

Ditton Lodge Community Primary School

St John's Avenue, Newmarket, CB8 8BL

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- The executive headteacher is a strong leader who has acted decisively to identify and tackle the school's weaknesses. As a result, this is now a good and improving school.
- The executive headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the school's other leaders. A shared commitment to school improvement is raising standards quickly.
- The quality of teaching is now good and improving. The school has been successful in changing the focus of teaching from 'doing' to 'learning' and pupils are making better progress as a result.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well both in the classroom and during less structured parts of the day. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and rightly feel safe when they are at school.
- Achievement in the early years is good and the proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development is above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with the national average and rising.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern British society. Pupils are taught to value people as individuals and they have an appropriate understanding of democracy and the rule of law.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the quality of teaching is good overall, inconsistencies remain. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they should when teaching does not sustain their interest and they lose concentration.
- Until recently, governors have not held the school's leaders to account rigorously enough.
- Parents of children in the early years are not sufficiently involved in considering their children's progress with the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning. They observed pupils' learning in parts of 16 lessons throughout the school, some jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' exercise books, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work. Inspectors examined the school's documentation on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and informal conversations on the playground. One letter from a parent was also received.
- Inspectors listened to the views of staff and evaluated the 23 staff questionnaires that were received.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, and attendance and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rod Warsap

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. There is one class per year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis. The school has close links with the privately-run nursery that is housed on the school site.
- The school has experienced a number of significant changes since the last inspection.
 - In November 2011 the school entered an informal partnership arrangement with Kettlefields Primary School. Although both schools retain their own governing body, the school has shared an executive headteacher since this time.
 - Previously a first school, the school extended its age range to become a full primary, with the first cohort of Year 6 pupils leaving the school in 2013. The school was subject to extensive building works in order to accommodate the additional pupils.
 - The school became a designated teaching school in 2013, forming part of the Anglian Gateway Teaching School Alliance. The school has recently withdrawn from its commitment to supporting other schools and is no longer a designated teaching school.
 - The previous executive headteacher retired in July 2014 and the current executive headteacher joined the school in September 2014.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is about half the national average. Most pupils are of White British origin and there are no other significant groups. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club operate on site. The clubs are led and managed by the school and run by members of the school's staff.
- The school meets current floor standards; these are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
 - inconsistencies are eradicated
 - an increased proportion of teaching is outstanding
 - teaching sustains pupils' interest throughout lessons so that concentration is maintained and better progress made.
- Develop assessment processes in early years to ensure that parents are fully involved throughout their child's time in the Reception Year.
- Continue to improve governance so that the governing body is able to hold school leaders even more rigorously to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- From an outstanding position in 2011, the school has, more recently, experienced a period of turbulence. Over a short period of time the school took on a number of intensive and time-consuming challenges: extending to become a full primary school; major building works; becoming a teaching school; and partnership with another local school. As a result, until this academic year, the school's leaders did not have sufficient focus on raising standards at Ditton Lodge and on ensuring that achievement was good enough.
- The new executive headteacher is a knowledgeable and experienced leader who has rapidly gained the respect and trust of the school community. When he took up his post in September 2014, he was quick to assess the school's shortcomings and to take prompt action to start to address them. As a result, from a low starting point at the beginning of this academic year, the school is now on a clear upward trajectory.
- The deputy headteacher and the executive headteacher form a strong leadership team. They complement each other well and, together, have created an environment in which good behaviour is expected, the quality of teaching is improving and standards are starting to rise again.
- The school's other leaders (that is, those responsible for a range of curriculum areas) are fully committed to the school. They have a good understanding of their individual subject areas, as well as the improvement needs of the school as a whole, and are increasingly effective in bringing about change. Similarly, the special educational needs coordinator leads and manages provision well.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school; 100% of parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to others. Staff too are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, very appreciative of the new executive headteacher's leadership and very clear about the positive impact that he is having on school improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation is detailed and thorough. The evaluation summary is appropriately self-critical and does not attempt to gloss over the school's shortcomings. As a result, the school's termly operational plans are well-focused and robust. They are effective working documents that are reviewed regularly. The headteacher has correctly focused on the most urgent issues, in the short term, but he is aware that a longer-term strategic overview is needed to guide the school to the next stage in its development.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Two members of the senior leadership team and another member of staff have completed designated safeguarding lead training and this means that there is always a suitably qualified person available on site should a safeguarding issue arise.
- The school has strong systems in place to support and improve outcomes for looked after children, whenever such pupils join the school. The designated teacher for looked after children is well informed and deeply committed to her role. The school ensures that personal education plans focus on academic achievement as well as personal and social development.
- The new primary National Curriculum was introduced to the school in September. The school ensures that the full range of National Curriculum subjects is taught and enhances the curriculum with, for example, educational visits and residential trips. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through, for example, exposure to a children's newspaper, celebrations of events such as St George's Day and the whole-school election of the Head Boy and Head Girl following the delivery of manifestos in assembly.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination very well. Pupils are unequivocal in their understanding that racism is wrong. They are taught to value people as individuals and not to judge them on their physical or other characteristics. The school makes reasonable adjustments to ensure that it is fully accessible to all members of the community, including pupils, staff and parents.
- The primary physical education and sports premium is spent well. The coordinator monitors closely how the grant is spent and has a thorough understanding of the impact it is having. The school recently

