

Newcroft Primary School

Trueway Drive, Shepshed, Loughborough, LE12 9DU

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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		Good	2
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

- Standards in writing and mathematics are broadly average in most years. Mathematics standards were low in some year groups last year.
- Pupils make no better than expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- The standard of boys' writing is well below that of girls in some year groups.
- In some lessons teachers talk for too long and so pupils do not have enough time to practise what they are learning and complete their work.
- Some teachers do not always ask probing questions to help pupils think carefully about their learning.
- In some lessons all pupils do the same level of work which means that more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they could and some other pupils find the work too hard.
- Pupils' progress is tracked each term but this is not checked often enough to make sure that any pupils falling behind are helped quickly.
- Occasionally, the judgements leaders and managers make about how well lessons are taught are not accurate and so guidance on how to improve is not as clear as it could be.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.
- Pupils' progress has improved this term, particularly in mathematics, where new methods of teaching have been introduced.
- There are some skilled teachers in the school who can show other colleagues how to improve their teaching.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are respectful to adults and to each other.
- The leadership structure of the school means that many staff members are given the opportunities to take on leadership roles.
- The governing body has recently recruited a number of new governors who have specific skills intended to help hold the senior leaders to account for school improvement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school and underpins all it does.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteachers.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, four governors, school staff including senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), individual communications from parents and 24 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: information from the school's checks on its performance; school improvement plans; analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and minutes of governing body meetings. They also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school which caters for children from nursery age up to Year 5.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to help particular pupils who need it) is below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action, at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The current Chair of the Governing Body was elected six months ago and three new governors have joined the governing body since then.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards in mathematics and in writing, especially for boys, by ensuring:
 - lessons are well-paced and pupils get plenty of opportunity to practise their skills, develop their learning and complete their tasks
 - all work is well matched to pupils' abilities
 - questions are used to probe understanding and develop pupils' learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring:
 - all leaders have the skills to make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching so that they can provide secure and informed guidance for improvement
 - pupils' progress is tracked in smaller steps and checked more frequently, so that any pupils in danger of falling behind in their work are quickly identified and given suitable help and guidance
 - governors sharpen the challenge they offer school leaders and managers, especially in evaluating the effectiveness of pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in mathematics by the end of Years 4 and 5 were low in the past two years. Pupils have been making only the expected progress and this means that standards have not risen. However, the introduction of a new way of teaching mathematics this term has resulted in improved progress since September, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Standards remain broadly average in all year groups. Last year, girls attained higher than boys in all year groups except Year 3. School data show that progress in writing in Key Stage 2 has improved since September, especially for boys. Most pupils have made good progress this term and the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is starting to close.
- Progress in reading last year was good in Years 2, 3 and 4. However, the results of the national screening check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 were well below the national average last year. The school has reviewed how it teaches phonics and made improvements this year so that pupils are making better progress.
- Many children start school with skills broadly expected for their age. Good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that a high proportion of pupils start Key Stage 1 with skills expected for their age group. A few pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills higher than expected.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress and some make good progress. Pupils who have benefited from one-to-one teaching in reading and writing have made particularly good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding, such as the pupil premium, make similar progress to their peers. Much of the money has been spent on extra adults to reduce class sizes and provide individual or small group teaching for these pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In some lessons the pace is too slow. This is because teachers do too much talking and pupils have less time to work independently. Where the pace is good, pupils are given the opportunity to talk through their thoughts with a partner and then swiftly move to independent work.
- Occasionally teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. They ask questions but do not persist in encouraging pupils to develop their answers. Where learning is best, the teacher follows up answers with supplementary questions such as 'What do you mean by that?' and 'Tell me more.'
- Work is sometimes too easy or too hard for pupils, especially if the whole class is working together at the same pace. More-able pupils are not given the opportunity to extend their learning while some pupils struggle to keep up.
- Where work is well matched to pupils' ability, they make good progress. For example, more-able pupils in a Year 5 lesson worked independently on complex number problems while the teacher checked that the rest of the class understood some basic mathematical ideas. In the same

