

Stonebow Primary School

Loughborough

Stonebow Close, Loughborough, LE11 4ZH

Inspection dates

10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' achievement has fallen since the school converted to become an academy in February 2013. Pupils, including those who benefit from additional funding, do not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding were further behind their classmates in 2014 than in the previous year.
- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough. Teachers' explanations do not always help pupils to understand fully what they have to do, especially in writing.
- The school's assessments of the standards pupils reach are not sufficiently accurate.
- Marking does not always help pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- The leadership and management of the early years do not ensure that children are taught well enough. Consequently, children do not get off to a good start in their communication and numeracy skills.
- Use of the outdoor environment in the early years does not consistently promote good progress.
- School leaders do not ensure that their planning and actions focus on improving pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Governors have yet to address fully inconsistencies in pupils' achievement to ensure the school's performance is strong.
- Behaviour is not consistently good. Some pupils do not settle to their work and this distracts others from their learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not sufficiently strong and this hinders their progress in lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1, where teaching is consistently strong.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The school nurtures pupils and ensures that all feel safe. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders have identified key aspects to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils' achievement is starting to improve.
- The range of subjects, together with visits and after-school clubs, enrich pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 teachers and visited 23 lessons or part lessons. Teaching and learning in three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, other leaders, pupils and governors.
- The inspectors observed pupils' work, looked at their exercise books, listened to them read and observed them in two assemblies.
- A range of documentation was examined, including: the school's analysis of how well it is doing; information on pupils' progress; documents related to safeguarding; and key reports and policies. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also reviewed.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's system to check on teachers' performance.
- The inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 50 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 17 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elaine Hamilton	Additional Inspector
Dennis Brittain	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stonebow Primary school converted to become an academy school in February 2013. When its predecessor school, Stonebow Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in Reception, where children all attend on a full-time basis. There are two classes in each of Years 1 and 2; there are three mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4, and three mixed-age classes in Years 5 and 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Many more pupils than seen nationally join partway through their primary school education.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes of staff since the school converted to become an academy. In May 2014, the governors appointed a new headteacher. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2015. Also in January 2015, the governors appointed two coordinators for mathematics, one resuming responsibility in Key Stage 1, the other taking responsibility in Key Stage 2. The governors also appointed a pupil premium coordinator in January 2015.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on the school site. They are not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - identifying and sharing the most effective ways for teaching reading and writing across the school so that pupils make the best possible progress in their literacy skills
 - ensuring that staff in the early years intervene effectively, both indoors and outside, to enable children to make the most of all opportunities to learn and swiftly improve their communication and numeracy skills
 - making sure that teachers' written guidance in their marking makes clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Strengthen leaders' roles in checking the school's performance so that actions have a greater impact on pupils' achievement by:
 - sharpening targets in the school's plans for improvement so that actions can be checked for their impact on pupils' achievement
 - having a stronger focus on how well teachers promote pupils' progress when checking on teaching across the school
 - ensuring that the monitoring of pupils' progress is accurate
 - making sure that pupils supported through the pupil premium catch up with the attainment of their classmates
 - strengthening the role of governors so they are more effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

