

Great Doddington Primary School

Church Lane, Great Doddington, Wellingborough NN29 7TR

Inspection dates	20–21 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet consistent across subjects and all classes.
- Teachers do not always give pupils work which is hard enough for them in every lesson.
- Pupils do not receive enough chances to write at length in different subjects.
- Progress for pupils currently in the school is quickening, but it is not yet good throughout the school and in all subjects. While many pupils make good or better progress, others do not make much more than the progress expected of them.
- Not all disadvantaged pupils have made good progress because the support some of them have received has not helped them to improve enough.
- Teachers have decided a new way for measuring pupils' progress, but have not yet begun to use it. As a result, teachers cannot be sure that pupils are attaining the standards expected of them for their age, nor be certain that progress is good or better for all pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has swiftly brought about widespread improvement to the school. The quality of teaching is improving considerably and many more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are now achieving well.
- Staff morale has improved greatly and adults are working increasingly closely together as a united team.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils become self-confident, reflective young people who feel very safe in school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils want to learn and make progress in lessons. They are very supportive towards each other.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years where staff give them work that consistently interests and challenges them. The early years leader works effectively to involve parents in the education of their children.
- Governors are effective and hold senior leaders and staff to account well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good or better progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently provide work that is sufficiently challenging and exciting to the different needs of pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum
 - beginning the new system to assess pupils' outcomes and using it to check that all pupils are making the gains expected of them.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is good

- Since her arrival in January 2015, the acting headteacher has moved swiftly to bring about significant improvements to all aspects of the school. These are continuing at a quick pace. She and senior leaders recognised that teaching across the school was not good, and pupils were not making good progress as a result. She has sensitively but decisively implemented changes to the school. These are resulting in better teaching and improved outcomes for pupils. Pupils are more motivated and want to learn.
- At the time of her arrival, parents held negative views towards many aspects of the school. No parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View then said that they would recommend the school to other parents. Since that time, the acting headteacher has won the support of many parents, who see the effects of the changes she is making. Almost all the parents the inspector spoke with on the inspection were very positive in their praise for the new leadership of the school. This is reflected in the latest responses to Parent View, where a large majority now believe that the school is well led and managed. A large majority would now also recommend the school to others. As one parent commented, 'It has regained its positive atmosphere, is moving forwards and has once again become a place where my children are happy to go.' However, a small minority believe that more improvements are needed: for example, more challenge for the most-able pupils.
- The acting headteacher has greatly improved the morale of staff by giving them a clear sense of direction and high expectations to aim for. They are working increasingly as a united, motivated team. Those staff the inspector talked with were very positive about the future and talked in ambitious terms about its 'huge potential'. One said that, 'Morale is improving massively' and another added, 'It's a happy place to be because we know where things are going.'
- The school's senior leadership team, which comprises the subject leader for mathematics and the coordinator for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, is strengthening the drive for improvement. A culture is being created where it is expected that every pupil will achieve his or her potential. Leaders are successfully encouraging teachers to learn from each other. The subject leader for mathematics is also helping teachers to improve their planning and delivery, to ensure that more pupils are challenged fully in lessons.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the areas that require further improvement. They know that teaching, although improved, is not consistently good and that not all year groups are yet making good progress. Leaders have involved staff in writing action plans to address this.
- Leaders and teachers have designed a curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils at Great Doddington. Teachers' planning emphasises skills in reading, writing and mathematics but not at the expense of other subjects. The school describes it as a 'creative curriculum' because staff are keen to stimulate the imagination of pupils. For example, a particular topic will begin by asking pupils what they want to find out. As a result, pupils say that they enjoy most of their lessons, pay attention and learn new things. In addition, pupils enjoy attending the range of extra-curricular activities. These include basketball, dance, choir and Latin. These clubs help pupils to stay healthy or to learn new skills.
- The curriculum teaches pupils fundamental British values. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy by having class debates and through taking part in elections to the school council. They take part in devising classroom rules which, alongside the school rules, they encourage each other to abide by. Pupils also meet visitors from other cultures and faiths, and understand the importance of respecting those whose beliefs and backgrounds are different from their own. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils become reflective and considerate young people, take pride in their achievements and support each other. Parents and pupils are keen to talk about how new children in Reception have a 'buddy' upper junior pupil who will help them to settle in, sort any worries at playtime and, for example, show them how to scrape their plate clean after they have finished their lunch.
- Leaders have used the additional physical education (PE) and sport funding well. As a result, pupils' participation in exercise has increased, and pupils say that they are enjoying PE more.
- Until recently, however, the funding to support disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium was not all spent effectively. Some of the support which disadvantaged pupils received was not sufficiently effective in raising pupils' achievement. However, leaders were unaware of this because they were not monitoring the impact of that support closely enough. As a result, too many disadvantaged pupils did not

