriculum. The school actively fosters kindness and tolerance towards one another. Leaders have ensured that behaviour is good and that pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. There are no recorded racist incidents.
- Exactly how the sports funding grant is used is unclear. Pupils have extensive opportunities to take part in sporting activities, competitions and sports clubs. All of this information is available on the school website and was shared with the inspection team. However, no specific information was made available during the inspection regarding the actual use of the funding grant to show how it has improved pupils' performance.
- The early years leader is effective in making sure that children make good progress in the Reception classes.
- Despite many staffing changes over the last two years, staff questionnaires indicate that staff are proud of the school and staff morale is high.
- The local authority has supported school leaders effectively in a variety of ways, for example by analysing assessment information, visiting to the school and meeting with staff and governors. The latest report from the local authority identifies the need to improve the achievement of those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium funding, and the most-able.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body knows the strengths and areas requiring improvement. They visit the school regularly to check on its work for themselves. Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that staff performance is focused upon improving pupils' achievement. They ensure that good teaching is rewarded and that underperformance is tackled.
- Governors know how to interpret assessment information and understand how the school's performance data on attainment and progress compare with those of schools nationally. Governors question leaders closely to check that any areas in need of improvement are tackled. They receive information about pupils' progress regularly from the headteacher. However, this has not included specific information about the use and impact of the pupil premium funding or sports funding. They know that this information is needed in order for them to evaluate how well funding is used.
- Governors regularly attend training, such as on safer recruitment, safeguarding and preparation for inspection. Although safeguarding meets statutory requirements, the school website does not provide a useful resource for parents as it is missing some of the documents required by law. Governors have worked closely with senior leaders to manage the significant expansion to the numbers of pupils on the school's roll.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enthusiastically tell visitors about what they like about school. They say disagreements are sorted quickly, and staff are quick to resolve differences and difficulties when they sometimes occur. Pupils greet visitors politely, and it comes as 'second nature' to them to hold doors open and offer assistance.
- In lessons, pupils show respect for their teachers and each other and most take pride in presenting their work well. Except where the lesson is not challenging enough, pupils are attentive and eager to learn and ready to answer the teachers' questions enthusiastically. They show good respect and consideration when other pupils are answering questions.
- Around school and in lessons, pupils say relationships between pupils are good, but also say that at times, both in and out of class, a few pupils misbehave. The school behaviour logs record numerous incidents of very low level behaviour concerns and over the last year there have been ten fixed-term exclusions. However, the staff are being especially vigilant in their recording of incidents and in their insistence that only the very best behaviour is acceptable.
- Pupils are well aware of the importance of good attendance and being punctual to school. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils enthusiastically take on responsibilities such as running the school council or reminding younger pupils of the need to walk sensibly along corridors.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. A clear strength is the way that pupils feel happy and settled. This starts in the Reception classes where children confidently speak to new people, knowing they are in a safe environment. The building is a secure place and there are good levels of adult supervision at play and at lunchtimes. Pupils report that the school deals quickly with any worries or accidents. Parents generally agree that their children are cared for well and are happy at school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and, although there are times when they fall out with each other, that bullying is rare. Pupils can explain the different forms of bullying. They are confident that should any instances of bullying occur, they know who they would speak to and it would be dealt with quickly. Despite this confidence, a number of parents felt bullying was not dealt with well, although inspectors could find no evidence to support this view.
- The benefits and pitfalls of using computers and the internet are clear to pupils. They know that they must be careful not to share personal details, or engage in any conversations online, with anyone they do not know.

