

Muskham Primary School

Main Street, North Muskham, Newark NG23 6HD

Inspection dates 8–9 December 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Many pupils achieve standards securely above those expected for their age across the school in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make the best progress they are capable of because the school provides very effectively for their varying needs.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils very well. As a result, they plan accurately to meet their needs across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils have made accelerated progress since the last inspection and attainment gaps have closed significantly.
- Pupils are excited about learning. They demonstrate this both in lessons and through their homework. Pupils are safe and well cared for and their parents agree.
- In the early years, teachers know the children very well and plan challenging activities that engage and capture their imaginations. As a result, children make good progress across the early learning goals.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are inspirational. Together, they have successfully halted the decline in pupils' standards through strong, effective leadership of teaching and learning. They know the strengths of the school well and plan effectively to address any remaining weakness swiftly.
- A determined and committed Chair leads the governing body. The governing body provides effective and robust challenge to school leaders. Since the last inspection, it has developed efficient and effective systems to check the quality of education at the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is of the same consistently high quality as some of the best teaching in the school.
- The spelling of some pupils is inaccurate. Not all teachers are addressing this effectively, so that progress in writing slows.
- The wider leadership team is new. Not all leaders are well established in their roles and, as a result, they are not as effective as others are.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all teaching matches the most challenging and inspiring teaching in the school.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing and their achievement in spelling by ensuring that:
 - teachers correct inaccuracies in spelling consistently in line with the school policy
 - older pupils have regular opportunities to check their own spelling and use available resources to correct their work accurately.
- Ensure that all leaders have the support and training necessary so that they become as effective in their roles as the best leaders in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is inspirational. He is determined to ensure that Muskham Primary School achieves the highest outcomes possible for its pupils. Along with the excellent deputy headteacher, they have improved outcomes significantly in mathematics, reading and writing across the school. This is as a result of targeted and effective improvements in the quality of teaching and changes to the curriculum that challenge and engage pupils of all abilities and interests.
- The senior leadership of the school has acted with urgency to build a staff team that is able to work together extremely well to benefit pupils. They have successfully passed this vision for excellence on to all those involved and, as a result, without exception, all the pupils, staff and parents spoken with during the inspection said the school is a different place from the time of its previous inspection.
- Senior leaders carefully analyse the quality of teaching and track the progress of pupils robustly. As a result, no pupil is 'left behind'. Those who are not making accelerated progress are picked up quickly and interventions are put in place to remedy the shortfall. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said their tasks are much more difficult and more is expected of them – but they like it and enjoy coming to school!
- School leaders carefully check the impact of pupil premium spending. Current pupils supported by this funding are making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Senior leaders are well supported by middle leaders. The wider leadership team is relatively new and not all leaders have the same wealth of experience as others. Senior leaders know there is some work to do to ensure that all leaders function as highly as each other, and have put plans in place to ensure that this happens.
- Leadership of special educational needs is thorough, effective and imaginative. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have access to the full curriculum. Their particular needs are met through interventions either within their classrooms or in small groups at other times, for example in an early morning club. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The relatively new curriculum is a growing strength of the school. The range and depth of the subjects planned for have been designed to encourage pupils to think deeply about the world they live in. The curriculum motto of 'a village school with a world view' perfectly mirrors the approach taken by school leaders. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded throughout the wealth of experiences they have at the school. The result of this can be seen in pupils' respect for each other, their fairness and tolerance and their growing understanding of different faiths and communities beyond their everyday experience.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers are effective. Teachers value the many opportunities they have to develop their professional skills whether through in-school training or training elsewhere. School leaders keep a careful track of the impact of this training and its effectiveness within the classroom. Leaders are quick to address poor performance and are not prepared to accept anything less than good-quality teaching across the school.
- The additional sports funding received by the school from the government is used to provide increased opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in swimming to ensure that all pupils are able to swim by the time they leave the school. All those who had this opportunity improved their skills and confidence. Further funding is used to bring the support of a professional coach. Nearly all pupils said that these sessions increased their confidence to take part in different sports. The impact this funding has had on teachers' confidence to teach sport better is not well documented at present.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, the role of the governing body has completely changed. The Chair acted with urgency to address the weaknesses in governance identified in the last inspection report. Through his determined and committed leadership, systems for checking the quality of education at the school are robust, effective and challenging to school leaders.
 - The same ambition to improve Muskham Primary School seen in school leaders is reflected in the governing body. Consequently, they are exceptionally well informed, know the school well and act decisively to address any areas of concern.
 - There is a real sense of collective responsibility among governors. Governors take their roles very seriously. As a result, governors regularly attend training courses to support their development.
 - Responsibilities for checking the overall effectiveness of the school are shared out among a wide

group of governors. Governors match the skills they use in their everyday lives to ensure that all aspects of school life are checked systematically.

