

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School

Main Road, Deeping St Nicholas, Spalding PE11 3DG

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards at Key Stage 1 and 2 were below average in 2012 and, although there were some improvements in 2013, these are not high enough, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in writing.
- Pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not well developed and they do not get enough opportunities to write longer pieces and to apply their mathematics skills to problem solving.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always plan work so it is at precisely the right level for pupils and at times lessons do not get off to a brisk start.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning regularly in lessons and give pupils time to respond to comments in marking.
- The school does not work closely enough with pupils and parents to ensure attendance improves and becomes at least broadly average.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved enough to be good. Observations of teaching are not always linked to pupils' progress and subject leaders are not involved in developing teaching in their areas.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe in the school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They behave well with each other around the school.
- Governance has been strengthened since the previous inspection with additional governors and a review of their performance so they could ensure they were more effective. This was successful.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The teacher has an excellent understanding of the children and plans an interesting range of activities which supports children well in their learning.
- The teaching of early reading has been developed in the school and this is now strong.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part-lessons. Most of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also observed the headteacher feeding back to staff on pupils' learning and progress in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, four governors and pupils. A telephone call was also made to a local authority representative.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in books and listened to them read.
- The 12 responses to the online Parent View survey were considered along with written correspondence from parents and the views of parents in the playground when they brought their children to school.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, its evaluation of its work and plans for the future, behaviour and attendance logs, records related to safeguarding and those relating to the management of staff performance as well as minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups) is similar to the national average. This has increased over the last year.
- It is not possible to make a valid judgement against the current government floor standards, the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, as there were not enough pupils in Year 6 in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - planning work so it is at precisely the right level and is not too hard for the less-able pupils and stretches the more-able pupils
 - teachers ensuring lessons get off to a brisk start so pupils move onto activities more quickly which engage them with their learning
 - teachers checking on pupils' learning regularly in lessons to ensure pupils remain focused and make good progress
 - giving pupils opportunities to reflect on and respond to teachers' comments for improvement in their books.
- Raise achievement, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in writing, by:
 - developing pupils' accurate use of spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write regularly in lessons and to write longer pieces
 - providing more opportunities for applying mathematics skills to problem solving.
- Work more closely with pupils and their parents so they understand the importance of attending school and attendance rises so it is at least broadly average.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - observations of teaching being more focused on its impact on pupils' progress
 - developing the role of subject leaders so they are more involved in developing teaching in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good progress throughout the school. Standards at both Key Stage 1 and 2 were below average in 2012. Although there were improvements in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages, writing remains behind the other subject areas and standards overall are not high enough, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils do not use the basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately in their work and this stops Year 6 pupils structuring their work well. Pupils do not have enough opportunities in their literacy lessons to write regularly and to write regular longer pieces which help them to develop their writing. In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematics skills to problem solving to help them reach the highest levels. Occasionally in lessons pupils become distracted and this slows their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given extra help in lessons although teachers do not always make sure this is planned carefully enough for these pupils to make the fastest progress. Similarly to most pupils in the school, these pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school.
- The school has changed how it supports pupils for whom it receives additional pupil premium funding. A specialist has been used to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provided effective one-to-one support. This support has accelerated progress for pupils currently in the school, with gaps narrowing between other pupils and these pupils who now make good progress across the school. It is not possible to comment on the performance of this group of pupils compared to others in the national tests in 2012 as numbers are too small. This shows how, with focused support, the school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity for pupils' learning.
- In the Year 1 phonics (letters and their sounds) check in 2012 the school's results were below national levels. The school adjusted how phonics was taught and delivered training to staff so all staff used the same methods. This was effective in 2013 with most Year 1 pupils achieving the required standard. Pupils are able to use the strategies they have learnt to sound out difficult words and they say they enjoy reading and read regularly. They particularly like reading story books.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typically below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication and literacy development. Children are well supported in their learning with a wide range of activities to develop all areas of learning and give children a wide range of experiences, such as for example, carving pumpkins before Halloween. Children are well supported and make good progress in their learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers do not always plan work at precisely the right level so it is not too easy for more-able pupils and too hard for less-able pupils. Sometimes, lessons do not get off to a brisk start and pupils lose a little focus in their learning before they start doing activities by themselves or in groups.
- Teachers do not always check on pupils carefully enough in lessons to make sure that they understand activities and that extra help is given promptly so all pupils make good progress.