- There are effective procedures in place to check on the suitability of staff. Policies to ensure the safety of pupils are regularly reviewed, with risk assessments carried out as required, for example, for school trips.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, it is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make good and sustained progress in all subjects, especially in writing and mathematics. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils and for those who are supported by the pupil premium. Occasionally, work is too easy for the most-able pupils, especially at the start and end of lessons.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do are not always high enough. In some classes of younger pupils, the worksheets that are provided too often give only limited challenge. Marking merely takes the form of 'ticks and crosses', with very few development points identified.
- In mathematics, the work set for pupils, especially the most-able, is not always challenging enough, nor does it sufficiently require them to develop their reasoning skills. For example, in Year 3 the most-able pupils wasted time rehearsing the three times table which they already confidently knew. In Year 2, pupils who were secure in understanding the value of thousands were involved in activities involving only hundreds, tens and units.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement overall, even though some aspects are good. There is good evidence throughout the school of pupils having lots of opportunities to write in a range of subjects. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where the teacher ensures pupils acquire accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. In this year group the most able are challenged well. However, this positive picture is not consistently reproduced across the school. For example in a Year 4 and 5 class, the most-able pupils spent time writing sentences using a list of words given to them. This work was completed too easily. It did not help to improve pupils' writing skills or further develop their vocabulary.
- The range of approaches used to support pupils eligible for additional funding are not closing gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils quickly enough. While the additional support promotes their personal and social development, including their well-being, it does not bring about consistently good progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and use praise to encourage. However, marking does not always provide pupils with enough information on what they need to do to improve. When comments tell pupils what they need to do, teachers do not always ensure that advice is followed up by pupils. This means that pupils' learning is not taken further forward. Marking is more helpful and detailed in writing than in other subjects.
- Well-organised and effective teaching of phonics in the early years and Years 1 and 2 is helping secure improvements in pupils' reading skills and the standard of reading is rapidly improving in these year groups. Reading is taught effectively. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to read, both for pleasure and to find information about the topics they study.
- There is a good atmosphere for learning and all lessons are characterised by good relationships. Classrooms are well resourced and attractive. The development of displays as a source of information and instruction are guiding pupils successfully as they learn, including in the early years.
- Teaching assistants are used to boost the learning of all abilities and provide specialist interventions. This ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least the progress expected of them. Those pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English receive good support, initially in their home language and are quickly introduced to key English words and phrases.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- National test results and assessments for Year 6 pupils in 2014 showed attainment was broadly average in mathematics, reading, and the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test but below average in

writing. Progress was good in reading, but fewer pupils than the national average made expected or better than expected progress in writing and mathematics.

- The achievement of the most-able pupils is mixed. The proportion of Year 2 pupils in 2014 reaching Level 3 was average in reading and mathematics and well-above average in writing. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or better was average in reading, mathematics and the grammar, punctuation and spelling test. In writing it was well below average. The work in pupils' books shows that the most-able pupils are not given good opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and ideas fully over a sustained period of time, which is why their achievement requires improvement. On occasion, they mark time in lessons, repeating work that they can already do, particularly in mathematics.
- Across the school, gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to others in the school and nationally are not closing quickly enough. In Year 6 in 2014, they were two terms behind in mathematics and two and a half terms in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test. There was no significant difference in reading and writing. In comparison with all other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were three and a half terms behind in mathematics, one term in reading, three terms in writing and two terms in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This shows improvement in reading since 2013, but not in the other subjects.
- In Year 2, there was a marked gap in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. In other year groups, assessments show that in most classes, disadvantaged pupils are working at levels below their age in all three subjects.
- The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that most pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, are reaching an appropriate standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there is evidence of higher attainment and challenge for the most-able pupils, this is not consistent in all year groups.
- The progress made by disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, is similar to that of their classmates. Pupils who have specifically targeted support for their learning needs make better progress than others.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra help they receive and the strategies used across the school to help them extend their vocabulary and develop their confidence in speaking.
- Standards in phonics have improved since the previous inspection. In 2014, 86% of pupils attained the expected level in the Year 1 national phonics check which is well above average. Younger pupils are able to confidently use their phonic skills to read unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils say they enjoy reading and speak enthusiastically about a range of different authors.

The early years provision

is good

- The leadership and management of early years are good. There are good relationships between staff and children. Parents say staff are very approachable and supportive. Indoor and outdoor environments are attractive and support children's learning well.
- Children joining Reception quickly settle into routines and behave well. They start school in the early years with skills and knowledge which are mainly typical for their age but with weaknesses in their communication, language and literacy skills. They gain ground rapidly in all areas of their learning as a result of good teaching, and children are well prepared to start a more formal curriculum in Year 1.
- Children learn well as a result of the consistently good teaching within a caring environment. Children are assessed carefully when they start school to help staff plan activities to meet their individual needs and abilities. By the end of Reception, an above average proportion of them have reached a good level of development and are well prepared for the transition to Year 1.

- In the early years, good teaching provides children with exciting activities that stimulate them so that they are actively engaged in their learning and make good progress. For example, children using torches excitedly explored the effect of light in a dark 'cave.' The outdoor area, where children have use of a wide range of equipment, is used well to support and extend their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to meet the needs of individuals. The progress children make is recorded in individual 'learning journeys'; these are illustrated with photographs and commentaries and build up a clear picture of children's achievements.
- Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics well, which helps children at the early stages of reading. Children enjoy identifying new sounds in familiar everyday words, including the names of children in the class.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and the procedures in place ensure children are safe at all times, whether using the indoor or outside spaces.

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	120424
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	453603

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Griffiths
Headteacher	Martin Lister
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2013
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Fax number	01205 355037
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