

Langham CofE Primary School Academy

1 Burley Road, Langham, Oakham LE15 7HY

Inspection dates

6–7 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Subject leadership requires improvement. Leaders' roles require further development as they do not yet have enough impact on school improvement.
- Governance has been weak. Governors have an increasing understanding of the importance of their role after presiding over a period of school decline.
- Senior leaders and governors have not held colleagues to account for their performance in the past. There was too much complacency and not enough realism about the school's performance.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not use regular assessment of pupils' knowledge to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not always match the work they set to pupils' abilities well enough. As a result, some pupils could achieve more.
- Outcomes are not good enough for particular groups of pupils. Most-able pupils, disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not make as much progress or achieve as well as they should.
- Pupil achievement in Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent in recent years.
- The role of the early years' leader is underdeveloped. The quality of provision and resources for children, both indoors and outdoors, requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and head of school have made an immediate difference to the school. Their actions are improving the school rapidly.
- Senior leaders have the full support of governors, staff and parents for their actions to improve the school.
- Pupils' attendance is good and they are eager learners who behave very well in class and around the school.
- The school's values and teaching prepare pupils well for life beyond the school gates. They understand fundamental British values and treat each other with respect, care and consideration.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard and impact of subject leadership, by:
 - developing leadership skills
 - monitoring subject leaders' performance and ensuring that they hold colleagues to account for the outcomes of all pupils.
- Increase the impact of governors on school improvement by ensuring that:
 - governors challenge school leaders about their actions and insist that there is good evidence to support the answers provided
 - governors hold leaders and teachers to account for the progress of all pupils
 - governors fully understand all of the statutory duties required of an academy
- Ensure the consistently high quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that they extend pupils' thinking and deepen understanding
 - assessing pupils' work to accurately identify the next steps in learning which provide sufficient challenge for all pupils
 - introducing a curriculum that engages pupils and provides them with meaningful opportunities to use their skills across a range of subjects.
- Raise outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 2, especially most-able pupils, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, through:
 - senior and subject leaders and governors holding colleagues fully to account for the achievement of all pupils
 - more regular monitoring of pupil performance
- Improve provision in the early years, by:
 - developing effective leadership to raise standards and ensure that pupils are better prepared for Year 1
 - providing an environment which strengthens the learning of children, both indoors and outdoors
 - assessing children accurately and using this information to identify next steps in learning for every child.
- The school should undertake an external review of governance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- On their arrival, the executive headteacher and head of school rightly identified that school self-evaluation was over-generous and that there was a complacent attitude to school improvement. There was a culture of too much trust and not enough challenge within school leadership. Leaders did not hold staff to account for pupil outcomes with enough rigour. This resulted in some groups of pupils not achieving as well as they might.
 - The role of subject and middle leaders is underdeveloped. In the past, these leaders were not held to account for their actions in improving outcomes in the areas they led. They lacked the necessary skills and understanding to discharge their responsibilities to full effect.
 - Staff and governors have received the recently appointed executive headteacher and head of school like a breath of fresh air. Staff share their sense of purpose and understand the need for rapid change and improvement. The new senior leaders have effectively communicated important messages about raising expectations and now enjoy the full support of their staff.
 - The executive headteacher and the head of school have evaluated the school's current position accurately and honestly. They have implemented a newly created plan for school development with signs of early and rapid improvement across the school. Staff know what is now expected of them and school leaders challenge underperformance effectively. Raised expectations are also reflected in the recent performance targets set for staff.
 - There is a greater focus on the impact of actions taken and the use of additional funding such as the pupil premium and PE and sports premium. Leaders can identify where these grants have had most success and have pinpointed future spending with greater accuracy to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, in particular.
 - Senior leaders lead by example and parents comment on how they are now a more visible presence in school. Parents have better information about their children's progress and feel increasingly welcome in the school. Both parents and pupils speak highly of the wide range of extra-curricular activities covering the arts and sport and the impact that this has on their development.
 - Leaders are improving the curriculum to enable better teaching and learning to take place. They have identified gaps, particularly in the teaching of literacy. A new assessment system is helping teachers to have a better understanding of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve further.