lesson another group of pupils worked with an adult for a short period to fill gaps in their knowledge of 24-hour clocks while the rest of the class completed quick number investigations.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The range of activities ensure that children develop skills in all areas and there is a good balance between indoor and outdoor learning. For example, during the inspection, while some children were working inside, others were outside eagerly building a sleigh out of plastic crates and pretending to be Santa and his reindeer.
- Pupils who are at risk of not doing well are sensitively supported by additional adults. In most classes, adults are well briefed and show a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported by additional adults in the classroom and in small groups or one-to-one teaching.
- Marking in books is thorough. Most teachers follow the marking policy and direct pupils to the next steps in their learning. Occasionally comments are too general to be helpful, but in many cases pupils say they get good guidance and have the chance to respond to the teacher's comments.
- Homework is set regularly. Pupils say that they feel it is generally the right amount of work and always relevant to what they are doing in lessons. They are very enthusiastic about the homework linked to the new style of mathematics lessons.
- In all lessons, teachers encourage pupils to be responsible and develop good social and moral skills and understanding. Pupils respond well and show consideration and respect for each other. For example, pupils spontaneously applauded the achievement of a boy who read a particularly challenging piece of text and showed respect to another boy accompanying their singing on his guitar.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are happy and safe in school and this is reflected in the above average attendance over the last two years.
- Pupils are very clear about what bullying is and appreciate the difference between bullying and 'falling out'. They can talk about different types of bullying including cyber and physical bullying. All pupils spoken to were adamant that it rarely happens in the school. They were very clear that any trouble is sorted out quickly and valued the 'worry box' which they know is regularly checked by teachers.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations. They can discuss road safety and older pupils have a good understanding of basic internet safety. During the inspection they referred to visitors such as the police who talk about other safety issues and say they have regular fire practices.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to activities in school. For example, when she realised an inspector was not going to join them in watching a concert rehearsal, a Year 2 girl cheerily offered to tell her all about it when she came out. The popular breakfast club and after school clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy forest school activities.

- Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to take on a role of responsibility. They all feel that the school council takes their suggestions seriously and play leaders help with younger pupils on the playground.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The senior leaders and managers of the school have a clear idea of what the school needs to do to improve. Occasionally, some leaders are not always accurate in making judgements about the quality of teaching and how it can be improved.
- Teachers' performance is checked against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved.
- The progress that pupils make is tracked against National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, the steps that the tracking identifies are too large for the school to show how much progress has been made over a short period of time. This means that any pupils in danger of underachieving may not be identified quickly enough.
- The topics planned by teachers offer pupils exciting activities to engage them in learning. For example, pupils talked enthusiastically about Roman and Greek days, when they dressed up and experienced aspects of ancient Greek and Roman life. However, the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not consistently strong in all classes.
- The school fosters pupils' self-worth and respect for others. Through class discussions, involvement in the forest school and themes covered in assemblies, they see themselves as part of a wider family and world community.
- The promotion of co-operation and working together is a strength of the school. Learning is improved through pupils working with a partner; shared teaching, observed in many lessons during the inspection, widens the experiences that pupils receive.
- Music plays a large part in school life and pupils respect the skills of others as well as the sheer enjoyment of the music itself. They develop a sound understanding of their own culture and the school works hard to develop an understanding of other cultures through religious education, music, drama and links with a hostel in India.
- The local authority has provided support for school leaders in tracking pupils' progress and making judgements about how well lessons are being taught. It has also supported the governors in checking the performance of the headteacher in leading the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors of the school have a clear drive and ambition for the school. They have already started consulting parents, pupils and staff about a forthcoming senior appointment. Governors are very involved in a range of activities to check how well the school is doing and regularly visit the school, looking at work and talking to pupils. They ask challenging questions to hold the senior leaders to account, but these are not always incisive enough to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. A number of new governors have been appointed this term. Although they have yet to develop their knowledge of governance, they all have very specific skills which the more experienced governors feel will strengthen the governing body. Governors have a good understanding of

how managing the performance of teachers affects standards in school. They are less clear about the difference that the spending of additional funds, such as the pupil premium, has made for the pupils it is intended for.

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	119950
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	401892

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Gilmour
Headteacher	Phil Goulding
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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