- Governors track the progress of pupils carefully and ask challenging questions of school leaders if they are not satisfied with the information they receive. The governing body has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching and learning. Governors visit the school regularly to see for themselves the impact of teaching on the progress of pupils.
- The governing body makes sure that the financial management of the school is robust and teachers are rewarded for the quality of their work. The governing body ensures that the headteacher's performance is checked through consultation with an external adviser.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Since the last inspection, school leaders have successfully addressed the concerns raised about the safety and supervision of pupils during the school day. School leaders, including the governing body, are vigilant in ensuring that all staff undertake the appropriate training to manage their roles to safeguard pupils. The school cooperates well with a wide variety of external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils are safe. School leaders understand the need to protect pupils from extremist views and radicalisation. They have undergone the necessary training to fulfil their roles.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. They encourage pupils to ask questions, think deeply and share their learning with each other. In most classes, pupils of all abilities work hard from the beginning to the end of lessons and make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They make good use of the assessment information they have to plan tasks that closely reflect the learning needs of pupils. Most teachers carefully assess the progress of pupils during lessons, change tasks and use a wide variety of strategies to ensure that pupils stay on track and keep learning. Since the beginning of the year, work in pupils' books in mathematics and writing reflects the good, and in some classes outstanding progress pupils make across the curriculum.
- Where pupils make the best progress, teachers make the most of every learning opportunity. Pupils take responsibility for their learning because the tasks are so well matched to their needs. Pupils of all abilities learn at a fast pace and teachers prompt and extend pupils' thinking through well-formed questions that develop pupils' understanding further. In the Year 2 class, pupils insisted on working at lunchtime to complete a challenge they had been set. This was because they so enjoyed the task and wanted to 'beat' the problem. While teaching is good across the school, this high-quality challenge is not yet reflected in every class.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is of a consistent quality across all year groups. Pupils have many opportunities to respond to their teacher's feedback, correct mistakes and deepen their understanding. However, not all teachers follow the school policy of 'zero tolerance' for spelling mistakes in pupils' work. On occasion, mistakes in pupils' spelling corrections remained unchecked. As a result, pupils' progress in this key area of learning slows.
- In mathematics, teachers deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts through regular problem-solving tasks. These tasks help pupils apply their knowledge of numbers to 'real life' challenges. Tasks are open-ended so that pupils of different abilities can work at their own pace and level of understanding. In the Year 6 class, for example, pupils were challenged to write equations using only the number four. The outcomes from the activity demonstrated some pupils' understanding of basic equations to the most-able pupils' mastery of complex equations. As a result, all pupils made good progress.
- The work of teaching assistants is well planned. They work closely with teachers and use their training and skills to provide effective support to different groups of pupils. This has a demonstrable impact on the progress of the pupils they work with.

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 are unfailingly polite and friendly with each other, and with adults and visitors in school. Throughout the inspection, pupils were keen to 'show off' their school because they are so proud of it.
- In nearly every instance, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils understand that they have a responsibility to manage themselves and their learning. They complete their homework tasks and contribute to the wider life of the school through taking responsibilities for 'jobs' and helping each other.
- School leaders have developed opportunities for pupils to explore and develop their understanding of wider world issues and pupils are open to this. The whole school considered recent events in the news from Paris and pupils' responses demonstrated their growing understanding of tolerance, understanding of other cultures and of other peoples' right to hold differing views to their own.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They understand that there are dangers when using the internet. The school engages well with them if pupils express concerns about sites they visit. The youngest children are aware of 'stranger danger', and how to play safely with their friends.
- Pupils listen respectfully in assemblies and adopt a quiet, contemplative attitude during times of reflection.
- Pupils have been effectively taught about different types of bullying. They are aware that using the word 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable. School leaders ensure that this is addressed with expediency on the rare occasion it arises. The school explores other types of bullying effectively in 'circle time'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and around school pupils' behaviour is orderly and usually self-managed. Only on rare occasions during the inspection were pupils asked to lower their voices or refocus on tasks during the school day.
- Pupils said that the exciting changes in the curriculum and greater challenge in learning have been key factors in improving their behaviour in class and around school. Pupils say more is expected of them, and they want to rise to the challenge. There is still a residue of untidy presentation and some rare off-task behaviour. However, school leaders are addressing these with urgency.
- Adults support pupils to behave well through a comprehensive reward system. This system recognises those pupils who behave well consistently as well as those who need some help to do so. They understand their moral responsibility to allow others to be free from being distracted so that everyone can learn and grow together.
- Pupils' attendance is good and the proportion of pupils attending school regularly is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing are rapidly improving across the school. This is because leaders have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have ensured that the curriculum and the quality of teaching have improved to match their expectations. The rates of progress pupils make in all three subjects have accelerated rapidly in the last year.
- A high proportion of pupils enter Year 1 with skills above those typical for their age. Due to good-quality teaching, they continue to make good and sometimes outstanding progress, across Key Stage 1. Unvalidated outcomes from the 2015 assessments indicated that in mathematics, reading and writing, pupils' attainment was significantly above the national average in all three subjects at the expected and higher levels. Outcomes for all groups of pupils were equally above their peers nationally.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is well above the national average. Boys' outcomes are similar to girls'. The proportion of pupils achieving this standard has risen over the last three years. Pupils' outcomes in this standard have improved more quickly than rates of improvement nationally.
- The progress and attainment of current pupils is improving rapidly. School assessment information and pupils' books show that many pupils are making accelerated progress from starting points that in some

cases were lower than they ought to have been. In mathematics, reading and writing, different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils supported through the pupil premium, now achieve well.