An external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, since converting to become an academy, leaders' actions to maintain the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour, have not been effective. As a result, the school's performance is not strong enough.
- Leaders have identified what needs to be done to improve the school. However, school plans do not show how and when school actions will bring improvement in pupils' progress in key subjects. As a result, actions of school leaders do not focus effectively on improving the progress made by pupils as they move through the school.
- The school's assessment of pupils' attainment has been too generous. This has led to an inaccurate view of pupils' progress. Some parents identify the quality of information about pupils' progress as a concern to them.
- Teaching is not consistently good, even though senior leaders are tackling some weaker teaching. Checks on the quality of teaching do not focus enough on how pupils' progress is being promoted. As a result, there are weaknesses in pupils' achievement, especially in reading and writing.
- Subject leaders' efforts to improve the quality of provision in their subjects do not have a consistent impact and pupils' progress is variable. Pupils' progress is stronger in mathematics but improvement is needed in pupils' reading and writing, particularly in the accuracy of spelling.
- Gaps in attainment are not closing quickly enough for pupils eligible for additional funding. This is because the range of approaches introduced does not have a consistently strong impact on their progress. Recently, the governors appointed a pupil premium coordinator to lead the actions to address closing the gaps between pupils eligible for funding and their classmates.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to share equally in the range of activities the school provides. They make similar progress to their classmates.
- The new senior leaders recognise the need to refocus their priorities. They are aware of the school's declining performance and have identified key aspects for improvement and begun to work to address these.
- There are established routines to review teachers' targets, pay and career progression. Good links with other schools, through the Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership, enable teachers to learn from one another. Staff are further supported within the school through training to improve teachers' skills; for example, in teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar, and in teaching phonics (the links between letters and sounds). The full impact of training to improve teaching and pupils' achievement is not yet apparent.
- This is a school where every pupil is able to take part in all that it provides. Positive relationships are clearly evident and discrimination is not tolerated. The headteacher very successfully promotes the good care, equality of opportunity and well-being of pupils. All staff share these values. Parents are very complimentary about how well the school looks after their child.
- The provision for sport is well developed. The extra primary school physical education and sport funding is enhancing teachers' capacity through the deployment of sports coaches. Pupils' physical well-being is advanced through an extensive range of activities that includes basketball, tennis, dance and competitive sports such as athletics.
- The school is currently reviewing the curriculum with the purpose of engaging and motivating pupils more thoroughly. Subjects are taught so that they help to develop pupils' literacy through topics and themes,

although approaches for teaching writing across the school are less effective. Mathematics is covered as a discrete subject, and taught in ability groups in Years 5 and 6. Pupils say they enjoy opportunities to engage in problem-solving tasks. Pupils are taught Spanish.

- A range of good opportunities serve to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Because of the school's emphasis on its values, pupils have a strong sense of fairness and right and wrong. This serves to reinforce their understanding of being British and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. The school council serves as a forum for pupils to debate and make decisions about how to improve the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. These are effective and include background checks of adults working with pupils and risk assessments covering aspects of school life, such as educational visits.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement because governors have not addressed inconsistencies in pupils' achievement well enough to ensure that the school's performance is strong. They are currently developing an understanding about data on the school's performance. However, their challenge of school's leaders has not been sufficiently robust to secure improvements in key areas; for example, in ensuring that pupil premium funding is used effectively to close the gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and their classmates. In other respects, their management of the school's budget is effective.
- Governors undertake a range of training but this has yet to lead to the school's performance matching that of schools nationally. There are established routines for the management of the headteacher's performance and that of teachers' pay and progression against their targets. Governors know how the performance of teachers is managed. Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and where the headteacher is tackling underperformance.
- Governors are active within school and make visits to subject areas. They also check how pupils' well-being is enhanced through allocation of the primary physical education and sport premium. Governors are overseeing changes in the way checks are made on how well pupils are learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils have positive attitudes but too few display enthusiasm for learning. Some are slow to settle and do not respond quickly enough to their teacher's instructions. These negative attitudes act as a hindrance to the progress pupils make.
- The school's behaviour log shows few incidents of poor behaviour. The very few pupils with poor behaviour are benefiting from carefully planned support. This is helping to promote acceptable behaviour and is successfully eliminating the need for exclusions.
- Pupils understand the system of sanctions for managing their behaviour and, as a result, their conduct in classrooms and around school is usually acceptable.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and co-operative around the school and in the playground. Relationships are positive because pupils are well known to staff.
- Pupils say that adults take their views seriously. They enjoy the wide range of responsibilities on offer to them, such as 'Little Leaders' to younger children, house captains, school councillors and in fundraising activities.
- The school has taken rigorous steps to promote regular attendance and punctuality. As a result, attendance for the vast majority has improved and is above the national average. Leaders have been successful with the measures they have put in place, and few pupils are persistently absent.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The large majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire agree.
- There are effective procedures in place to check on the suitability of staff who work in the school. Policies to ensure the safety of pupils are regularly reviewed. Risk assessments are carried out as required, such as for school trips. There are good systems in place to control access to the school.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying and the different forms it can take, such as cyber-bullying or racist name-calling. They say that instances of such bullying are very rare. Any occasional unkind behaviour is quickly and effectively sorted out by the adults.
- Pupils have good strategies for keeping themselves safe; for example through street-wise training, cycling proficiency training and regular e-safety training.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not ensure that pupils make fast enough progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils do not always receive helpful feedback on their learning. Written guidance does not always help pupils to understand how to improve their work and move to the next level. Examples of more effective practice have yet to become routine.
- The teaching of writing does not enable pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. As a result, the quality and standard of writing are variable and this hinders pupils' overall achievement.
- The teaching of reading leads to weak progress in Key Stage 2. The school is developing a range of strategies to nurture a love of books. Some pupils do not successfully apply their phonics skills and this affects their ability to read unfamiliar words.
- The range of approaches in place to support pupils eligible for additional funding are not closing gaps between their attainment and other pupils quickly enough. While support promotes the well-being of disadvantaged pupils, it does not bring about consistently strong progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Planning enables teachers and other adults to work effectively together during lessons. Consequently, the learning of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is not hindered and most make progress that is at least comparable to that of other pupils.
- Pupils' progress is stronger and reinforces good learning where teachers use questioning effectively. For example, in one lower Key Stage 2 literacy session, pupils made strong gains in their learning in response to discussion generated by the teacher. As a result, pupils used their punctuation skills to write dialogue about different events and the feelings generated by facial expressions.
- In mathematics, teachers set high expectations to help pupils develop their numeracy knowledge and skills across the school. Teaching techniques are used effectively as a vehicle to encourage resilience and to appropriately challenge and develop good understanding in basic numeracy skills.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make sufficiently strong progress in their reading and writing as they move through the school, and this hinders their overall achievement at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in national tests is not good enough. Weaknesses in spelling led to below-average results in the national tests for spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of Year 6 in 2014.