make as much progress as they should have done. However, leaders and governors are now checking that intervention is effective and adjusting it where it is not. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making considerably better progress.

■ The governance of the school

- This is increasingly effective. Governors have conducted an audit of their skills and have drawn up a plan to improve further. Like senior leaders, governors have an accurate view of the school and know which subjects and year groups pupils do not yet achieve highly enough in. They also know where teaching needs improvement so that it is consistently good. They have conducted a range of monitoring exercises, including checking pupils' books for progress and talking with pupils about their learning. While very supportive of the acting headteacher and the changes she is making, governors are not afraid to challenge her and other senior leaders where necessary. The headteacher, in turn, welcomes this because she wants every pupil to reach their potential.
- Governors manage the performance of teachers effectively. They expect all teachers to meet clear targets to improve the progress of their pupils. Governors are clear that they do not give pay rises unless there is clear evidence that pupils' progress has improved sufficiently.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The acting headteacher commissioned the local authority to conduct an audit of safeguarding upon her arrival. This found that leaders needed to make improvements to ensure that all pupils were safe. Leaders carried these out swiftly, and believe that safety of pupils is their highest priority. A sample of referrals that the inspector looked at during his visit showed that record keeping was effective and that leaders make prompt referrals to outside agencies whenever they need to. They involve parents well in making sure that their children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although leaders have eliminated any inadequate teaching and teaching is strengthening, it is not yet good overall.
- Not all teachers make sure that the work they give to pupils is sufficiently challenging in all lessons. Pupils' books that the inspector looked at showed that, on too many occasions, teachers had given more work of the same difficulty to those pupils who had shown that they already understood something. Teachers did not give these pupils the more difficult work that they needed in order to move on. In another lesson, a teacher asked pupils to copy out again in their books the same work they had already completed on paper. Because of this, valuable learning time was lost and these pupils did not make sufficient progress.
- Although the teaching of writing has improved, and pupils are making greater progress as a result, not all pupils yet receive sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects across the curriculum. Because of this, pupils' skills in writing are still not high enough.
- While pupils say that most of their work is challenging, some pupils say that some of the work they receive is too easy. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. One pupil remarked that, for example, in science, 'They teach us things we already know.'
- Teachers are skilled in assessing what pupils can do in the former National Curriculum levels. However, now these levels have been abolished nationally, they have not yet begun to use their replacement system for assessment. Staff recognise that they need to attend to this quickly and become proficient in assessing pupils through this. Currently they cannot be sure that pupils are achieving well enough.
- Where there is stronger teaching in the school, it is because teachers have high expectations. This means they set work that makes pupils think hard. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen by the inspector, the teacher had given pupils a mathematics challenge to make shapes of different areas with identical perimeters. One pupil told the inspector, 'It's impossible!' but was still eager to persist. Several minutes later, she was keen to show that she had solved the problem.
- Where the best teaching occurs, teachers also move pupils along quickly to even harder work, once it is clear that they understand. They match this with skilful questioning which probes pupils' thinking.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is good. Staff teach pupils to blend letters together to make words of increasing difficulty. The inspector saw pupils from Year 1 learning to spell correctly, for example, words such as 'frog' by thinking about the sounds each letter makes. At the end of the session, pupils were writing simple sentences and developing confidence in their writing abilities.
- Last year, pupils did not make quick progress at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Many parents were unhappy with the sharp contrast between the teaching styles of Reception and Year 1. Parents told staff

that their children were not ready to sit for long periods on the carpet at the beginning of the new school year. Staff listened to parents and, as a result, adjusted their teaching this year. The inspector saw children happy to learn because they were actively engaged in the lesson, working cooperatively in groups and pairs to find out numbers that could add up to 20.

