

St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School

Ecton Brook Road, Ecton Brook, Northampton, NN3 5EN

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement are consistently good.
- Instability in staffing, including at a senior level, has slowed the school's improvement.
- Several subject leaders are new to their roles and have not had sufficient time to guide and support other teachers and secure pupils' good progress.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Sometimes work is too easy, particularly for the most able.
- Occasionally, the activities that teachers provide in lessons do not fully engage and motivate pupils and some lose concentration.
- The quality of teachers' marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers do not ask questions of pupils that make them think deeply or check that all pupils understand what they have been learning.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects so they do not reinforce their skills well enough.
- The teaching of phonics (sounds that letters represent in words) in Reception and Key Stage 1 does not ensure that all pupils are fully involved and learn well.
- Pupils do not make good progress. The standards they attained by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 declined and were below average, particularly in writing.
- Not enough children in the early years provision are making good progress because not all adults talk to and question children purposefully.
- Leaders have not used funds to support disadvantaged pupils effectively, so they do not achieve well. Governors have not checked how the funds are spent or the impact they are having.
- Leaders do not check data on pupils' progress closely, so are slow to identify some who fall behind.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are keen to learn and their good cooperation contributes positively to their learning.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are happy at school and, as a result, attendance is above average. Pupils feel very safe and are safe as a result of the rigorous safeguarding procedures that are applied.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress since the start of the year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school leaders and governors. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own recent survey of parents' views and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to the 31 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school's improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Appleby, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Elaine Hamilton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll is rising. The school changed to two-form entry in 2012.
- A majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest ethnic group are from a Black African background (20%) and the remainder are from several other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision is made for the early years in two Reception classes, which children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club and after-school care.
- There have been several changes of staff during the last year, including the assistant headteacher, leaders of English, mathematics, the early years and the special educational needs coordinator.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils' progress is accelerated by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of, and plan work that challenges, pupils of all abilities, but particularly the most able
 - activities consistently motivate, enthuse and engage pupils so they maintain concentration and work hard throughout the lesson, especially in phonics
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work
 - teachers ask questions of pupils that make them think more deeply and that help them check that all pupils understand what they have been taught
 - pupils have frequent opportunities to apply their literacy and mathematical skills across a range of different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching in early years to increase the proportion of pupils making good progress particularly in speaking and listening skills, and writing by ensuring that adults:
 - take every opportunity to develop and extend pupils speaking and listening skills
 - use questioning more effectively so children have to think harder
 - provide more guidance and opportunities for developing writing skills.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - training and support is provided for subject leaders so they can give better guidance to other teachers to improve their practice
 - leaders analyse data on pupils' progress in more depth in order to identify any pupil at risk of falling behind and take action to ensure they do not underachieve
 - pupil premium funds are used effectively to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally
 - governors pay closer attention to the way that pupil premium funds are spent and the impact that spending decisions have on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

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.

An external review of governance 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

- School leaders have not been able to ensure that all teaching is consistently good enough to secure good progress for all pupils.
- The actions taken in the past two years to improve the quality of teaching and progress of pupils did not result in raised levels of achievement at Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. The actions taken in the current year to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are having a positive effect in improving achievement and teaching but this is still too inconsistent.
- There have been several changes to the teaching and leadership team in the past two years. This has slowed the rate of improvement in English and mathematics. There is now a full complement of senior leaders and a clear leadership structure. The leadership team have created a renewed culture of high expectations for teaching and behaviour which is having an impact on these aspects in the school.
- The new leaders of English and mathematics are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, but have not been given enough training and support about monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on different groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders introduced a new system to record and track pupils' attainment and progress in January 2015. However, leaders do not analyse the results in sufficient detail or meet regularly with staff to discuss each pupils' progress in order to support those who are at risk of falling behind.
- The way that leaders use the pupil premium funds is not closing gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others quickly enough. Leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils by providing more adults to help these pupils in class. It is also used to subsidise school visits so these pupils do not miss out.
- The curriculum is well planned to cover the requirements of all subjects in the national curriculum. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the skills they learn in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' behaviour has improved through the introduction of a new approach. The new procedures for rewards and sanctions are fully understood by all staff and pupils and they are consistently implemented. The pupils have responded very positively to these changes and, consequently, behaviour in lessons and at other times has improved since September.
- The school improvement plan is based on an accurate review of the school's work and identifies the correct areas for improvement. Through classroom observations and checks on pupils' leaders assess teachers' skills and provide appropriate guidance and support. Challenging targets are now being set for teachers, with salary increases linked to pupils' progress.
- The school makes every effort to promote equality of opportunity by including all pupils whatever their need or disability so all can access the learning and extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their understanding of different cultures and religions.
- The pupils benefit greatly from the spiritual, moral, social and cultural ethos and provision given by the school. Assemblies in particular are very successful in promoting pupils' ability to think and reflect on key aspects of the Christian faith. They successfully foster the values of honesty, democracy, respect and tolerance to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports funding is used well to help pupils lead healthier lifestyles and understand the importance of teamwork. There are more opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sport both within lessons, at after school clubs and in activities with other local schools. Specialist coaches have also been used to teach pupils sports skills and provide teachers with training, which has improved the