- From their starting points, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium and other pupils nationally is not closing quickly enough. In mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar the gaps widened in Year 6 in 2014. Compared to their classmates, eligible pupils were nearly four terms behind in reading, over three terms behind in writing and nearly five terms behind in mathematics. Compared with pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils at the school were over four terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment of the most-able pupils is below that of similar pupils nationally. From their starting points, too few are successful at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The performance of pupils in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 was above that found nationally in 2013, although it declined in 2014. The provision for pupils' phonics work has strengthened and school evidence shows pupils are becoming more competent readers.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was average in the 2014 national assessments. Attainment fell in 2013 and so the 2014 results showed improvement since the school converted to become an academy. However, attainment in mathematics and writing is comparatively weaker than in reading.
- 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 because the school meets their particular learning needs well.
- Attainment in current year groups in Key Stage 2 is rising when compared to previous years. This represents improving progress.
- There has been a steady stream of late arrivals to the school since September 2014, with most of them joining classes in Key Stage 2. Also, since January 2015, a number of new pupils have joined the current Year 6, in some cases with skills and abilities below those expected for their ages. This is lowering the school's figures for attainment.
- Pupils' achievement in other subjects, such as art and design, history and geography, is improving. The primary physical education and sport premium has improved teachers' expertise and is helping to raise standards in physical education. Pupils' use of subject vocabulary and skills are particularly well extended in their Spanish language sessions.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children generally start in Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. However, their literacy and personal and social skills are generally the weakest elements.
- In 2013, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was below the national average. It improved to be average in 2014. However, there are weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, and in early calculation skills. This stems from staff in the early years not setting tasks, both indoors and outside, to promote more opportunities to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills. These pupils are catching up in Year 1.
- In Reception, children engage in a variety of activities covering all areas of learning. Leaders have introduced changes that have led to adults now assessing children's skills more frequently and adapting their planning to meet the specific learning needs and interests of all children.
- Adults ensure that children settle into school life quickly. Right from the start, supportive links are established with parents. This has a positive impact on children's personal, social and emotional development. All safeguarding policies and procedures are good and implemented consistently so that children are kept safe.
- The new building's indoor area provides children with an appropriate learning environment. Resources are

easily accessible and stimulate the children's interest. Activities contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as encouraging imagination in the role-play areas. The safe and secure outside area supports most areas of learning. The school has plans to provide more opportunities for children to improve their literacy and numeracy skills outdoors.

- Supportive relationships between adults and children help develop each child's confidence and positive attitude to learning. The children enjoy being together, sharing and taking turns. An increased emphasis is now being given to the development of children's language skills because adults are encouraging them to talk about their learning. Children quickly learn to follow the school's orderly routines and their behaviour is usually good.

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	139287
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	456020

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Seaman
Headteacher	Jane Fines
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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