

Helpringham Primary School

Highgate, Helpringham, Lincolnshire NG34 0RD

Inspection dates

22–23 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require 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

- Disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as they should and gaps in attainment between them and their peers are not closing quickly enough.
- Pupils do not develop writing skills that are appropriate for their age.
- Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not high in a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Consequently, not enough pupils reach the standards they should.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles. Although they are beginning to use the assessment information they have to address weaknesses in pupils' achievement, this is not well established. As a result, they are unable to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work in improving outcomes for pupils.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is not good enough.
- Although teachers are growing in confidence in using the school's new assessment system, they do not use it well enough to plan learning that meets the needs of different groups of pupils. This slows learning across the school.
- The curriculum plans in English and mathematics do not support teachers to plan learning that is in line with national expectations for pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The school improvement plan does not identify precisely targets for the proportions of pupils who should be making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the work of the governing body is weakened in holding leaders more closely to account for their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is effective. He has acted rapidly to halt the decline in the quality of education at the school. He is well supported by the newly established governing body.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. They flourish and make good progress because learning is well planned and exciting.
- The development of pupils' reading and spelling skills is good. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading across the school.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare of pupils is secure. Pupils feel safe at school and the arrangements to safeguard them are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good in all classes by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can attain in all subjects, including English and mathematics
 - ensuring teachers have a secure understanding of the year group expectation for teaching in English and mathematics and that they use this information to set more challenging work for pupils of different abilities
 - ensuring teachers are able to use the school's assessment systems accurately so that planning for learning moves pupils' progress on at faster rates
 - ensuring the presentation in pupils' work is of a high standard and reflects pupils' understanding that nothing less than good will do when recording their work.

- Raise the attainment and progress of:
 - disadvantaged pupils in all subjects so that gaps in learning between them and all pupils nationally close quickly
 - all pupils in writing so that they gain the skills needed to meet age-related expectations or better, including in grammar and punctuation.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring subject leaders gain the necessary skills, understanding and knowledge they need to challenge their colleagues to improve outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring subject leaders have the time to establish exactly what teachers need to teach in English and mathematics so that pupils are working within age-related expectations and that subject leaders use this information to support teachers to close gaps in attainment quickly across the school
 - ensuring there are clear targets in the school development plan for the proportions of pupils who will be making better than expected progress in each year group, so that the governing body is able to hold leaders to account for their work in raising attainment for all pupils, but particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

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 **requires improvement**

- Since his appointment, the new headteacher has acted quickly to put plans in place to address areas of weakness in the quality of teaching and learning. This has been timely in order to halt a decline in standards and the progress of pupils. He has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. He has wasted no time in ensuring that systems for safeguarding pupils are secure. He has begun to challenge teaching that is less than good and has set a vision for the school where nothing less than good will do. He has successfully gained the trust and commitment of other leaders in the school, including the newly formed governing body. As a result, the school is poised to move forward at a pace that should benefit all pupils.
- The headteacher is very well supported by the local authority adviser. She has worked alongside him to evaluate the quality of provision in school. This adviser has secured the services of a highly experienced headteacher and her team from the Great Oaks Federation to add capacity to the leadership team, while the school's own subject leaders gain the skills they need to fully support the headteacher to secure school improvement.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles. They are determined, keen to learn and responding well to the challenge of raising standards. Their effectiveness in bringing about improvements in the past has been limited by a lack of training and time to carry out their roles. The new headteacher has begun to remedy this. Subject leaders have a better understanding of the school's assessment data and use it to challenge and support their colleagues. However, they do not have a broad enough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. For example, they do not know if teachers are teaching pupils at nationally expected standards for their age in English and mathematics. Consequently, they are not as effective as they should be in bringing about rapid school improvement.
- The school's development plan is fit for purpose and focuses correctly on improving the quality of teaching. The headteacher has identified the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers.
- Good-quality training opportunities, in-school coaching and school-to-school visits are beginning to address areas of weakness quickly. Performance management systems are fully in place. Targets hold teachers rigorously to account for their work. Staff know they must meet their targets to progress up the pay scale. As a result, the headteacher has successfully set the standard for high-quality practice across the school.
- The headteacher and the governing body have used the pupil premium funding in a variety of ways, such as increased staffing, and providing wider opportunities, such as school visits. The school's assessment information indicates that pupils eligible for this funding are making progress at similar rates to other pupils in school, but this is inconsistent. However, they are not making the accelerated progress they need to make in order to close the attainment gaps in mathematics, reading, and writing in particular. Governors' systems for checking how well these pupils are doing are in the early stages of development and are not yet effective.
- The sports leader ensures that the physical education and sports funding is used effectively. Leaders have successfully developed participation in a wide variety of sports such as sailing, water polo, pistol shooting and 'ultimate frisbee'. Opportunities to broaden pupils' involvement in sport have resulted in nearly every pupil in key stage 2 representing their school in competitions. The school are now the defending champions of the local area tri-golf tournament. Pupils develop resilience and stamina through involvement in sport at this school.
- The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. Leaders ensure pupils learn from a range of subjects. For example, pupils explore, investigate and learn about the world through regular outdoor learning. Opportunities for residential visits, 'sleep overs' in school and sporting opportunities develop pupils' wider interests well. However, the standards pupils reach are not high enough, for example in subjects such as history and art, to fully develop their skills and knowledge to age-related expectations.
- Provision both in lessons and assemblies promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. For example, pupils participate in the National Gallery's 'Take One Picture' initiative and study famous artists' work. Visits to the seaside, Tattershall Castle and the Lincoln Collection help pupils to gain a broader understanding of the world around them. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of democracy and others' rights to hold views different to their own. Pupils' care and support for charities demonstrates their commitment to support and care for others in need.
- The school has gone through a period of change this year. One parent wrote, 'this is a fantastic school, we have a headteacher who is fighting to make this school excellent'. The majority of parents agree their children are happy and safe. Governors recognise that in a period of change some parents may feel

