

Blenheim Park Primary School

Lancaster Road, Sculthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 7PX

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, weak leadership, governance and teaching has led to pupils making inadequate progress in English, mathematics and a range of subjects across the school.
- The curriculum is inadequate. It does not meet the requirements of the national curriculum.
- Expectations are often low. Work set does not match pupils' capabilities. It is not challenging enough to help them make rapid progress to overcome their prior low levels of attainment.
- Untidy work is often accepted by teachers, and pupils are not given sufficient guidance on how to improve.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the modern world, such as different cultures, faiths and democracy, are underdeveloped.
- Currently, the school is too reliant on external support from the new partner school to overcome weaknesses that exist in the school.
- The high turnover of staff, together with long-term illness, has hindered the development of leadership within the school. Consequently, the leadership of teaching and learning has proved to be ineffective.
- Parents are dissatisfied with the level of communication between home and school. The school's website does not provide enough up-to-date information for parents.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate. Inadequate teaching has resulted in children underachieving.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher and re-formed governing body are ambitious for the pupils to succeed. They are clear that much has to be done to overcome the challenges faced by the school.
- Actions taken by the executive headteacher are showing signs of improvement in the school. The new staff team are supportive of the drive for improvement.
- Leaders have made sure that there are now very effective safeguarding procedures in place to protect pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Parents say that their children are well looked after in school.
- Governors have carried out a recent review of their work, and governance has become much stronger recently.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to secure good and better rates of progress for all groups of pupils by making sure that all teachers:
 - use assessment to match work accurately to the abilities of pupils to ensure that prior gaps in learning are eliminated
 - demonstrate consistently high expectations of what pupils can, and need to, do
 - provide helpful feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - improve their subject knowledge so that they can plan the next steps in pupils' learning more carefully on a daily basis across the curriculum
 - manage the work of teaching assistants to help them to make a strong contribution to learning
 - expect high standards of presentation, handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling from pupils at all times, across the curriculum, in order to strengthen pride in their work.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - all national curriculum subjects are taught effectively
 - the proportion of pupils, including girls, the most able and those who are disadvantaged, reaching their full potential in all year groups, and the proportion of these pupils reaching the above-expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, is similar to that found nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels and ensuring that everyone has a common understanding of expectations
 - ensuring that there is effective senior leadership managing the school on a daily basis
 - improving the role of middle leaders so they contribute effectively to school improvement and take their share of responsibility more widely
 - establishing the role of subject leaders, so that they rigorously monitor the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning across the school within their subjects
 - ensuring that the school's website meets statutory requirements, including publishing curriculum information, and that it keeps parents up to date with what is happening.

