

The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CE Primary

Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 6AL

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All leaders work well together under the strong direction of the headteacher. They benefit from good support from the governing body to drive improvements forward. Leaders and governors have ensured good improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement from the last inspection. The school continues to improve.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, including their understanding of British values.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They have good attitudes to learning and their attendance and punctuality are also good. Pupils stay safe in school because staff make sure pupils are safe and secure.
- Teaching has moved from requiring improvement to good since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations for learning and plan a range of interesting activities to capture pupils' interests.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for learning.
- Pupils achieve well, as they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for secondary school.
- The early years provision is well led, children's safety and well-being are promoted well and teaching is good. As a result, they achieve well, feel safe, are happy and are making good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Occasionally, teachers miss the opportunity to extend pupils' thinking and learning to reach the highest levels.
- Pupils do not always receive effective enough guidance to help them improve their learning to outstanding levels.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place during national testing week.
- The inspector visited four lessons with the headteacher to look at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. They saw all teachers.
- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work across the school, including in the early years, and heard a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the early years teacher, subject leaders, three members of the governing body and a group of pupils from each class. He held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- The inspector took account of parents' and carers' views. He considered the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to a few parents and carers who accompanied their children to school. He also looked at the 12 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: minutes of governing body meetings; the school improvement plan; safeguarding policies; records of behaviour and attendance figures; information about children's progress in the early years; and information about pupils' progress across the school.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above that found in most schools.
- The early years provides for children of reception age, all of whom attend full time. They are taught in a mixed-aged class with Year 1 pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is broadly similar to that in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above that found in most schools.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to report reliably on the school's performance in reaching the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school uses the village hall at lunchtimes to provide lunches for pupils.
- Since the last inspection, a deputy headteacher has been appointed and there has been a significant turnover of staff. There has been a significant rise in the proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English, which has more than doubled.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding levels by making sure teaching:
 - takes every opportunity to extend the thinking of all pupils so they learn even more quickly
 - provides pupils with the effective guidance needed to help them to improve their learning to outstanding levels.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership with good support from the deputy headteacher and governors. This has secured good teaching and has raised pupils' achievements across the school since the last inspection. Together, they have established a welcoming family atmosphere and a culture where good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- Staff morale is high, as seen in the overwhelmingly positive responses in their completed questionnaires. They all share the same drive in moving the school forward to outstanding.
- The headteacher has successfully strengthened links with parents and carers since the last inspection and this is reflected in their positive views about the school. Parents and carers recognise that the school is successful in helping their children to make good progress.
- Leadership of teaching has improved. Leaders and governors visit classrooms, look at pupils' books and regularly examine the school's information about the progress pupils make to determine the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time. They identify strengths and areas for development. They put in place effective actions to tackle weak teaching and, as a result of good teaching, pupils' learning is now good across the school.
- Leaders have also ensured good improvements in the quality of teachers' marking, in the tracking of pupils' progress, in the curriculum and in the quality of early years provision, since the last inspection.
- The management of the performance of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff is good. Targets set are focused on whole-school priorities for improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement. These are reviewed regularly and, as a result, teaching and pupils' achievement continually improve. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to raise teaching to outstanding levels.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The outdoor and indoor learning environments, the quality of teaching and the systems for tracking children's progress have improved. As a result, children achieve well.
- Subject leaders are new in post and are making a good contribution to improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement across the school. They have effectively implemented the new curriculum, taking into account the mixed ages of pupils in each class and new systems of assessment to measure pupils' progress. There are well-conceived topics and themes to ensure pupils enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leaders are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of British values, well. As a result, they make sure pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. As a church school, pupils learn to respect Christian values which are also enshrined in the school values of honesty and care towards others. Pupils learn about different religions and different cultures through religious education, art, music and geography.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. Different pupils make equally good progress from their various starting points. Leaders tackle discrimination effectively and promote positive relationships where pupils are polite and respectful towards others. This is confirmed in school records, which show no recorded incidents of homophobia or racist incidents of any kind since the last inspection.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to provide additional individual support for disadvantaged pupils. This was seen during the inspection to be helping those pupils to do at least as well as their classmates. Consequently any gaps in their attainment and that of other pupils nationally have narrowed significantly.
- Leaders are using primary sports funding effectively to provide additional coaching and increase the range of after-school clubs, such as for basketball, dance, football and tag rugby. This leads to the better development of staff skills in teaching physical education and increased participation of pupils in sporting events.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge for the school through regular visits to review its work and set challenging targets for improvement.
- Leaders make sure that all legal requirements for safeguarding are met. They rigorously check the suitability of all staff and visitors to work with children and ensure all training in safeguarding is up to date. They ensure the premises and accommodation are safe and secure and that all potential risks are thoroughly assessed, particularly when pupils attend the village hall for lunch. They ensure pupils are well behaved and travel safely to and from the village hall.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors provide good support and challenge for the school through regular visits to gain first-hand knowledge of the impact of the school's work on pupils' learning and well-being. Consequently, they have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They ensure that the arrangement for managing the performance of the headteacher and staff are rigorous and have good systems in place to reward good teaching and tackle any weaknesses.