unsettled and unsure of what the future holds for the school. The school has been set on a course of improvement and the governing body and the school staff are keen to ensure everyone in the school community works together in partnership to the benefit of the pupils.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body has recently been reorganised. When the previous headteacher left, the long-standing chair stepped down from the role of chair but remains on the governing body for continuity and support. The rest of the governing body are relatively new to the role, including the new chair and vice-chair. The governing body has acted with urgency to organise a review of its role and purpose within the school. As a result of the review, the governing body has its own plan of action to improve its effectiveness.
 - As part of its reorganisation, governors identified and matched the skills they use in their everyday lives to ensure all aspects of school life are checked systematically. Governors' commitment to improving the quality of provision is clear in their willingness to attend meetings with greater frequency than would normally be expected. The meetings focus solely on improving the quality of education and raising standards. As a result, the governing body is very rapidly becoming an effective unit to support the headteacher in school improvement.
 - Governors visit the school regularly in their lead roles. For example, the governor responsible for safeguarding, who also has a role on the local safeguarding children board, meets with one of the designated safeguarding leaders from the staff team to check pupils are safe in school. The governor responsible for standards, who has an educational background, regularly meets with staff, pupils and leaders to check the quality of learning and progress. As a result, the governing body know the school well. Governors demonstrate the same determination and resolve to bring about the necessary changes as the headteacher and other school leaders.
 - The chair of the governing body works with a senior local authority adviser to set the performance targets for the headteacher. He meets with the headteacher regularly to review performance. Reports to the governing body from the headteacher about performance management of staff are robust.
 - The governing body uses the school development plan to support its work in checking the quality of pupils' outcomes. However, the targets for improvement are not precise enough. They are not linked sufficiently to the progress of different groups of pupils, for example of disadvantaged pupils. This means governors are limited in their effectiveness to challenge school leaders rigorously to improve their work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that staff training in child protection and other wider national concerns such as radicalisation and extremism is regularly undertaken. The checks on staff recruitment are suitable. Leaders keep secure chronological records of families in need of support. Governors and the staff team check that accident records, fire safety checks and health and safety checks are up to date. Should allegations be made against members of staff, there are systems in place to ensure they are dealt with promptly. Leaders ensure information on pupils' behaviour and any incidents of bullying is recorded carefully and in detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This results in not enough pupils making good and accelerated progress, particularly in writing. Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils in any ability group, and planned learning does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Consequently, pupils do not consistently gain skills and knowledge at the right level for their age across the school. Gaps in learning are often filled in Year 5 and Year 6, but this is not good enough to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential from their starting points.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not secure. The new assessment and tracking systems introduced by the headteacher support teachers' evaluation of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the work in pupils' books and the teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment do not match. Teachers are not confident enough to know with certainty if their pupils are working within age-related expectations in the new national curriculum. The guidance they have received from subject leaders has not been clear enough to support them over time. Consequently, teachers' planning for learning is not ensuring pupils are making the progress they should.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Pupils do not gain the skills needed to make good progress from their sound start in the early years. For example, in pupils' books, the standard of writing between some younger pupils and older ones in lower key stage 2 was not very different in the use of grammar and punctuation skills. While the progress of most pupils is as expected, disadvantaged pupils are not

making the accelerated progress they need to catch up with their peers in this subject.

