

# Marshland St James VC Primary School and Nursery

School Road, Marshland St James, Wisbech, PE14 8EY

## Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Since the last inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently below average because pupils have not made enough progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The teaching of phonics (the way sounds and letters are linked) is not effective enough as pupils move up the school.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that, in some classes, behaviour is not managed well enough to ensure pupils make good progress.
- Teachers do not always insist on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting or mark pupils' work as thoroughly as they should.
- Leaders at all levels have not improved achievement and teaching quickly enough because action plans and targets are not sufficiently challenging or precise.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The progress of Year 6 pupils improved markedly in 2012.
- There are now systems in place to improve the quality of teaching and these are beginning to make the difference that is needed.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers have a better understanding of the work that is the right level for pupils.
- A wide range of outdoor activities and well-planned school trips have a positive impact on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five teachers and visited eight lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- An act of worship was observed.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative and school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's assessments of pupils, teachers' planning, the headteacher's monitoring documents, the self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, safeguarding policies, logs of school behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), written responses from parents and questionnaires completed by staff.
- Examples of pupils' work were examined along with teachers' marking.
- Anonymised records relating to staff performance were discussed with the headteacher.
- Several younger children read to the inspector.

## Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of children from minority ethnic or mixed heritage backgrounds is lower than that found in most schools. A higher proportion than usual of traveller pupils attend the school.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is higher than the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit is comprised of a nursery and reception class who work together.
- Other pupils are placed in mixed-age classes consisting of Years 1/2, Years 3/4 and Years 5/6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing, including a number of temporary teachers.
- No pupils are educated off-site.
- The school has developed links with a local Teaching School.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of English and mathematics so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
  - expect pupils to be on their best behaviour at all times
  - insist that work is always neat and well presented
  - mark all work to a high standard, building on the best practice that already exists within the school
  - provide pupils with more opportunities and time for them to respond to teachers' comments on their work so that they can improve it
  - identify and respond more effectively to pupils' misunderstandings so that they can make quicker progress
  - improve their teaching of phonics (early sounds and letters), particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - temporary teachers receive the briefings and other guidance they need from the school for them to work to a consistently high standard
  - middle leaders receive better training and support so that their action plans are precise enough to lead quickly to raise standards further in English and mathematics
  - governors hold the school to account more rigorously, monitor the achievement of pupils closely and set the school measurable targets to help pupils achieve at least in line with pupils in other schools.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children start school with skills and understanding that are well below the levels typical for their age. Although they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 varies across different classes and subjects.
- Results at the end of Year 2 are low because pupils make slower progress than they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Key Stage 2 accelerated in 2012 so that the Year 6 pupils exceeded the expected progress for reading, writing and mathematics. However, their previous low starting points meant that their overall results were still well below the national average. Boys and girls make similar progress.
- Progress is improving because staffing is now stable, recent appointments have been good and teaching now focuses more sharply on raising standards.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they read regularly. Communication with parents through the reading record is excellent but frequent staff changes in the past have meant that pupils have not learned the basic letters and sounds that help their reading progress quickly enough. The 2012 phonics screening test for Year 1 pupils showed that many were still below the national average despite the good progress now being made in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's tracking of pupils' performance show that the current Year 6 are still not securely on track to reach average standards by the end of the year. However, the stronger attainment now being seen among younger pupils in other classes shows that the gap is set to narrow in future years.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional help through small-group tuition, extra support in lessons and additional teaching. They typically make reasonable progress overall, though this varies considerably with each pupil and these pupils leave school with standards that are the equivalent of around two years behind pupils nationally. The small proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers, as do the traveller pupils.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as there is not enough consistently good teaching in the school to ensure that standards in mathematics and English rise as fast as they need to.
- The pace of learning is not always fast enough, either because expectations are too low, activities take too long to get going or behaviour is not managed effectively.
- The teaching of phonics, other than in the Reception Year, is variable and is not effective enough in helping to raise standards. In some sessions, the pace is too slow and there is not enough demonstration or repetition of the sounds to help pupils make good progress.
- Teachers' marking of pupils work is inconsistent. There is some practice that is very good and some other that is weak. Not all teachers have high enough expectations for the pupils' handwriting and presentation, and not all school policies are implemented fully by all staff. Some

teachers encourage pupils to respond to marking more effectively than others.