achieved the Silver School Games Mark as a direct result of the way the additional funding is being used. The school now offers pupils a much wider range of sporting activities and has greatly increased the number of competitions pupils take part in. The proportion of pupils who attend sports clubs at school has also risen and 40% of pupils are now engaged in a weekly extra-curricular activity.

- The local authority provides good support to the school. The local authority was quick to respond to the new executive headteacher's concerns and it carried out a full review of the school in September 2014. As a result, a range of suitable support was provided to the school in a timely fashion.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively. The deputy headteacher monitors the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely and ensures that appropriate measures are put in place so that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

■ The governance of the school:

- The school's governors are a dedicated group who are well aware that they 'dropped the ball' during the period between the previous inspection and the beginning of this academic year. The school became increasingly 'outward facing' during this time and too little attention was paid to ensuring that Ditton Lodge sustained its own high standards and continued to improve.
- The governing body has responded well to an external review of governance and are starting to hold the school's leaders to account more effectively. Governors know that they need to challenge the school's leaders even more and to use a variety of sources of information to check the accuracy of the information they are given.
- The new executive headteacher has introduced a rigorous system of performance management to the school, including mid-year reviews. Governors do not have a strong enough understanding of what is done to reward good teaching and to tackle underperformance.
- Governors now have an appropriate view of the quality of teaching in the school. Governors' knowledge and understanding of data about the school's performance is also improving. The governing body's view of the school is now accurate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, respectful and show good manners to adults and to their classmates. Pupils work well together in groups and with partners, cooperating well on the tasks they are given. Pupils play well together, with older pupils frequently taking responsibility for younger ones.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance rates are above the national average and there is very little persistent absence. The school has robust systems in place to tackle absence from school and staff work closely with parents, in the first instance, to encourage regular attendance. School leaders are not afraid to use more formal methods, including involving the local authority's education welfare officer, when necessary.
- In 2012 and 2013 the proportion of fixed-term exclusions was above the national average. There have been no exclusions during this academic year and consistently good behaviour was seen during the inspection. School records, and conversations with members of the school community, indicate that this is typical at Ditton Lodge.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and 100% of parents who responded to Parent View agreed.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations (for example, road safety and staying safe in the sun). During the inspection, an unplanned evacuation of the building gave inspectors the opportunity to see first-hand how well pupils have been taught about fire safety; pupils exited the building quickly, quietly and without fuss, then awaited further instructions calmly and with maturity.

- The school meets the needs of individual pupils very well. They ensure that staff are properly trained and that suitable plans are in place to ensure pupils' safety, both physically and emotionally.
- Pupils know about bullying but their understanding is limited. Although the school participates in Anti-Bullying Week each November, teaching is not sufficiently systematic throughout the year to ensure that all pupils know exactly what they should do if they were ever the victim of bullying. However, pupils say that they feel safe from bullying and their parents agree. School records show that bullying incidents are rare but are dealt with thoroughly and appropriately when they do occur.

