

Linton Primary School

Main Street, Linton, Swadlincote, DE12 6QA

Inspection dates 15–16 November 2012

| 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

- Too much teaching requires improvement. Work in lessons is sometimes too easy or too hard for some pupils. In these lessons, pupils' behaviour slips and some become disruptive. This stops them and others from learning.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds that they make requires improvement in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes.
- The Nursery and Reception outdoor areas are not used well enough to support pupils' early literacy and mathematics learning.
- Pupils in all year groups have too few opportunities to write or use their mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Pupils' writing and mathematics require further improvement in Years 3 to 6.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistent and does not help them understand how to improve.
- Not all teaching assistants are given enough information to enable them to provide good support for pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management require improvement because governors are over-reliant on senior school staff for information about how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe at school and their achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Key Stages 1 and 2 is improving.
- By Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is above average.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and they enjoy being at school.
- School self-evaluation procedures are thorough and the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas needing improvement.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have secured significant improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement this year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. In all, 18 lessons were observed, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff including the senior leaders, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), information from parents provided via telephone messages and school-based parent survey information. They also considered 21 staff questionnaires.
- A number of school documents were scrutinised. These included those relating to safeguarding, attendance, the school's pupil progress and attainment data, curriculum planning documents, school self-evaluation information and local authority monitoring reports.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised with the pupils, and some pupils from Year 1 were heard read.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Truby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school is receiving additional funding (the pupil premium) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement is below average. The proportion supported through school action is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that pupils make good progress in all subjects and year groups by:
 - setting clear small short-term targets for improvement for all groups of pupils and ensure that these are communicated clearly to pupils
 - making best use of the school's 'Steps to Success' when planning lessons, so that work is neither too hard or too easy for pupils' different abilities
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work in all classes indicates to pupils what they have done well, their next small step for improvement and that they are given time to respond
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of pupils' engagement and behaviour in lessons, and that pupils are managed in a consistent way to achieve these aims
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are well briefed and able to contribute fully to pupils' learning.
- Further raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - improving the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) in Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2
 - ensuring that the Nursery and Reception outdoor areas are used well to support early literacy and mathematics learning
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to read and write in subjects other than English and for older pupils to write for a wider range of purposes and at greater length
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills in other subjects and to solve practical problems.
- Ensure that governors are helped to contribute fully to school self-evaluation, and that subject leaders identify how pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics can be supported through subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Attainment is rising across the school but there is some variation in the progress made by pupils across all year groups. In some lessons, teachers do not expect enough of pupils so that, over time, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- The achievement of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium requires improvement as their progress is also inconsistent. The additional support they receive does ensure, however, that, by Year 6, there is no significant difference between their achievement and that of other pupils.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those expected. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in their personal and social development. Their progress in other areas requires improvement, particularly their learning of early literacy and mathematics skills.
- The school's results in the 2012 national assessments for Year 2 and Year 6 showed a significant improvement on the previous year. Pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, pupils' attained average standards in writing and mathematics and an above-average standard in reading.
- The school's own checks on pupils' progress show that progress has improved. Pupils are making steady progress in Years 1 and 2. This is better than in previous years but pupils are not being challenged enough to enable them to make good progress. Their grasp of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is not good enough to allow them to attempt to read unfamiliar text or write words for themselves with confidence. In mathematics lessons, the tasks set do not help all groups to build confidently on previous learning or use what they already know to solve problems.
- Typically, pupils make good progress in reading in Years 3 to 6. Progress made in writing and mathematics is more variable and requires improvement. These variations are not specific to any one year group but are a result of lessons that are not always challenging or supportive enough for pupils at different levels of knowledge and understanding. As a result, some pupils struggle to learn while others learn very little that is new. In addition, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to see the relevance of their learning by using and applying their knowledge and skills in other subjects or problem-solving situations.
- In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because tasks are well matched to their interests and they are challenged to apply their skills. For example, in a Year 4 lesson with a geography focus on transport, pupils wrote lists of facts and opinions linked to a presentation made by a visiting airline pilot. Similarly, having designed and made a new board game, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote a letter to a manufacturer to try to persuade them to produce their game for sale.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is as inconsistent as that of other pupils. They make good progress when supported individually or in small groups by well-briefed teaching assistants. Their progress slows when they are expected to work independently in lessons on tasks that are too complicated or too difficult.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much and not enough is good. Inconsistencies exist in a number of areas and this results in pupils' progress requiring improvement overall.
- Mutual respect and trust between adults and pupils underpins the predominantly good relationships evident in lessons. The management of pupils varies and this has a direct impact on the way lessons progress. Where expectations of behaviour are high and the school's behaviour management systems are employed consistently, lessons move at a brisk pace and are typically good. In lessons that require improvement, these features are often absent.
- Teachers do not make best use of the information they have to set groups of pupils' short-term targets for improvement. Too many targets are very similar and so do not reflect the pupils' very different needs and abilities.
- Within lessons, the school's 'Steps to Success' system is used to inform pupils what they are expected to learn. However, too often these steps reflect what should be expected of the average pupil. Consequently, pupils of lower or higher ability are not supported or challenged to make good progress from their different starting points.
- In the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes, the teaching of letters and the sounds they make requires improvement. Pupils are given too few opportunities to write the letter sounds they hear, and the outdoor spaces in the Nursery and Reception classes provide too few opportunities for mark making and developing an understanding that information is carried by text through seeing for example, signs and labels.
- Teaching in mathematics up to Year 2 is not sufficiently well planned for or managed to enable pupils to develop a secure understanding of numbers and how they are used to solve simple problems.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils read for pleasure and to support their learning. They make good progress in reading because teaching is pitched accurately to move their learning forwards well.
- The links made between subjects are beginning to support pupils' learning in writing and mathematics. They are not extensive enough to give pupils' learning relevance, or to challenge them to use and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts. In particular, pupils have too few opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing or to solve real-life mathematical problems.
- Teachers' marking of pupils work is regular but it is not consistent or always easy to understand for pupils of different ages. Pupils generally receive praise for what they have done well, but their next steps for improvement are often too broad to be helpful, for example, 'be careful with your word endings'. Pupils are not always given time to respond to their teachers' marking so their teacher's advice goes unheeded and pupils tend to repeat their mistakes.
- Teaching assistants are not always told what pupils are expected to learn and how they can best help them to make good progress. Consequently, they are not always able to fully contribute to pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils behave well in lessons where expectations are high and when they are managed with a consistent approach. Typically, pupils also behave well in lessons that capture their interest and provide a balance of challenge and support that helps them to build on what they already know and can do. Where these elements are lacking, pupils' behaviour requires improvement as some go off task and there is some disruption, such as pupils talking when they should be listening. This interferes with the flow of the lesson and makes it difficult for the teacher to teach, and for other pupils to learn.
- There are effective procedures for managing pupils who find it particularly difficult to behave well and to manage their own behaviour. Work with the pupils themselves, their parents, and external support agencies have secured a marked improvement in the behaviour of some pupils. Other pupils are very clear that this makes a difference to their experiences at school as teachers are able to plan more exciting activities in lessons and this makes their learning more fun.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that if they have a problem or concern then an adult will support them. Pupils help each other through their work as school councillors and those who are assigned as a 'buddy' to pupils who find playtimes difficult.
- There are very few incidents of racism or bullying. Pupils are confident that the school deals with bullying and harassment of any kind effectively. This view is shared by parents who responded to the school's recent survey and online through Parent View. Parents also express their confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe.
- Safety has a high profile and pupils are well informed through lessons, assemblies and special events about how to minimise risks in their lives, including cyber-bullying and other online risks.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils develop positive relationships with each other and adults, and most are keen to do well at school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has ensured improvements over the past year. However, leadership and management require improvement because leaders at all levels are not contributing fully to school improvement. Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are not ensuring that planning in their subjects also supports pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics. The governing body is over-reliant on senior leaders for information about how well the school is doing.
- The headteacher provides strong supportive leadership. A clear expectation for school improvement has been communicated and accepted by staff. Morale amongst staff has improved and pupils and parents have noted the improvements secured over the last year.
- The local authority has provided effective support so that senior leaders have the skills necessary to carry out a well-focused programme of monitoring activities. This provides accurate information about the school's strengths and areas for improvement, including a correct view of teaching. The school improvement plan is sharply focused on improving teaching and pupils' learning.
- Performance management and ongoing professional development have been effective in securing the eradication of inadequate teaching and increasing the proportion of good teaching.