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.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Over time, leaders and governors have not tackled weak teaching, and all groups of pupils have underachieved. The new executive headteacher and governing body have not had sufficient time to overcome the weaknesses in teaching, learning and outcomes.
- With insufficient capacity in leadership, including a lack of middle leadership, the school has been unable to develop a suitable curriculum for pupils. Teachers have not been teaching to the requirements of the national curriculum. Pupils are not learning all that they should and thus they are severely disadvantaged. Year 6 pupils are leaving the school in July without the skills, knowledge and understanding they require to be successful at the next stage of their education.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the additional funding for those pupils supported by the pupil premium has been spent effectively. This is because the systems to track pupils' progress have not been robust. As a result, the funding has not necessarily been spent to help those pupils who need it most and disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should.
- The majority of those parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire stated that they would not recommend this school to others. In discussion, a number of parents shared their concerns with the inspector about the changes in teaching staff which disrupted their children's learning, and the lack of information they receive from the school.
- The local authority identified that the impact of governance and the leadership, previously, was weak. Swift action was taken by the local authority to strengthen the governing body and leadership.
- The new executive headteacher has made a promising start. She immediately rectified a number of health and safety issues to ensure pupils' safety. At the same time, extensive inadequacies in teaching were urgently addressed in the best interests of the pupils.
- The headteacher is clear that the school needs a large amount of external support to move the school forward as the capacity to improve is limited without it. The school is entirely dependent on the leaders from the partnership school for any changes.
- The executive headteacher, together with her senior team, which consists exclusively of staff from the partner school, has a very clear and realistic view of the task faced. They have established systems to hold staff to account for their work, but have not taken effective action to change practice due to lack of capacity on site and changes in staffing.
- New leadership has established a clear policy for marking. In Years 2, 3 and 4, feedback in literacy and mathematics is helping pupils to improve their work.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is being used appropriately to improve pupils' engagement and interest in sports activities, both during the school day and at out-of-school clubs. The children have not had the opportunity to participate in any external competitions.
- Senior leaders undertook a thorough review of the teaching of phonics and established that previously there was no phonics teaching across the school. Additional support and coaching is in place, using staff from the partner primary school. It is early days and the staff do not have the capacity to plan this themselves, instead relying on the leadership of the partner school to do it for them.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance in the past was weak. Following a review of governance, the governing body was changed. New governance is now in place and led by an independent chair with successful educational experience.
 - Information from recent meetings shows a strong focus on pupil achievement, and strong challenge as well as support for the school's leadership. There is a clear remit for governance which is being implemented swiftly. For example, the partner school is setting up a multi-academy trust which the governors have agreed to join. Governors have capacity to support the school and are a significant strength. They have a developing understanding of the overall effectiveness of the school. In a very short period of time, they have ensured that appropriate action is being taken, but it is too early to see the impact of their efforts on pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are well trained and vigilant. Effective systems are now in place to support vulnerable children. Recently, close links have been established with external agencies and parents to support safeguarding, including the local authority services.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching over time has led to all groups of pupils underachieving and making inadequate progress. There has been a very high turnover in staffing since the last inspection and this has not supported the effective development of the quality of teaching. In addition, teachers are not meeting the expected teachers' standards, which set the minimum expectations for teachers' practice and conduct.
- Expectations of what pupils are capable of doing are too low for most children. The quality of work accepted by teachers is often not good enough to ensure that effective progress is being made. Presentation of work, handwriting, grammar, punctuation and spelling are inadequate across the school, and are slowing pupils' progress and limiting standards. Pupils do not appear to take pride in their work or receive encouragement to do so.
- Assessment is not used effectively to make sure pupils make steady progress within lessons and over time. New assessments were undertaken at the beginning of the year to provide a baseline, as the previous assessment information was shown to have a significantly inflated view of pupils' attainment and progress. A new system of tracking has been introduced and recent assessment information for one term appears reliable.
- Historically unreliable data means it is very difficult to show the progress of all pupils. The data the school holds is inaccurate. The work in books from pupils who are higher attaining or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inadequate.
- Pupils do not know how to improve their work, as there is no clear information provided as to the next steps they should take. Across the school, this is seen in a lack of care, enthusiasm and effort, for example in pupils' topic books.
- The subjects required by the national curriculum are not covered in their entirety and some subjects, such as computing, are not covered at all.
- The subject knowledge of many teachers is weak. For example, in key stage 2 English, many pupils lack basic skills of grammar and punctuation in their general writing. Too often teachers do not challenge pupils to think deeply or creatively about how they can improve the content of their writing. This lack of rigour in the teaching of writing has meant that none of the pupils leaving Year 6 have the skills to achieve the expected standard in writing. They have not been taught all the areas needed, and the expectations of them were lower at the end of the year than they had been at the beginning.
- Teachers are too reliant on external support from the partner school to provide for planning and assessment and meeting the expectations of the teachers' standards. Teachers do not use the good information provided by the partner school with sufficient rigour to ensure improvement in their practice. For example, the school did not have a curriculum to meet the 2014 national requirements. The partner school provided a curriculum to ensure broad and balanced coverage. Pupils are not learning what they should and are severely disadvantaged.
- Some teaching assistants provide good support to the pupils they work with. However, the quality of the work they do is not checked often enough to make sure that it always meets the needs of the pupils they support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school has not developed pupils' self-belief and confidence in their abilities. Consequently, they have not developed as quickly as they should. Their attitudes are not what would be expected for their ages. This has had a detrimental effect on their ability to learn and take responsibility for themselves.
- Pupils are not clear about what they are learning. They can happily converse about what they are doing but often struggle to articulate how activities are developing their skills.
- Staff do not provide opportunities for pupils to learn about or understand British values. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding are limited.
- The executive headteacher has ensured that the school's grounds, buildings and premises have been significantly improved and made into a safe environment for pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because low-level disruption occurs in lessons, which adversely affects their ability to learn well and make good progress.
- Pupils' understanding of bullying is limited to the saying of unkind words or being physical. They do not know about any other form of bullying.
- Pupils have confidence that staff address incidents of misbehaviour. They have a well-developed sense of cause and consequence. Most parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Recent changes to the direction of teaching, focused on pupils' behaviour when learning, have resulted in children being more likely to 'have a go' and show a greater level of persistence. They now enjoy having responsibility, for example in setting up the hall for assemblies. They showed courtesy during the inspection by holding doors open. Children and adults both talked about the significant decrease in 'telling tales'.
- The staff are becoming more skilful in getting children back on track to continue learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in lower key stage 2, a couple of pupils were calling out; the teacher refocused them and they then waited for others to ask first next time.
- In class, most pupils show that they want to learn. Their conduct is generally orderly, and most pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from adults. Children in key stage 2 understand that the expectation at school is to come and work, rather than play. They are starting to take ownership for their own learning. They say they enjoy school and feel safe.
- Attendance is now broadly average. Strategies to improve attendance for some pupils, including persistent absentees and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are making a positive difference. The new executive headteacher has clearly communicated her expectations to parents. As a result, rates of persistent absence have halved.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils enter the school at levels typical for their ages. Weak teaching over a number of years has meant that too many pupils across the school underachieve. The progress made by all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as the most able, is inadequate in all subjects.
- In some classes, assessment information provided by teachers remains unreliable and there is little or no evidence in pupils' books to support their teachers' assessments of progress.
- Pupils do not have a good understanding of phonics, as these were previously not taught. Because of this lack of prior learning, the pupils are not at the expected levels of literacy for their age from Reception to Year 2.
- Evidence of the learning of pupils currently in Year 6, from a scrutiny of their past and current workbooks, confirms that many have made limited progress towards the expected standards for their year group. Pupils' books show that all groups are underachieving in writing. This is because basic spelling, grammar and punctuation skills are not built on progressively in every year group. Pupils do not write often enough in subjects other than English.
- Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 make better progress than pupils in other classes.
- Progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is patchy and poor. There is no subject leadership, so coverage of the wider subject areas is fragmented. Pupils' development of skills in, for example, scientific investigation and historical enquiry is limited.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate. As a result, the children have not made the expected progress because, on a daily basis, not enough staff within the classroom have the knowledge or expertise to support all aspects of children's learning. The Reception/Year 1 class has been taught by many teachers during the year. As a result, staff are rarely able to follow the interests of children when developing learning opportunities. Consequently, teaching does not effectively meet the needs of early years children.
- Most children start the school with skill development that is generally typical for their age. They do not make enough progress, and by the end of Reception they are achieving below the national expectations.