The quality of teaching is good

- A review by the local authority, in September 2014, found that the quality of teaching required improvement. This judgement agreed with the new executive headteacher's assessment of the quality of teaching in the school. This review, combined with the executive headteacher's accurate self-evaluation, enabled the school to pinpoint precisely what needed to change in order to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, raise achievement.
- The school has worked hard to change the focus of teaching from 'doing' to 'learning'. Observations show that there is now a much stronger focus on the objective of lessons, that is, on what teachers want pupils to learn in each lesson. As a result, pupils make better progress because they have a clearer understanding of the purpose of what they are doing rather than simply focusing on completing a task.
- Teachers explain concepts to pupils particularly clearly and this helps pupils to make better progress. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, teachers used a set of accurately-sized blocks effectively to represent parts of a whole when teaching fractions. In a literacy lesson, a teacher showed pupils very clearly how to write accurately in sentences by demonstrating explicitly on the interactive whiteboard.
- Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and their peers, are a strength of the school. Teachers create an atmosphere where pupils are not afraid to fail. For example, in one lesson the teacher said, 'I like it when you're brave' when a less confident pupil managed to answer a question he had been asked.
- Teaching assistants often provide strong support to pupils, either individually or as part of a small group. In the best examples, teaching assistants' work is very well focused on developing specific elements of pupils' development in, for example, reading, writing or mathematics, and this has a notable impact on the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their literacy skills in subjects other than English. For example, in a history lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to practise note-taking skills while learning about the Vikings.
- The school's monitoring, and evidence seen during the inspection, shows clearly that the quality of teaching is improving rapidly and is now good. However, inconsistencies remain and it is important that these are tackled in order for more pupils to make accelerated progress throughout the school. There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to raise the overall quality of teaching in the school.
- When teaching is at its best, the direct input by the teacher and the tasks given to pupils to do are well matched to pupils' interests and abilities. Where teaching is less strong, pupils sometimes become less interested in lessons when teaching does not engage them as effectively.

The achievement of pupils is good

- This year, pupils throughout the school are making good progress across subjects and year groups. Achievement is tracked closely and half-termly pupil progress meetings are used to identify and address issues as they arise. This is an improvement on last year where the proportion of pupils who made

expected progress was similar to the national average but far fewer pupils made accelerated progress than typically found nationally.

- Work in pupils' exercise books shows clear evidence of the good progress they are making, including the most-able pupils. Pupils read widely and often, showing an interest in the texts they read and applying their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of their age. Children make good progress in early years and the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above the national average.
- Standards in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) are good but this has not yet been fully reflected in the statutory assessment of pupils' phonics knowledge at the end of Year 1. Results in 2014 represented a significant improvement on the school's 2013 result but remained below the national average. Pupils make good progress overall after leaving early years and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The school's first cohort of pupils took the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2013. The proportion of pupils who achieved at least the expected level was just above the national average in 2013 and in line with the national average in 2014.
- Results of the Key Stage 2 national tests show that far fewer pupils than the national average reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics overall in 2013. Last year results were greatly improved and, overall, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels was broadly in line with the national average.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 cohort to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, generally, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. The special educational needs coordinator monitors their progress closely and ensures that appropriate interventions are put in place to address identified needs.

The early years provision is good

- Good leadership and management have led to improvements in the early years this year. The early years staff have worked successfully with an adviser from the local authority to improve provision. The indoor environment is now attractive and appropriate, offering children a good range of suitable opportunities. The outdoor area on the other hand is rundown and unsatisfactory. This will be addressed fully during the summer holiday when major renovations to the outside area will take place.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class and achieve well. For example, in a literacy lesson observed during the inspection, the children re-told the story of *The Runaway Chapati*. One child wrote, without help, 'One day a girl was cooking a chapati and then she tried to fry the chapati but it ran away too quickly out of the door'.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good and improving. Staff work closely together as an effective team and plan increasingly well across the curriculum. Staff use their assessments of children's progress, and their observations of children's interests, to help them plan next steps in children's learning.
- Behaviour and safety in the early years are good. The children quickly learn to follow the rules and to cooperate well with each other. They behave well and are kind and thoughtful to each other. The children are prepared well for the new demands and challenges of Year 1.
- The children's individual learning journals are detailed and thorough. They include a wide range of information across the seven areas of learning and track each child's progress clearly. However, assessment is not as well developed as it could be because parents are not sufficiently involved in the

ongoing review of their children's progress during their time in early years.

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	110624
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	461560

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Turner
Headteacher	Chris Marshall (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2011
Telephone number	01638 613001
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