

# Mears Ashby CofE Endowed Primary School

North Street, Mears Ashby, Northampton NN6 0DW

<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 April 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils have declined significantly since the last inspection.
- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils underachieve because teachers do not challenge them enough.
- Over time, teachers and teaching assistants have not had high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Teaching assistants do not support pupils' progress effectively in lessons.
- Teachers do not plan lessons in mathematics that are based on previous assessments of what pupils can do, nor do they provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write in a range of subjects to a high standard.
- The school leadership team is undergoing changes. Some leaders are new to their roles and so their strategic roles and responsibilities are not developed. Leaders have not tracked the progress of groups of pupils in sufficient detail to make sure they have the appropriate support and challenge they need. Consequently, they are unable to account effectively to governors for this aspect of their work.
- Until recently, leaders and governors have not taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching.
- Behaviour requires improvement because low-level disruption in some lessons interferes with pupils' learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Over recent months, the executive headteacher and governors have made great strides and implemented important changes rigorously, which are beginning to raise standards.
- Children have made a good start in the Reception class this year. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- The newly introduced curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting for the pupils.
- The safeguarding of pupils is effective.

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by making sure that:
  - the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are developed, so that the leaders are able to have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils and governors are able to hold the leaders fully to account
  - leaders analyse in detail the progress pupils make, so that governors can hold them to account for the progress of all groups of pupils throughout the school
  - the leadership of the early years is developed, in order to be able to bring about long-term and measurable improvements in this stage of the school
  - the performance management of teachers is undertaken effectively
  - pupil premium funding is used effectively and monitored closely, so that governors can be certain it is having a positive impact on those pupils who are entitled to it
  - the school's website is fully compliant with government requirements, so that parents have all the information they need
  - leaders and governors find ways to strengthen communication with parents, so that parents' faith in the school is restored.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that outcomes for pupils improve, by ensuring that:
  - all staff demonstrate the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve, by providing them with tasks that challenge their thinking and build on previous learning
  - teachers make effective use of accurate assessments, so that the learning is matched well to the different abilities of the pupils in the class, including the most able pupils
  - the skills of the teaching assistants in all classes are developed, so that they can maximise the progress pupils make
  - pupils have more opportunities to write across a range of subjects, with the expectation that they will apply the skills of handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling that they have learned in their English lessons
  - teachers embed pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, by using accurate assessments effectively to build upon previous learning and by providing opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning skills
  - school procedures, such as those concerning assessment, are applied consistently by all staff
  - low-level disruption in lessons is eradicated.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite some strong leadership from the executive headteacher and the governing body, other leadership roles within the school are underdeveloped and some leaders have been in post only for short periods of time. For example, leadership roles for English, mathematics and the early years are yet to be established. Consequently, leadership overall is not bringing improvements as quickly as it could.
- Leaders do not analyse the progress of all groups of pupils across the school in detail. For example, they do not compare the progress of pupils with special educational needs and disability with national expectations.
- Leaders have not used the small amount of pupil premium funding that the school receives well. They are unable to account for the impact it has made on the outcomes of pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- Leaders have not communicated effectively with all parents. Several parents expressed concern that they have not been kept well informed. As a result, they do not understand the need for some of the changes.
- The executive headteacher and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have taken determined action to bring about improvements, and know which of the changes they have implemented are making a positive difference and which are still in the early stages of development.
- The executive headteacher has introduced a system to track the progress that pupils are making. Teachers have received training to use the system. They have worked alongside teachers from other schools to make sure that their assessments of what the pupils know and can do are accurate.
- The executive headteacher, supported by the governors, has undertaken a root and branch review of the work of the school this year. They have made some fundamental changes to staffing and to the organisation in school, such as where classes are based and arrangements for parents' evenings. Some parents are supportive of these changes. For example, one parent commented to the inspector, 'There were issues before, but if the changes help the children then it's all for the good.'
- The changes to staffing have resulted in some classes having several teachers over the course of the year. The changes to staffing have been necessary in the long-term interests of the school. Nevertheless, these changes have been disruptive to pupils' progress over the past year.
- Leaders have introduced performance management arrangements for teachers this year. The executive headteacher has set challenging targets for teachers. She monitors progress towards teachers' targets regularly and provides governors with information, so that they can check how well performance targets are being met. A full annual cycle of performance management has not yet taken place and so it is too early to judge whether arrangements for the management of teachers' performance are effective.
- The executive headteacher has provided teachers and teaching assistants with professional training and development to help improve their practice. Some of this training is bearing fruit. For example, pupils are increasingly engaged in learning and understand what they have to achieve in lessons; however, some professional development has been less effective. For example, teachers are not using assessments effectively to build on pupils' previous learning.
- The leader with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and disability checks on the progress these pupils make against targets that have been set for them.
- The governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and disability asks searching questions about the provision for these pupils. She is gaining an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of this aspect of school leadership.
- The executive headteacher has introduced a new school website. It gives parents some helpful information. For example, curriculum plans and class homework are posted on the site. Not all of the statutory information, however, is on the website, such as details about provision for pupils with special educational needs and disability, or about the use of the primary sport funding. This means the website is not compliant with government requirements.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding premium well, for example the funding issued to employ a sports coach, who teaches PE. Teachers are able to develop their skills in teaching PE, when they work alongside the coach.
- The executive headteacher has implemented a curriculum that is interesting and designed to inspire and to excite the pupils. The curriculum is organised into themes that begin with a 'stunning start', move on to a 'marvellous middle' and work towards a 'fabulous finish'. A 'concept map' at the start of each theme