- Governors have a good understanding of assessment information on pupils' progress and use the outcomes effectively to shape whole-school priorities for development. They know how the school compares to others locally and nationally. They hold the school to account for its spending of pupil premium and primary sports funding and make sure these funds are used well to enhance pupils' learning and well-being.
- Governors promote safeguarding effectively through the regular review of policies and thorough checks of the safety and security of the premises and accommodation. They ensure their own training in safeguarding is up to date. They make sure that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including British values, effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to the good role models for acceptable behaviour provided by staff and the effective management of their behaviour across the school. Consequently their behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is good. Parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils confirm that behaviour is typically good.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in the low rates of unauthorised absence from school, in their good punctuality to lessons and in the high levels of participation in all the school offers. Pupils take a pride in their work and in wearing their school uniform. In lessons, pupils nearly always remain focused on learning and some pupils develop a thirst for knowledge which has a significant impact on their progress.
- Pupils have good relationships with others. They are respectful and listen carefully to their teachers and to one another. They are courteous and polite to visitors. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is having a positive impact on their positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour.
- Pupils develop a deep sense of right and wrong and good social skills through topics such as internet safety and substance abuse. Older pupils take responsibility as playground buddies in befriending and helping other pupils at break times.
- Children in the early years learn to take turns and share. They settle into their routines and their behaviour is good.
- Pupils' behaviour when attending the village hall for lunch is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding policies and staff training are up to date. The school rigorously checks the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children. The school's grounds and premises are secure and assessments of any potential risks to pupils while at school or on trips, including when they attend the village hall for lunch, are detailed and thorough.
- Pupils say they are safe in school and can go to anyone if they are worried about anything. Parents and carers, governors and staff also agree that pupils are safe in school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They move safely from one area of the school to another and walk safely every day to the village hall for lunch. There have been no incidents of unsafe behaviour reported or recorded since the last inspection. Pupils use computers safely and follow the guidance given on the safe use of the internet.
- Pupils have good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say bullying does not occur, although sometimes pupils may argue or disagree with one another. They believe that if it should occur, bullying would be dealt with quickly. Parents and carers, staff and governors believe pupils are safe in school. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying or harassment of any kind since the last inspection.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is reflected in pupils' work, in the good progress pupils make over time and in lessons visited. Teachers' high expectations for learning were seen in pupils' books where pupils were encouraged to improve their work, for example by using more creative and imaginative vocabulary in writing and in using storyboards to improve writing.
- Teachers promote pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning well in providing a range of interesting activities. For example, older pupils were given good opportunities to compare the characteristics, similarities and differences of Ghandi and Guy Fawkes in deepening their awareness of violent and peaceful revolution in history. Younger pupils worked hard to calculate various items for sale in the farm shop created in their classroom when suddenly the phone rang with a fresh order to calculate for a customer. This generated great enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well and provide good opportunities for pupils to use these skills in topic work. Pupils' books show that teachers are marking pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling in history and geography topics and provide good advice on how well pupils are using their mathematical skills in practical subjects such as science.
- The teaching of reading is good. Reading records show that pupils are encouraged to read widely and often in school and at home. Teachers make sure that pupils acquire good skills of using letter sounds (known as phonics) to read and write unfamiliar words.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for the learning of all pupils, irrespective of their background or ability level. They focus on developing pupils' understanding of the meaning of unfamiliar words and break tasks down into smaller achievable steps to enable pupils to learn as well as their classmates.
- Teachers' use of assessment has improved since the last inspection. Teachers usually make good use of assessment information to ensure pupils' thinking is constantly extended. However occasionally they miss the opportunity to do this, as seen in pupils' work where a few pupils found tasks too easy. On other occasions in lessons, teachers do not always provide pupils sufficient guidance to enable them to achieve to outstanding levels.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding at levels below those typical for their age, especially in their communication language and literacy, physical development and personal social and emotional development. They make good progress in all areas of learning from their different starting points.
- Although a well below average proportion of pupils in Year 1 reached the nationally expected standard in the phonics reading check, the school's accurate and detailed information shows that they all made good progress from their low starting points. All of these pupils are on course to exceed the expected standard by the end of Year 2. Pupils currently in Year 1 make good progress in using letter sounds for reading and writing and are on course to at least reach the expected levels when they start in Year 3.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was broadly average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. Nevertheless, attainment has been rising steadily since the last inspection when it was significantly below average. Currently, pupils in Year 2 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and are on course to reach at least broadly average standards in all three subjects.
- Pupils' national results at the end of Key Stage 2 last year showed that all pupils made good progress from their very low starting points. However, the proportions of pupils making expected and above expected progress in reading and writing compared favourably with national figures and slightly less favourably in mathematics.
- Pupils' work in their books and the school's accurate information about their progress over time show that this year, pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and are on course to reach better than expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Different pupils make equally good progress from their various starting points and are well prepared for their start in secondary school next term.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress relative to their starting points because teaching assistants are providing good support for their learning.
- The few who are at an early stage of learning English and those who arrive later in the school year are making equally good progress as their classmates because they also receive good support for learning.
- The most able pupils across the school generally make good progress from their relatively higher starting points. All usually achieve the higher levels in their national tests and more pupils currently in Years 2 and Year 6 are on course to reach the higher levels.
- In 2014, in Year 6, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment reliably with that of other pupils nationally or their classmates, without identifying them. However, they all made at least