teaching of physical education.

- Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements.
- The local authority provided limited support for the school until the dip in performance in 2014. The local authority has increased support for the school since September. This recent involvement is helping the school leadership with assessment and training, so improving the quality of teaching and governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the recent past, the governing body was not rigorous enough in questioning the school's performance. Governors have undertaken training so now better understand their roles and are challenging more robustly the information presented to them by the headteacher.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the attainment and progress of pupils. They are fully involved in the evaluation of the school's performance, plans for improvement and the performance management of the headteacher and staff. Governors ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled robustly.
 - Governing body minutes show evidence of challenge and governors questioning the impact of spending on pupils' progress including the sports funding and the pupil premium. However, governors have not been successful in ensuring that pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make the necessary rates of progress they should to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of others. They have not checked closely enough what funds have been used for or evaluated the impact of decisions about how funds are spent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From the early years and throughout the school, pupils' attitudes towards their work are mostly positive. Most parents who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire think that behaviour is good and inspectors agree with them.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons and around school contributes well to the calm and purposeful learning environment. However, when pupils are given tasks which do not interest them or are not challenging enough, their attention wanders and they lose concentration and progress slows.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work very well together. Inspectors observed many occasions where pupils mixed happily when working in small groups and when playing alongside one another. They learn about each other's faiths, customs and traditions and, as a result, there are very few racist incidents.
- Pupils speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being members of this school and this is reflected in their smart appearance and good manners. They are friendly, polite and respectful towards all adults and respond quickly to any instructions given to them. There have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions during the past two years.
- Attendance has improved over time and is above the national average. Punctuality is good. Staff keep a close check on the attendance of individual pupils so that any concerns can be addressed quickly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and well looked after. Responses to Parent View indicate that most parents think that their children are safe at school, and inspectors endorse this view. There is strong provision for the pupils' pastoral care.
- Arrangements to check adults who work or visit the school are rigorous. All staff are fully aware of the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. Risk assessments for all trips and activities are carried out thoroughly to ensure pupils' safety.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is not a concern in the school and are very confident that staff would sort out

any problems quickly. They know that bullying can take different forms, including physical bullying, name-calling and cyber bullying. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school and in different situations, including when online or using computers or mobile phones.