- The teaching of phonics is systematic and ensures pupils make good progress in learning to read. Very young pupils are confident to apply their understanding of the sounds letters make and build words skilfully in order to read and write. Pupils across the school apply this knowledge to their spelling, and outcomes for this are good. Pupils enjoy reading and teachers encourage them to read widely. As a result, the teaching of reading is good.
- Teachers mark pupils' work routinely in line with the school's new marking policy. Teachers' marking in the mathematics books leads pupils to improve their learning and helps them to think about the mathematical concepts they learn. Marking in writing does not follow the policy as consistently as it does in mathematics. As a result, feedback in writing does not always lead to improvements in pupils' learning.
- Where pupils make the best progress, teaching matches work closely to pupils' learning needs. Teaching assistants have clear instructions so that they know how to support pupils best. In these lessons, pupils focus on the tasks in hand and support each other well. For example, in the Year 5/6 class, pupils started with a number, for example 32; they then used different methods of calculation to find percentages of the number, or changed the place value of the numbers by multiplication and division. Pupils' explanations of their thinking were clear and demonstrated that good-quality learning has taken place over time.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. However, it is clear from pupils' books that not enough is expected of them with regard to their presentation of work. Handwriting is untidy and there are poorly presented diagrams and sketches. Pupils scribble out incorrect answers and teachers tolerate this as acceptable practice.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Attendance has improved this year and is now slightly above the national average. As a result of the work of leaders, persistent absence is now below the national average. This means pupils are in school and ready to learn. Pupils come because they like their school. One pupil said, 'it's like being in a great big family in this school'.
- Pupils say they are safe and feel safe in school. During the inspection, when speaking with the inspector, pupils could describe exactly how the site was made safe through fencing and locked gates and internal security doors. They knew the adults in school would keep them safe. Pupils said they trusted the adults to manage any problems they have.
- Pupils in Year 6 expressed appreciation of the way the headteacher speaks with them and resolves problems and misbehaviour. In the short time he has been at the school, the headteacher has gained the trust of the pupils.
- Pupils are articulate and thoughtful when speaking about sensitive issues such as bullying, including cyber bullying and racist or homophobic bullying. The adults broach these sensitive subjects carefully when they arise at age-appropriate levels.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility to manage the school. Pupils willingly sell fruit and vegetables at playtime. Some lead school teams in sport, while others are junior road safety officers or junior police and community support workers.
- Parents believe the school keeps their children safe and most say their children are happy at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When teaching is not engaging, pupils display signs of low-level disruption and lack of interest. This slows the pace of learning.
- Pupils said that behaviour is generally 'okay'; however, sometimes behaviour in school is not always good. In some classes, 'silly' behaviour spoils the learning of others. Pupils say this is dealt with quickly by adults, but it does occur.
- Pupils' learning behaviours require improvement because not enough care is taken of how pupils look after their books and present their work. Pupils do not have high enough expectations of themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in the playground is generally calm and considerate. Older pupils play well with younger ones. For example, in a playground incident, a very young child tripped and fell. Before the adults could get there, a boy from Year 6 immediately went and helped her up and showed

real concern and consideration for her. He later checked she was all right. This speaks of the 'family' atmosphere the pupils referred to in action.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Attainment in the national tests in Year 6 in 2015 were broadly in line with the national average in mathematics, reading and writing as single subjects. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a combined Level 4 in mathematics, reading and writing was below the national average. Not enough pupils achieved Level 4 in all three subjects. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school was slightly wider than the national gap in attainment between the two groups. Disadvantaged pupils achieved well against their peers nationally in mathematics, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling; however, in writing their attainment was well below other pupils nationally. At Level 5, the proportion of pupils achieving a combined Level 5 in mathematics, reading, and writing was above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving Level 5 in the combined subjects was in line with their peers nationally.
- In 2015 national tests for Year 6, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in reading was similar to all pupils nationally. There was a similar picture for mathematics. However, in writing, the proportion of pupils making expected progress was slightly below the national average. The proportion exceeding expected progress in writing was broadly in line with national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils exceeding expected progress in mathematics and writing was below the national average.
- In the 2015 key stage 1 national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved standards that were in line with the national average in mathematics, reading and writing at Level 2 and Level 3. There were no significant differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school.
- In the Year 1 phonics screen test, the proportion achieving the national standard was above the national average. In 2016 the school expects similar outcomes, with the majority of pupils achieving the standard.
- Currently, the school's predictions for the end of key stage 2 Year 6 assessments demonstrate that the majority of pupils are on track to achieve standards expected for their age, with the most able pupils achieving standards above those expected for their age in mathematics, reading and writing. The attainment gap between the disadvantaged pupils and their peers is predicted to close.
- In classes other than Year 2 and Year 6 the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils is not good enough. Across the school, their progress and attainment in mathematics and writing are inconsistent.
- In Year 2, the proportion achieving age-related expectations in mathematics, reading and writing is similar to last year.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information do not match. The school's assessment information for classes other than Year 2 and Year 6 shows most pupils underachieving and working well below age-related expectations. However, the work in pupils' books shows a more positive picture. In mathematics, there is a broad correlation between age-related expectations and the work in pupils' books. However, there are some gaps in pupils' learning and what they are expected to know. There is a similar picture in writing, only here the gaps are wider. Most pupils are making expected progress in both mathematics and writing, but this is inconsistent between year groups and subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities have their needs met through small intervention groups, mostly led by teaching assistants. School assessment information shows that these pupils are making similar amounts of progress to their peers in school in all three subjects.
- The most able pupils are making progress similar to their peers. Their attainment across the school shows they are attaining above expected standards. However, the same lack of precision in teaching that prevents all pupils making accelerated progress also affects this group.