 - The school provides strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Pupils have a good sense of justice, fairness and equality. They told inspectors how they feel safe at school and how their lives differ from those of refugees, for example. Pupils say there is no bullying and that they know who to turn to if they have a problem. They understand the rule of law and democracy, comparing it to those who do not enjoy such freedoms. Pupils know that the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and that they are responsible for their own actions. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - During the last year, the local authority has provided effective support and this has helped to raise pupil achievement. The Rutland Learning Trust currently provides very good support which has speeded up school improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governance was not as strong as it needed to be in the past. Governors took too much on trust and there was insufficient challenge to information provided by school leaders. As a result, governors were not clear enough about their roles and responsibilities and were not able to hold leaders to account effectively for their actions or the performance of the school.
 - Over the last 18 months, the governors have begun to address gaps in their skills and knowledge, insisting on external reviews and support to improve the quality of school leadership. The school is now improving because of the quality of this support and the improved decision making by governors. They have an accurate picture of standards in the school, its strengths and weaknesses, and current priorities.
 - Governors are ambitious for the children and are keenly aware of the vital role of the school in this community. However, they still need to address some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of their role, particularly as they consider any alterations to the school's position as a stand-alone academy. For this reason, the school would benefit from an external review of governance.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders have reviewed and improved previous practices to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. Recording of incidents or concerns about pupils' welfare or behaviour are well documented and analysed regularly for trends or patterns. The school now contacts parents promptly and involves them fully when an incident occurs. Pupils are taught about potential risks such as those posed by the internet or extremism as well as strategies to keep themselves safe from harm. The school works well with external agencies to safeguard pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is inconsistent. Previous school leadership incorrectly identified teaching to be an outstanding feature and this resulted in a false impression being given to staff and governors. As a result of the narrowing of the literacy curriculum to focus on a single published scheme of work, there was not enough emphasis on writing and standards declined.
- Teachers do not use assessment consistently to inform the next steps in learning for pupils. On too many occasions lessons are built around activities rather than pupils' learning needs. Consequently, tasks are not always matched closely to pupils' abilities, particularly the most and the least able. Teachers do not consistently extend pupils' thinking or deepen their understanding using challenging and thought-provoking questions.
- Teachers are quickly adapting and improving their practice. This is happening more quickly in some parts of the school than others. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure that no pupil is left behind and that their learning is being accelerated. Teachers are in no doubt about the high expectations of senior leaders and this is incorporated into the management of their performance.
- The introduction of a simple and effective marking method has helped teachers and pupils. Teachers are more focused on what pupils can do and what they need to do next to develop further. Pupils are clearer about what they do well and how they can improve. This is helping to increase rates of progress and to develop a greater subject understanding in pupils. Pupils' books show progress at this early stage of the year. Pupils present their work well and take pride in their achievements. Teachers regularly set homework and parents support their children to ensure that it is returned on time.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers know their subject and their pupils. Inspectors saw this used to good effect in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on fractions. At the start of the lesson the teacher used thoughtful questions to confirm the starting points for pupils. She then used her subject knowledge to extend the learning of the pupils, ensuring that they understood at points throughout the lesson and addressing misconceptions along the way.
- The teaching of writing is improving after a period of neglect. Improvements in the curriculum and teaching now ensure that pupils have meaningful opportunities to write. This has improved writing across a range of subjects over the past year. In mathematics, teachers now give more attention to assessment practices and place a greater emphasis on pupils applying their skills. This is having a positive impact on increasing the rates of pupils' progress in all year groups.
- Pupils read with understanding and fluency which is appropriate for their age. Younger pupils use their phonics skills to help them read new or tricky words. Books are well matched to ability and many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take pride in their school, their appearance and their work. They are confident individuals who know how to deal with disappointment as well as success.
- Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with dignity and respect and are very effective role models for pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They are particularly aware of online safety, the risks associated with social media and who to talk to if they have a concern. School leaders are vigilant to other forms of risk to pupils such as extreme views and domestic violence. Pupils report no bullying in school and no experiences of derogatory or offensive name-calling. Senior leaders have introduced a very effective recording system for any behavioural incidents and these records are analysed regularly for trends