- Like teachers' planning, marking is becoming increasingly consistent in the school. As a result, more pupils understand, and use, the new 'think pink' marking system. This helps pupils to see where they have made an error, and be able to correct this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- Staff are keen to ensure that all pupils become self-confident young people who talk about what they know, believe and want to learn. They are increasingly able to understand that getting some things wrong in their work is an opportunity to learn something new.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe at school. They say that if they have any concerns or worries, they can approach an adult who will help them. They are proud that bullying does not happen at their school, and that the very occasional instances of name calling are always quickly dealt with by adults.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe because staff teach them about a wide range of risks. They were keen to tell the inspector about how a recent whole-school assembly, given by a local police officer, had told them of the risks at Bonfire Night and at Hallowe'en. Pupils also showed a good understanding about the risks of the internet. Some pupils have made posters, displayed around the school, telling others what to do if they ever receive a text message that worries them.
- Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils stay healthy, with a wide range of opportunities for sport. Three in four pupils have represented the school in a competition, and there have been recent successes in a number of prestigious events. Staff are proud that girls have excelled at those sports traditionally favouring boys, with the girls from Years 3 and 4 winning the Northamptonshire 'World Cup' at football, and girls from Years 5 and 6 winning the district competitions in both football and cricket. The opportunities pupils have to take part in sport and PE help develop their positive attitude, determination and sense of fair play.
- Parents have noticed positive changes in the school's approach to its pupils. One parent who responded to Parent View commented, 'Over the last few terms I have noticed a marked improvement in my children's emotional well-being at school. They now look forward to coming to school and speak positively about their relationships with staff.' Another responded that her children 'feel like they belong to a community'. Almost all parents now agree that their child is now happy and safe at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils has improved, and it is now good. The caring ethos of the school is reflected in its motto of 'Achievement, respect, care and teamwork'. Staff highlight a particular value to promote each month and give stars to recognise pupils who demonstrate that value around the school. As a result, pupils want to show how well they can behave. Classrooms are orderly, calm learning environments. This is because pupils want to do well and work hard.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to try their best. They keenly raise their hands to answer questions in lessons and show a pride in their work. One pupil was keen to show the inspector a striking piece of writing he had done, persuading people not to chop down a forest because of the damage that it would do to wild animals and the environment. Pupils' books that the inspector looked at during the inspection showed that almost all pupils now complete their work with neatness and accuracy.
- Pupils are caring and supportive to each other and behave well in corridors, at lunchtimes and in the playground. There is very little, if any, litter in school.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because, on occasion, their behaviour falls below the high standard expected of them at Great Doddington. For example, in one lesson seen, some pupils were not paying attention and were engaged in low-level disruption rather than doing the work they had been given. Nevertheless, where low-level disruption occurs, it is almost always quickly dealt with by adults.
- Attendance, which in 2014 was below average for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, has improved. Latest attendance figures show that the attendance for these pupils is now broadly in line with, or better than, the attendance for similar pupils shown in the most recent nationally published information.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, like teaching, not all pupils are yet making good or better progress. For example, unconfirmed information for 2015 shows that the progress in writing that most pupils in Year 6 made during their time in Key Stage 2 was significantly below the national average.
- Overall progress for pupils currently in the school is inconsistent. While in some year groups it is good and even, on occasion, outstanding, this is not the case for too many others. Last year, some year groups made barely expected progress in reading, and others little more than expected progress in mathematics. In at least one year group, the progress was also below that expected for writing. The variance in outcomes, including for the most-able pupils, was due to some weak teaching across the school and a lack of consistency between classes.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils in the school did not make the progress expected of them last year. This was because teachers did not take sufficient account of their needs, or give them the support they needed to catch up. Where staff put support in place, much of it was not sufficiently effective. As a result, while some disadvantaged pupils made good progress, too many of them did not. While the gaps therefore narrowed between the attainment of some of these pupils and their classmates, it was not the case for all of them.
- Children make good progress in Reception and by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is significantly above the national average in reading, slightly above the national average in writing and in line in mathematics. The progress in reading and writing in Year 2 is particularly rapid.
- Pupils' progress is variable across Key Stage 2. In 2015, generally, pupils made better progress in reading and writing compared with mathematics, where progress was largely no more than expected. However, a lower proportion of pupils remained at the levels expected for their ages in writing, compared with other subjects.
- Recent work in pupils' books confirms that progress is now accelerating. All year groups made considerably better progress in the second half of last year, compared with the first half. This improvement is continuing into this academic year. Many pupils are learning to calculate accurately and to write with increasing creativity and skill. For example, one pupil had written, 'Suddenly the floor started vibrating. I then realised the whole floor beneath me was suddenly opening. I was trapped. Would I escape?' However, good outcomes are not yet consistent across all year groups and subjects.
- Books looked at by the inspector during his visit show that progress for disadvantaged pupils has now improved considerably. Most, although not all, of these pupils are making faster progress due to much better levels of support. The acting headteacher is insistent that staff monitor the progress of these pupils every six weeks. If the support they receive is proving not to be sufficiently effective, teachers know that they must adjust it.
- The progress for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is good overall. Most pupils are learning quickly because teachers and additional staff support them well. These adults understand pupils' needs and adjust the learning precisely to ensure that the work is appropriately challenging for them. The inspector saw some particularly good examples of this happening during his visit. Information the school collects on the performance of these pupils confirms that these pupils are making good progress.