As a result, children are not well prepared for starting Year 1. There have recently been systems put in place to track progress but there has not been enough time to see if they make enough difference to the outcomes for children this year.

- The teaching assistant has become the day-to-day lead learner for the Reception children, as she has been the only consistent member of staff within the class during the year. She is provided with support and guidance from the early years leader, who is based at the partnership school.
- The leader of early years has ensured that the provision of indoor and outdoor areas has been developed and they are now attractively organised ready for imaginative play. Children have not yet learned how to use these areas effectively. They make better progress when they are involved in adult-led activities rather than those that they choose for themselves.
- Children's personal development is supported well in the Reception class. Children are friendly and polite. They respond well to instructions from adults when moving around the classroom and cooperate well with each other. They are well looked after and safety is given high priority.
- The teaching of phonics is now regular, but was not taught effectively until March 2016. Consequently, too few children demonstrate well enough early reading and writing skills.

School details

Unique reference number	120907
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10011795
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Gardner
Headteacher	Lisa Cook
Telephone number	01485 528368
Website	www.blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- Blenheim Park Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has until recently been much higher than average. After a review, this is now lower than national.
- There has been high turnover of staff and long-term illness in recent years.
- An independent playschool is based on the school site and is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons in all classes, attended assembly and observed pupils at lunchtime. Some lessons were visited jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, the evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- The inspector met with a selection of parents in the playground and with pupils from across the school.
- A representative from the local authority met with the inspector and with four members of the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and risk assessments undertaken for education visits.
- The views of 36 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.
- The views of six staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Cassandra Williams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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