makes pupils think about what they know already and what they would like to learn. Visitors and trips bring learning to life for the pupils.

- Pupils learn about faiths and cultures that are different from their own in Britain and across the world. The school has strong links with schools in India and Ghana. The headteacher from the Ghanaian school has visited Mears Ashby. Pupils email their peers in Ghana and send books, equipment and toys to them. Pupils say, 'We help to improve their learning' and are proud of the links the schools have.
- Pupils learn about the importance of playing a part in their school community through the school's focus on values such as kindness, respect and community. They enjoy taking responsibility in their school, for example by setting up assemblies, writing prayers and organising equipment for PE lessons. Pupils know this is helping them to be prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have opportunities to be reflective, for example when listening to music. When sharing their views, they are generally respectful of the views and opinions of their peers.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club. They are busy and purposeful, with activities to interest the pupils, such as baking, sport and craft projects.
- The school has benefited from the support it has received from Cranford Primary School, Five Wells Teaching School Alliance, the local authority and the Peterborough Diocese to begin to improve leadership, governance and teaching across the school. This support has made a positive impact, for example on developing governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Last year, governors, rightly, recognised that significant improvements were required across the school. They have supported the executive headteacher to implement the necessary changes.
  - Governors have undergone a period of training and development. They are now more able to hold school leaders to account with rigour. They visit the school more regularly and have a formal timetable for checking the work of the school. This has enabled them to form a more accurate view of the school's strengths and areas of weakness.
  - Governors, rightly, recognise that, while some of the changes made this year are making a positive impact on the quality of provision, there is a need to strengthen the leadership team, so that roles and responsibilities can be shared.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The executive headteacher puts the highest importance on safeguarding pupils. All the appropriate checks are made when a new member of staff starts at the school. Governors visit school to make sure that records of the checks are well kept. The executive headteacher has made sure that staff have received training in safeguarding, so that they know what to look for and how to raise any concerns they may have. She has introduced a signing-in system to make sure pupils are dropped off at breakfast club safely.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate**

- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is too variable. Too often, the expectations that teachers have of what pupils can achieve in lessons are low.
- The school's assessment information shows that, over the year, not all teachers have used the school's system correctly or accurately. Consequently, assessment information is not always reliable.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. For example, when pupils revisit aspects of the curriculum, such as play scripts or fractions, the teacher does not routinely challenge the pupils, or build on their learning, so that the pupils work at a higher level than they did previously. As a result, pupils across the school are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching assistants do not support pupils effectively with their learning. They do not use questions well to deepen pupils' understanding. Occasionally, when pupils say that they do not know what to do, teaching assistants do not provide sufficient explanation to make learning clearer for pupils. This leads to pupils becoming confused.
- Time is not used well routinely in lessons. Occasionally, groups of pupils are marking time while they are waiting for the teacher to finish talking to other pupils. This slows progress.
- Pupils are making slow progress in mathematics because teachers do not regularly plan sequences of lessons that build upon the skills that have been taught previously. Teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunities to embed the skills they have learned well. Teachers give pupils some opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving situations; however, opportunities to develop pupils'

mathematical reasoning skills are rare.

- In English, teachers have not had high enough expectations of pupils. Not all teachers make effective use of assessment to plan future learning. Consequently, pupils of all abilities are not set challenging targets for their work and their progress is limited.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills that they have learned, when they are writing in different subjects. In some classes, teachers have not insisted on high standards of presentation throughout the year, although there are signs that this is beginning to improve.
- The school has not ensured that interventions to support pupils with special educational needs and disability benefit the pupils consistently.
- The executive headteacher has brought about some improvements in the quality of teaching. For example, the inspector saw some teachers using questions effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. When this happens, teachers relate the concept they are teaching to previous skilfully learning, so that pupils can make sense of what they are learning to do.
- Increasingly, workbooks show that teachers are giving feedback to pupils in line with the school policy, but this is inconsistent across subjects and classes. Pupils say that they can use this feedback to help them improve their work.
- Where learning is effective, teachers use their subject knowledge in English and mathematics to explain concepts to pupils clearly. This broadens pupils' understanding successfully.
- Teachers have received training to improve the quality of their teaching. Leaders have forged close links with Cranford Church of England Primary School. Teachers in both schools have worked together to plan the curriculum and to improve their teaching skills, for example in using questions to promote understanding and in matching the work to the needs of the pupils. In one class, the inspector saw that this is having an impact, as the teacher was implementing the teaching strategies. When this happens, pupils' progress quickens.
- The executive headteacher has introduced a set of 'non-negotiables'. These are expectations that must be met in every lesson. They include correct presentation and pupils having the learning objective for the lesson explained to them.
- Pupils know what the 'non-negotiables' are and they say that teachers are now insisting on these standards much more than they did previously. Pupils recognise that this is having an impact on improving the quality of their work.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school policy, introduced by the executive headteacher this year. A colourful display in the school cloakroom showed that pupils have produced some high-quality homework and it is displayed proudly for all to see.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's core values have a high profile. The school is promoting eight values this academic year, which staff focus on in turn. During the inspection, the value was 'kindness'. Teachers referred to this value during assembly. One of the youngest pupils proudly told the headteacher he was showing kindness to another child, after he had helped his classmate.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and proud to attend their school. They are generally respectful to each other when they share ideas in class.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and remain focused when the teacher is talking to them.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that they have someone in school to talk to, if they are worried. As one pupil expressed to the inspector, 'I have friends who care about me. I care about my friends and the teachers care about all of us.'
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet. They say that they learn about this in school. They know what they should do if they see something on the internet that worries them.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that if it does happen they are confident someone will help them.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Not all teachers or teaching assistants are insisting upon high enough standards of behaviour in class. This means that low-level disruption is present in some lessons and teachers have to interrupt the lesson to deal with it.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved considerably since the arrival of the executive headteacher.
- Almost all pupils move around school in an orderly fashion. They are well mannered to adults and to each other.
- Pupils play together well on the playground. Younger and older pupils play running games, or play with skipping ropes, or balls. The inspector did not see any incidents of poor behaviour during playtime. Adults interacted well with pupils. Those pupils who finished eating a piece of fruit put the skin in the dustbin immediately, showing care for their school environment.
- Attendance is above the national average, indicating that pupils enjoy coming to school. Persistent absence is low in comparison to the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