Early years provision

is good

- Children settle very quickly into the Nursery. This is because early years leaders work closely with parents and pre-school providers to ensure children are confident coming into school. Adults and children form close attachments quickly and, as a result, children feel relaxed and happy to begin their learning right from the start.
- Children enter the early years with skills and attributes that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress throughout their time in Nursery and Reception. In 2015, the proportion of children

achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years was above the national average. Current school assessment information for 2016 shows a similarly high proportion of children achieving a good level of development this year. This year the gap between girls' and boys' attainment in reading from 2015 has begun to close.

- Children leave the early years well prepared to begin learning at national curriculum age-related expectations. However, the proportion of children exceeding a good level of development is not high enough. The most able children are not challenged sufficiently to ensure they reach their full potential at the end of the early years. Leaders know this and are putting plans together to address this with urgency.
- Adults in both Nursery and Reception classes know the children well. They use a variety of observations to track the interests and fascination of the children. Adults adapt the learning environment to capture children's interests. They teach children skills and knowledge through carefully considered tasks and opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. For example, in one session, children were asked to make a paper man, using different joining materials but no glue. This fired children's imaginations and ingenuity and a variety of options were explored, some with more success than others. Children developed their critical thinking skills very well and this task encouraged them to be confident and resilient in learning.
- The caring ethos of the school is mirrored in the early years. Children play very well together. The behaviour of the early years children is good and they clearly enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. This is because adults plan learning that engages interests and challenges the majority of children well.
- The early years leaders ensure all the adults who have responsibility for children's learning are prepared to teach by ensuring everyone knows precisely what children need to learn next. Leaders check the learning of all children regularly. Meetings between the team mean everyone is informed about how to support the learning of every child.
- Leaders keep detailed records of children's progress. Parents are invited to join in with the learning on a weekly basis in the Nursery. There are plans to extend this to the Reception class next year. Parents share their views on how well their children are doing and this is included in the 'big picture' of how well children are doing in school.
- The learning environment, both inside and outside, stimulates and interests children. Early years leaders have worked hard to ensure the outdoor area stimulates learning in all the early learning goals. Leaders have met with success but are not complacent and have plans to extend the outdoor area to incorporate further exciting learning experiences.
- Adults take the health and safety of children seriously. Adults check the learning environment daily to make sure the equipment is safe to use. Adults ensure children are handed safely to their parents and carers at the end of the day. Training in child protection is undertaken regularly and the same procedures for safeguarding children apply to the early years as in the rest of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	120379
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10010889

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Doughty
Headteacher	Andrew Canadine
Telephone number	01529 421 676
Website	www.helpringhamschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@helpringham.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2010

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.
- The headteacher was absent from school during the inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine parts of lessons, all jointly with a senior teacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with a senior teacher and the local authority school education adviser. The inspector also looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons and looked at the pupils' work around the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. A further telephone conversation was held with the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with a senior teacher, and the leaders of English, mathematics and assessment. A meeting was also held with the special educational needs leader.
- A meeting was held with the local authority school education adviser.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during visits to lessons and at playtime. The inspector also spoke with a group of pupils more formally.
- The inspectors analysed a large range of school documentation including school performance 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 through the 18 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the six responses to Ofsted's free text service.
- The views of staff were gathered through meetings during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jan Connor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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