Marking has improved since the previous inspection and pupils regularly get comments on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils do not have time to regularly reflect on these comments and respond to them to help them think about their learning.

- In the best teaching, for example a Year 2 and Year 3 mathematics lesson where pupils were completing a timeline to help them work out a crime, pupils answered the questions and helped each other in groups so they could work out the answer to the problem. The teacher circulated supporting pupils with their learning and ensuring they made good progress.
- Across the school lessons are characterised by positive relationships between pupils and staff. Staff value pupils contributions to lessons when pupils share work in class. Teachers and teaching assistants give pupils effective help on an individual basis to help them with their learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is good. The teacher has an excellent understanding of the individual needs of each of the children and makes sure lessons are adapted so children develop the skills they need to succeed. For example, in a Reception and Year 1 lesson the children were thoroughly engaged by the teaching assistant acting out the role of Little Red Riding Hood and children asked her questions which they had prepared. The teacher skilfully related these to the children's lives and helped the children understand the similarities and differences between Little Red Riding Hood and themselves. Children had writing activities at different levels which ensured all children developed their writing at an appropriate level and made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils occasionally lose focus on their learning, particularly if introductions to lessons are a little long or when they are working independently. Although pupils get given advice on what to do next when teachers mark their work, pupils do not take responsibility for their own learning and focus on these areas in their next piece of work.
- Attendance is stubbornly below average. Although the nature of small cohorts means that small numbers of pupils with genuine long-term absence make an impact on the figures, attendance is still lower than it should be for all pupils to make good progress. The school does not work effectively with pupils and their parents to promote the importance of attending school regularly to ensure they understand the link with good attendance and pupils doing well at school.
- Pupils generally behave well around the site. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils typically behave well around the site and in the playground. School records show there are no exclusions. The school's behaviour logs are very thorough and show actions taken. There are very few bullying incidents of any kind and the school's actions are effective in ensuring any that do happen do not recur. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils themselves say that behaviour is generally good although they do say that there are occasions where pupils get distracted in lessons. All pupils spoken to in meetings and in the playground said they felt safe in school and that bullying was not of concern to them. This was also a view held by parents. School records confirm their view is accurate. All parents responding to the online survey and those spoken to during the inspection were positive about how behaviour is managed in the school and that their child feels safe in school.

- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying including cyber-bullying, physical bullying and name calling. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example with strangers and when using the internet.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough since the previous inspection for them to be good.
- Although teaching is monitored regularly, observations of teaching are not always focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and linked to how much progress pupils make over time. Subject leaders are also not involved in developing the teaching of subjects in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum gives priority to reading, writing and mathematics. The recent work to bring in a whole school approach to the development of reading has been successful. However opportunities to develop pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation and for developing writing and problem solving in mathematics are less developed. The rest of the curriculum is taught around topics including the Stuarts, transport through the ages and around the world which linked with a local partnership multi-cultural day where there was a focus on Africa, India and China. Events such as these also support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good with the improvements seen at the previous inspection being consolidated and built on.
- The school has worked with the local partnership of schools to plan for use of the new government sports funding. In collaboration with the other schools a specialist gymnastics instructor works with staff to develop their expertise and bring specialist tuition to pupils. The coaches are also developing their skills in other areas of sport to increase sporting opportunities for pupils.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They like the school being small and find staff very approachable. They feel confident any problems or concerns will be dealt with.
- The local authority has provided support for the school's own evaluation of itself and for developing the quality of teaching and this is starting to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been strengthened by additions, including those with educational expertise. Members commissioned their own review of governance so they could improve their work. They now visit regularly to see for themselves improvements being made, for example, taking part in learning walks and one governor regularly monitors pupils' reading. Governors know about the published data on the school, about the changes made for pupil premium funding spending and the difference this is making. They receive updates on the progress data for pupils across the school. They receive updates on the quality of teaching and ensure systems for the management of staff performance are in place and they sign off pay awards for staff who teach well. They are aware of what support has been provided in the past to address underperformance and what is currently being provided to improve teaching. They receive regular training to update their skills, for example the Chair of the Governing Body is currently attending a national 'chairs' course. They ensure that statutory responsibilities are met, including safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120407
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	424999

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Peter Garland
Headteacher	Anita Bandey
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2012
Telephone number	01775 630280
Fax number	N/a
Email address	enquiries@deeping-st-nicholas.lincs.sch.uk

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