Although not yet consistently applied, a number of procedures are helping to secure a whole-school approach in areas such as the management of pupils' behaviour.

- Pupil progress meetings quickly identify pupils needing additional support. This is helping to ensure that, throughout the school, discrimination is prevented and all pupils are given equality of opportunity. The school's spending of pupil premium funding on individual and small-group support for reading, writing and mathematics has ensured that eligible pupils have achieved at least as well as their peers.
- Local authority support for staff responsible for the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes has been successful in ensuring planning better reflects children's interests and learning needs. Action planning identifies clearly the next steps for improvement.
- The range of subjects and activities taught is appropriately focused on supporting pupils to develop reading, writing and mathematics skills. Work to promote these skills through other subjects is in the early stages of development. Additional experiences are provided to enrich pupils' learning, including residential visits, after-school clubs and the use of visitors to provide pupils with first-hand information.
- The school is working well with other schools to develop good practice in teaching. Links with a range of outside agencies have supported improvements in, for example, the successful management of pupils with the most challenging behaviour.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequate. It is strong in the moral and social aspects. Links with local churches and a school in Africa, together with increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' achievements, are helping to strengthen pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Governors are committed to helping the school to improve and have embarked on a training programme to develop the independent skills needed to be able to challenge school leaders to improve the school's performance further. Briefings from the headteacher have ensured that they are familiar with how the performance of staff is managed and that they understand how the targets for improvement are decided, and progress towards them is monitored. Promotions and salary changes are scrutinised and have to be justified by staff performance. They are not yet clear about how to check that spending, including that of the pupil premium funding, is bringing about the expected improvements to pupil progress and attainment.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 112978 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 401331 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 250 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steve Fereday |
| Headteacher | Lynne Charles |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 March 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01283 760382 |
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