- Safeguarding procedures are highly effective and meet current requirements. Child protection procedures are thorough and applied sensitively.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and the work pupils are given is sometimes too easy, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Teaching of writing is not consistently strong in Key Stage 2 for pupils to make good progress. As a result, the quality and standard of writing are variable and this hinders pupils' overall achievement. Not enough opportunities are given to pupils to apply their writing skills in their work in other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics leads to weak progress in Key Stage 2 because pupils are not being moved on fast enough when they are ready. The most able are not always given mathematical work that is demanding enough, and this slows their progress. Pupils have not been taught how to successfully apply their calculation skills and this affects their ability to consistently solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers do not always make enough use of questioning to stimulate pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. Questioning is at times directed too closely to drawing out an expected answer rather than asking pupils to think harder and give their own ideas. Sometimes learning is moved on by the teacher without checking that all pupils understand.
- In some lessons, work is less interesting and pupils lose concentration and their progress suffers. Where the teaching is interesting and engages the pupils, they work hard and make rapid progress. For example Year 3 pupils worked hard with intense concentration to produce their own Kennings poems after an engaging and informative introduction by the teacher.
- The teaching of phonics requires improvement. The school is working to ensure the teaching of phonics is of a better standard across the school. The revised approach is relatively new and staff are not yet fully confident in ensuring the pupils are fully engaged by the activities they are given.
- The quality of marking in pupils' books is not consistently helpful. A revised marking system is beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress in writing. There is some very good practice, as seen in Year 6 writing books, that clearly informs pupils what they must do to improve. However, some marking simply confirms what pupils can do and lacks direction in how they should improve their work. Where pupils are given guidance on how to improve, teachers do not always check that pupils correct their mistakes.
- The teaching of reading has improved since September because of the actions taken to provide pupils with texts that more closely match their ability and a greater focus on the teaching of phonics. Pupils read regularly to adults in school both in groups and individually. However there is some inconsistency in the teaching of phonics which is slowing the progress of some pupils.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and pupils. They are usually deployed well and provide good support for pupils' learning in the classrooms.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress across the school. Although their standards are close to average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6, standards in writing are below average. Many pupils should be doing better. Some pupils have not made the progress they should by the end of Year 6 because expectations have not been consistently high enough in all year groups.

- There was a dip in standards in 2014 because a fifth of pupils had low prior attainment at Key Stage 1 in reading and mathematics and a third in writing. Although these pupils made expected progress they did not reach the national standards for their age.
- Pupils' work shows that where teachers do not expect enough of pupils, productivity is low and progress is slow. Analysis of pupils' work shows that the application of writing and mathematical skills in other subjects are not frequent enough to improve pupil's progress.
- Weaknesses in the teaching of phonics and spelling in the past have hindered pupils' progress in writing. The results of the Year 1 phonics check were below average in 2013 and 2014. Leaders have now established a better approach to the teaching of phonics across the school. This is helping to address gaps in pupils' basic literacy skills and their progress in reading is improving, but is not yet good.
- Attainment in Year 2 declined in 2014. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was average, but the proportion reaching the higher level was below average in reading and mathematics.
- The recent improvements put in place by leaders since September are raising the quality of teaching of reading and writing. The work in pupils' books show that standards are beginning to rise in reading, writing and mathematics across the school, although this is variable between classes and year groups.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teachers' expectations are not high enough. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 or above at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was lower than the national average in writing. At the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 or above fell in reading and mathematics to below average.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well enough. In the 2014 national tests, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were 17 months behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, 14 months behind in writing, and 12 months behind in reading. Compared to their classmates in school, disadvantaged pupils were 16 months behind in mathematics, and 10 months behind in reading and writing.
- The school's most recent assessments show that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making progress that is similar to or better than their classmates. Their progress from their starting points is similar to that of their peers and other pupils nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics, rates of progress are slower.
- The teaching for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs ensures they gain basic levels in key skills. Like other pupils in the school, teaching for these pupils requires improvement. This is because the support given to them is not always appropriately targeted to ensure good progress.
- Black African pupils achieved less well than other pupils nationally and other pupils in the school in 2014. Current school data and pupil's work in books show that this group are achieving better than other pupils.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- In both 2013 and 2014, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was below the national average. This resulted from weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, and in early calculation skills. Some staff are not intervening effectively, both indoors and outside, to promote more opportunities to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills. About half the children have the skills and knowledge expected for their age when enter Key Stage 1.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured teaching is effective enough to enable all children to make good progress. Most pupils make expected progress by the end of Reception, but the proportion making good progress is low.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what children can achieve, especially in writing. Teachers do not plan enough activities to help children learn to write or help them improve their writing of

letters.

- Not all adults engage purposefully enough with the children to improve and extend their listening and speaking skills. They do not ask questions that make children think about what they are doing or help them learn from their experiences.
- Staff have established warm relationships with children so they feel safe and happy at school and behave well. Children get on well together and enjoy sharing and taking turns when learning and playing. They settle into routines and expectations quickly and develop their confidence to try new things. The children in the early years are kept safe and are looked after well.
- The identification and provision for children with identified needs is managed very well. The support provided enables these children to feel included in all activities and make similar progress to others.
- Children learn to respect and celebrate differences between themselves through activities about festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Christmas.

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	122017
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	455980

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Brett
Headteacher	Deborah Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2011
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