or areas for further improvement.

- Pupils of different ages discuss democracy, elections, laws of the land, unfairness, equality and respect for the beliefs of others. They are positive about the role of the school in helping them learn more about life in modern Britain and about the role they will play in society. Pupils respect the views of each other and have a well-developed sense of collaboration when asked to work together.
- A small number of parents believe that pupil welfare could be further improved but inspectors found that leaders act promptly whenever they become aware of an issue.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around the school and at playtimes. They show respect and consideration for each other and adults. Pupils benefit from the introduction and consistent application of routines from an early age.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. There is no low-level disruption, even when work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and pupils are eager to meet these expectations.
- Attendance is above the national average and there is virtually no persistent absenteeism. Pupils are punctual and parents do much to support this.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The most recent pupil achievement information for Key Stage 2 shows that the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels has dropped.
- The small number of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium grant are typically one to one-and-a-half years behind other children nationally by the time they leave Year 6.
- Senior leaders are confident that assessment information is now more accurate and reliable than in previous years. This is providing a baseline on which to assess pupils' achievement more accurately in the future. They have used this information to set challenging targets for teachers and pupils. This information is now used to manage and reward the performance of staff more effectively.
- Children enter Reception at levels of development which are broadly typical, or above, those expected of children of this age. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the time they completed Reception was above the national figure. Achievement in mathematical development was stronger than in literacy.
- There is an improving trend in outcomes for the Year 1 national phonics screening test. In 2015, the figure exceeded the national average and represented an improvement on the previous year.
- Achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 has stabilised. Information from 2015 shows that pupil attainment has risen to above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils are attaining at higher levels because of more accurate assessment by teachers and clear guidance from senior leaders and external partners.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement in reading is strong, exceeding national attainment figures. Attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly in line with national expectations for the most-able pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard for their age is below the national figure for writing, although this figure rose in 2015.
- Work in pupils' books shows signs that the vast majority are making progress in the first months of the new term. Occasionally, there is some lack of challenge for the most able. However, teachers respond to pupils' work and act quickly to address misconceptions. They are beginning to provide greater challenge in a more timely fashion.
- Pupils of different ages and abilities read well. Younger pupils use a range of techniques to help them identify new words. Older pupils are able to discuss their books through mature and informed discussion.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The leadership of early years is underdeveloped. In the past, support for the leader has been weak and the school has not made the most of her skills. As a result, information about children's achievements in

previous years has lacked accuracy.

- The learning environments, both inside and outdoors, have been neglected and under-resourced in recent years. There has been insufficient consideration and understanding of the impact of this on children's learning.
- Senior leaders have rightly identified shortcomings in the early years and have quickly provided external support to speed-up improvements. Their actions have already begun to increase the impact of the early years leader who now has a clear view of what good quality provision should look like.
- Staff have ensured that children feel safe and secure in the early years. Safeguarding is effective and children behave well, even after only a few weeks in school. Children adopt new routines quickly and they are well supported, for example, singing a short verse to remind them about putting away their own PE kits. The teacher works hard to get to know the children well. She makes good links between home and school and almost all parents take advantage of the home visits that are offered. The teacher has made effective links with other providers and uses external services to meet the needs of pupils.
- The teacher promotes early language skills well and this is effective in helping children make progress. She makes good use of scrapbooks that children have made with their families at home to develop their vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. Inspectors saw a good example of this when the teacher was sharing family photographs and, following a discussion about what the children could see, she then asked if they thought there was music at this family event.
- The teacher plans small group activities following an evaluation of the previous day's learning. For example, following an activity making lolly stick puppets, a cardboard theatre was created to encourage children to act out a story. This was successful in drawing in children who had previously not shown an interest in this activity. Children are able to make good links between activities in the classroom and this helps them to make sense of what they are learning.
- Last year, children's achievement was similar to that of other children nationally. This represented a sharp improvement. Prior to this, the practices in place to monitor and assess children's progress were not accurate. The teacher has put more effective assessment strategies in place but they are not yet used with sufficient rigour to track children's small steps closely enough. Consequently, children's progress could be improved further.
- Children enter the early years at levels of development which are generally typical or above that seen in other children their age. Children's development in literacy and mathematics does not progress as quickly as it should and, as a result, more children could be better equipped for their entry into Key Stage 1. However, a focus on improving outcomes in personal, social and emotional development has had a positive outcome in raising standards in this area of learning. The very small numbers of children who are identified as disadvantaged through the allocation of the pupil premium grant achieve well.

School details

Unique reference number	139858
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	10002580

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Horrigan
Executive Headteacher	Mr R Gooding
Telephone number	01572 722676
Website	www.langhamprimary.co.uk
Email address	langhamoffice@rutlandlearningtrust.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Langham CofE Primary School Academy is smaller than the average primary school and shares its site with a pre-school which also serves this semi-rural village.
- Pupils are taught in single age classes, including children in the early years who attend full time.
- The vast majority of children of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is significantly below the national average. This funding provides extra support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- In 2014, the school met the national floor targets for pupil achievement.
- The school became a stand-alone converter academy in September 2013, having previously been judged as an outstanding school in 2009. Arrangements are in place for the school to join a multi-academy trust within the next year. The current executive headteacher and head of school joined the school in September 2015 following the retirement of the previous, long-serving headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in nine lessons, covering all year groups, including three which were jointly observed with the executive headteacher and head of school. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and representatives from the Rutland Academy Trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took note of the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement, the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils, the school's most recent published financial statement and the minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector
Di Mullen

Her Majesty's Inspector
Her Majesty's Inspector

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