- The previous gaps in attainment between pupils and age-related expectations have completely closed at Key Stage 1. There is a similar picture in lower Key Stage 2. This is because leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils have the resources and focused teaching they need to 'catch up' and close the gaps. Some attainment gaps still exist in mathematics, reading and writing in upper Key Stage 2. Leaders have risen to the challenge and gaps are closing rapidly. However, the quality of spelling is not as good as it should be and this is slowing pupils' progress in writing.
- There is a residue of underachievement indicated in the Year 6 outcomes from the 2015 tests. Pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading and writing is broadly in line with national average. However, not enough pupils achieved the higher levels in mathematics and writing. The proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing is significantly below that of their peers nationally. Pupils' progress in mathematics and reading is broadly similar to their peers nationally.
- All parents and carers spoken with during the inspection spoke very highly of the changes in the school. They acknowledged the rapid progress their children have made since the last inspection. Parents believe their children make good progress. This view is reflected in the high proportion of responses on Parent View.

Early years provision

is good

- Children settle very quickly into school because the early years leader plans their induction well. The strong links between home and school mean the youngest children happily come to school and begin learning straight away. Outcomes for the youngest children have improved over the last two years.
- The school manages the learning of different groups of learners well. From their starting points in Nursery to the end of the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average and prepares children well for the next stage of their education in Year 1. A proportion of the most-able children exceed this measure. The new early years leader is ambitious to increase this proportion and has addressed this in her planning. Targets for improving the attainment and progress for the most-able children are set to exceed last year's outcomes. Current school data suggest they are on track to achieve their targets.
- Adults know the children very well. Teachers plan children's learning based around their detailed observations. All adults are quick to notice when children become fascinated in a game and plan children's learning around those fascinations. As a result of this, children sustain their engagement in their tasks and are keen to develop their 'games' further. Consequently, different groups of pupils make good progress towards the early learning goals.
- Good-quality discussion and assessment ensure that adults intervene in children's learning in a focused and effective way. Targeted questioning and the provision of good-quality resources help to challenge children. During a phonics lesson (letters and the sounds they make), the most-able children were challenged appropriately to write unfamiliar words using their newly acquired understanding of the phoneme 'ch'. In writing the word 'check', one child eloquently explained his understanding of this word in relation to chess. The teacher encouraged others to share their understanding of the word and children gained a great deal from this activity.
- The learning environment has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is bright and fresh and supports children's growing understanding of the world through exciting resources and experiences. As a result, those children not engaged in activities with adults make good use of their learning time and engage in tasks that develop their growing skills and acquisition of knowledge. Children behave very well and enjoy learning together.
- Leaders develop strong links with parents. Leaders value the views of parents and use their observations and evaluations of their children's learning to enhance their planning. There are equally strong relationships with external agencies.
- Systems for keeping children safe are effective. Strong working relationships with external agencies ensure that children's needs are addressed quickly should issues arise. Training to protect children from harm is undertaken regularly by all the adults within the early years. Adults check the learning environment to ensure that it is safe for children and assess activities carefully for risks. However, these assessments are not recorded systematically to indicate who carried them out and when. Plans are in place to formalise these risk assessments so that this omission is put right.

School details

Unique reference number	122663
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10005358

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	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Bourne
Headteacher	Mr Russell Gray
Telephone number	01636 702254
Website	www.muskham.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@muskham.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 July 2014

Information about this school

- Muskham Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average. The proportion supported at School Action is also well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets 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.
- The school has entered into a formal collaboration with The Minster School.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school shortly after the previous inspection in acting roles. They were appointed to their substantive posts from September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, six jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work in their books jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books within the lessons and looked at their work on the walls around school.
- Two inspectors spoke with two different groups of pupils. First, to seek their views on pupils' behaviour around school and about how the adults care for their welfare. Second, inspectors asked about how teachers help pupils to make progress in their learning. Inspectors sought the views of other pupils while observing lessons. Inspectors viewed the behaviour and attitudes of pupils during playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. Inspectors also met with a local authority advisor and the deputy headteacher from The Minster School.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs leader and the early years leader.
- Inspectors analysed a range of school documentation including data and information on the attainment and progress of pupils, attendance, safeguarding and the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were gathered by speaking with them at the beginning of the school day and from the 99 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took into account the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jan Connor, lead inspector
Deborah Mosely

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted 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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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