- Teaching is improving across the school because the partnership with a Teaching School has provided high-quality training for staff and the headteacher. Teachers have improved the way they keep check on pupils' progress and set targets to ensure that work is set at the correct level. Pupils are increasingly aware of their current level of attainment.
- There is a particular strength in the teaching of information and communication technology, which is taught by a specialist. The inspector was struck by the confident way that pupils talked about taking apart and reassembling a computer.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. In some cases, these pupils are well taught and progress well. In others, however, teaching is not good enough to give pupils the opportunity to catch up with their peers.
- The teaching in Nursery and Reception is good. This is because of clear planning, an excellent learning environment, good-quality support from staff and good use of assessment to plan next steps in learning for the children.
- In the most effective lessons in Keys Stages 1 and 2, teachers have high expectations, the lesson moves along briskly, and pupils concentrate and are kept busy. There is very good use of the school's data on how well pupils are doing to plan different tasks for different groups so that all pupils are set appropriately demanding work and make good progress.
- In a good Year 5/6 lesson, for example, dynamic teaching made pupils enthusiastic and keen to develop a balanced argument. The teacher's clear explanations and good behaviour management ensured that all pupils made progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Most pupils have very good attitudes to school. On occasion, however, when teaching is not stimulating enough, there is minor disruption to learning through calling out and pupils taking too long to move between activities. Movement along the corridors and lunchtime behaviour is sometimes not calm enough.
- Relationships in class are generally positive and pupils have a good understanding of the school rules and how they should behave. Some teachers, however, do not manage behaviour well enough to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils say they are happy, feel safe and that they enjoy coming to school. There are good opportunities to join in with acts of worship and these contribute effectively to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. The cultural development of pupils is particularly strong, with pupils taking part in an e-twinning computer project with a school in Germany and partnering with a school in inner-city London.
- The senior leadership team works very effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to provide high-quality support for pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties. Recently, there have been a number of fixed-term exclusions due to quite serious incidents. These have been handled sensitively and the improvements in behaviour as a result of skilful leadership have been noticeable.
- A number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire (Parent View) felt that the

school was not dealing effectively with bullying. Pupils, however, said that there were occasional incidents of poor behaviour but that these were being dealt with effectively. They also said that they feel safe in the playground and that the midday assistants look after them very well. More serious incidents were investigated in detail by the inspector and the school's response to these was in line with best practice.

- The school has worked effectively to improve the attendance of pupils, which has improved over the last three years, but is still below the national average.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the pace of change since the last inspection has not been quick enough. Improvements last year helped children to make better than expected progress but, despite this, their attainment was still much lower than the national average because of slow progress in previous years.
- The school development plan has not been effective enough in supporting improvements in the last three years. Actions to improve English and mathematics have been agreed but achievement targets are not challenging enough to ensure that pupils match the standards of their peers nationally.
- The leadership team is working hard to improve the progress of pupils in a range of ways. A partnership with a Teaching School that has provided support and guidance for several staff has led to improved teaching as all staff have responded positively to advice. A higher proportion of teaching is now good. However, these improvements have not been as marked in some classes as in others, particularly where classes have been taught by temporary teachers.
- A new system for tracking the progress of pupils has been introduced. This has ensured that teachers now pay much closer attention to pupils' progress and more quickly identify and support pupils whose rate of progress is too slow.
- The subjects taught are made interesting for pupils and are supported by a good range of out-of-school activities. School trips are planned to support learning in subjects such as religious education and history. In addition, an extensive range of school clubs supports the teaching of physical education and music, with activities such as football, tennis and violin.
- Discrimination in the school is not tolerated and there are very good systems in place to value all members of the school community irrespective of their background. The school ensures that the funding to support pupils entitled to the pupil premium is used to provide additional teachers and other support to help them improve, although the standards attained by eligible pupils remain very low.
- The local authority supports the school well. It has taken a keen interest in standards at the school and has helped the headteacher introduce key improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the previous inspection members of the governing body have undertaken training and have begun to develop a better understanding of how to challenge the school and how to hold it to account. The new Chair of the Governing Body has trained extensively and is implementing systems for monitoring the progress of pupils closely. Similarly, governors are well aware of the links between the performance of teachers and their pay. The governing body has worked closely with the headteacher to ensure good-quality appointments of staff. Currently, a new

headteacher is being appointed for next year and the recruitment process is rigorous and has set out the school's high expectations for the qualities and attributes that the new headteacher should have. Governors monitor the school's spending closely, including the pupil premium, and receive information about the impact it has on these and other pupils. The governing body ensures that the school meets all safeguarding requirements, including those for child protection.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121073
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	401999

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sahra Van der Velde
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheila Day
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 430378
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