good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Current disadvantaged pupils across the school make good progress and some make excellent gains in narrowing gaps in attainment with their classmates.

- Pupils make good progress in physical education and in staying healthy because staff make good use of primary sports funding to help boost their activity levels.
- The thinking and learning of different groups of pupils are not always extended as well as they could be. As a result, not all pupils secure more rapid progress over time.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership of the early years provision has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. Links with parents and carers have improved, and systems for checking and recording the progress each child is making are developing well.
- There has been good improvement in the indoor and outdoor learning environments, with less clutter and a good range of stimulating resources to stimulate curiosity and enjoyment of learning. For example, this half term, the classroom is displayed as a jungle and there are toys and pictures of jungle animals and stories about the jungle displayed around the classroom to stimulate curiosity and knowledge of the world.
- Teaching and children's achievement, as seen in their work and in the school's information about their progress, are good. This was confirmed through visits to the early years class. Children link letter sounds to their names and use the sounds confidently to blend into simple words. Their books show they move rapidly from making simple marks on paper to writing familiar names and whole sentences. Children are recognising numbers to 10 and some are recognising and counting numbers to 20.
- Children behave well as they make good progress in their personal development. Staff work closely as a team to promote turn taking and sharing. In a lesson where children were linking sounds to the letter names, they all waited patiently for their turn to match a word with the letter sound.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1 because they are in a mixed-aged class with Year 1 pupils who provide good role models in how to behave and work. Most, but not all, reached a good level of development in 2014.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work strongly as a team to ensure children feel happy, safe and secure. They engage closely with children's learning and apply the school's procedures for safeguarding well. This helps children to settle into their routines quickly and to behave well.

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	120611
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	464185

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	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Start
Headteacher	Hilary Brewster
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 May 2013
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