### are inadequate

- Although pupils' workbooks show that pupils in Year 6 are making faster progress than over recent months, this has not been enough to make up for previously slow progress. Consequently, pupils are not on track to make the progress that they are capable of achieving.
- Pupils' workbooks across the school show that pupils of all abilities are not making good progress. Books show that teachers have not consistently had high expectations of what different groups of pupils can achieve and they have not used assessment well to build upon previous knowledge. This has led to some pupils repeating mistakes, or working continually at a level that is easy for them.
- The executive headteacher has introduced a method of assessing pupils and tracking their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not all teachers have used this system correctly this year. As a result, teachers have not used assessment reliably to inform their planning.
- The school's assessment information and pupils' books show that the most able pupils are not consistently making the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing or mathematics in key stages 1 or 2.
- Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan make good progress due to the specific support they receive which meets their particular needs. Not all pupils with special educational needs and disability, however, have targets that are sufficiently precise to be sure they are making the progress of which they are capable.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils in each year group to report on their progress compared to their peers nationally.
- Pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well when they read unfamiliar words. They make effective use of other clues to help them understand the text, such as looking at a picture. As they get older, pupils develop strong preferences for favourite authors and genres.

## Early years provision

### requires improvement

- Though children are provided for well currently, the long-term strategic view of the early years is in the early stages of development.
- Not all staff in the Reception class contribute reliably to assessments of children. As a result, children's learning is not evaluated sufficiently for the teacher to be able to plan to build upon children's learning.
- The executive headteacher has appointed a Reception class teacher, who has made sure that the children have made a good start to school life.
- The teacher assesses children's progress regularly and provides children with opportunities for learning that challenge them so that they make secure progress from their starting points.
- Phonics is taught well in the Reception class. Children are encouraged to use their newfound skills to read and write words that make them think hard. The teacher makes sure that she matches her questions well to the ability of each child. The teacher challenges the most able children to write more difficult words.

One child successfully wrote 'shelving', while another wrote, 'It is lit'. Both children were rightly proud of their achievements.

- The executive headteacher has recently improved the outdoor area for the Reception class. The teacher effectively plans learning activities for this area that engage and interest the children, such as planting seeds, writing or bouncing balls. The executive headteacher is keen to improve this even further.
- Children behave well in class. They share and take turns because the teacher has set high expectations and clear routines for them to follow.
- The teacher has successfully engaged parents. Parents are encouraged to share with the teacher the successes their children have at home. Parents are welcome to come into class and share their children's work.
- The teacher's assessment information shows that the pupils have made at least expected progress over the year. Children are developing skills and knowledge that will prepare them well for starting Year 1.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122026
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005715

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tobin James
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Julie Grey
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 810 063
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mearsashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk">www.mearsashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:bursar@mearsashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk">bursar@mearsashby.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 September 2010

## Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is lower than average. This is additional government funding for those pupils who are looked after by the local authority, or who are entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disability is higher than average.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club run by the governing body.
- The school does not meet requirements for the publication of information on the school's website. For example, information about the use of the primary sport funding and provision for pupils with special educational needs and disability is incomplete.
- There have been significant changes to staffing over this academic year.
- The school receives support from the local authority, Peterborough Diocese, Five Wells Teaching School Alliance and Cranford Church of England Primary School.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, or parts of lessons, and an assembly. All of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading, talked to groups of pupils about their work, and observed them at playtime. The inspector observed an assembly and part of lunchtime in the hall where pupils were eating.
- The inspector spoke to the chair of the governing body and three other governors, two representatives from the local authority, and a representative from Peterborough Diocese.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leader with responsibility for special educational needs and disability, and the early years teacher.
- The inspector took account of 33 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the local authority's school effectiveness report minutes, the most recent pupil's assessment information, and documents relating to teachers' performance management.
- The inspector took into account the views of staff and pupils through the online surveys and during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Di Mullan, 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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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