Early years provision

is good

- The effectiveness of the early years is better than other areas of the school because provision is more effective and, from their starting points, all groups of children make good progress. This is because the early years leader ensures that they receive exciting work that is appropriately challenging for them.
- Children receive effective phonics teaching and make good progress because of this. Last year, the Reception teacher noted that children found some specific aspects of phonics challenging. As a result, she has adapted her teaching to make sure that children's progress is now brisker in these aspects. She is ambitious for all pupils to make quick progress in all areas of learning. Staff give the most-able children particularly challenging tasks to make sure that they learn quickly. Staff use additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged to support them effectively. As a result, these children and children who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1. By the time they leave in July, slightly more children achieve a

good level of development than last year's national average. In almost all areas, the proportion achieving the expected levels was at least in line with, and in many cases above, the most recently published national averages.

- Children learn to cooperate well with each other, to take turns and to work together. They are well behaved and motivated by an exciting curriculum. The early years environment keeps children safe while stimulating their curiosity to explore and do new things. For example, pupils went on a recent hunt to find particular letters in the outdoor area. Staff teach children how to stay safe by showing them, for example, how adults always must take care with their knife when cutting up children's snack fruit. 'Smarty the Penguin' teaches children to keep safe when using technology.
- The Reception teacher and her teaching assistant are keen to involve parents as much as possible in the education of their children. They provide a 'parent pit stop' to show parents what work they have planned for parents to do, and send additional copies home. They have introduced 'Wow Books' which parents fill in at home to note the achievements and milestones their children make out of school. These then return to class, where staff tell children how proud they are of them. As a result, children become increasingly self-confident and keen to learn new things. Homework that is appropriate for pupils' age and abilities helps to extend the skills they have learned at school. Staff also ensure that parents know the progress their child is making.
- Although provision in the early years is good, it is not outstanding because not all children make sustained and substantial progress. For example, by the time they leave Reception, fewer children than nationally exceed the national standard in a small number of areas.

School details

Unique reference number	121821
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10008292

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Chris Davies
Headteacher	Teresa Davis
Telephone number	01933 225814
Website	www.greatdoddingtonprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@gt-doddington.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2011

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly below average.
- In 2015, the school met the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed each class in the school, most on at least two occasions each. In total, he observed 14 lessons, or parts of lessons. The inspector also checked pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and as they moved about the school during the day.
- The inspector held meetings with senior and middle leaders in the school, including the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the early years, and the subject leader for mathematics. The inspector also met with members of the school's governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector discussed pupils' work with them in lessons, heard pupils read and met more formally with them in a group to discuss particular aspects of their experiences at the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' attainment and progress, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's self-evaluation document. He also looked at work in pupils' books, anonymised records of the performance management of staff and school documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors analysed the responses, including the comments made, from 50 parents and carers on Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire).

Inspection team

Roary Pownall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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