

Rufford Primary and Nursery School

Hoewood Road, Bulwell, NG6 8LE

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | 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 | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve well throughout the school because teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Attainment in writing is lower than in other subjects. Teachers' planned tasks for writing do not always appeal to boys.
- Teachers do not always spend enough time on developing pupils' grammatical skills and ensuring that spelling and punctuation are accurate.
- The work set is not always an accurate match to pupils' needs and does not challenge them as much as it could.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy targets are not built-in to lessons and pupils are not given the opportunity to work towards them in all lessons and check whether they are meeting them.
- Teachers are inconsistent in the way they mark pupils' work. Sometimes, it does not tell pupils what they have learnt well and how to make further progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to check their own learning or that of their classmates.

The school has the following strengths

- The actions of leaders and managers at all levels have led to quickly improving teaching and rising standards since the school opened. The pace of progress is starting to accelerate.
- Governors' good understanding of teaching and achievement means they are able to help the school to move forward.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe, included and well-cared for by the staff.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors watched 19 lessons of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The inspectors also observed pupils at break and lunch times, listened to pupils read and attended an assembly.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed the nine responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) so the inspectors considered the findings from the questionnaire sent to parents late last year.
- They looked at the school's work, including its information about the achievement of groups of pupils, the records of observations of teaching and the quality of work in students' books. They checked the policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debbie Vials

Additional Inspector

Keith Adams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school, formed in September 2011 by the amalgamation of an infant and junior school.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after pupils, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the Bulwell Education Improvement Partnership and the Nottingham Learning Trust which provide resources and support for teaching and leadership.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is at least consistently good or better and speeds-up progress, by making sure that:
 - pupils of all abilities are given work that is set at the right level and which challenges them to think hard, in order to enable them to reach their potential
 - marking tells pupils very regularly what they have done well and how to make further progress
 - pupils regularly assess their own learning and that of other pupils
 - pupils' literacy and numeracy targets are built-in to all lessons and pupils check whether they have met them.
- Improve writing standards, particularly those of boys, from Nursery onwards, by ensuring that:
 - writing activities are interesting and relevant
 - teaching consistently concentrates on pupils' grammatical skills and correct spelling and punctuation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school and not enough is good because improvements in teaching are quite recent.
- Standards are below average by the end of Year 2, and they were in 2012 for Year 6 as well. The latest school data show they are much closer to average for this year's Year 6.
- Children start Nursery with lower levels of knowledge and skills than are typical for their age. Skills in communication, language and literacy are particularly low. Progress is quite slow in the Nursery because activities do not regularly encourage children to think or develop their curiosity. Progress quickens in Reception where activities offer children more challenge and variety.
- Pupils achieve less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. Grammatical skills, spelling and punctuation lack accuracy. Boys achieve less well than girls in writing throughout the school, because tasks offered do not always interest them.
- Not enough pupils reach higher levels of the National Curriculum overall because work is not consistently planned carefully enough to speed up their progress. However, this year, because of the improvements led by leaders and managers, in mathematics, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve higher levels.
- Pupils' personal and social skills develop well through the school. In Nursery and Reception, children share fairly and are thoughtful towards others.
- Pupils develop good understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and they are able to sound out words by breaking them down. This is because leaders and managers have made sure that good teaching in phonics is a priority.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those supported through school action and at school action plus, and those who have a statement of special educational needs, make similar progress to other groups of pupils. When classroom support matches pupils' needs specifically, as in, for example, some lessons in Years 1 and 2, the progress of pupils quickens.
- Pupil premium funding has been used particularly to provide one-to-one tuition and support for small groups. A lunchtime club and enrichment activities have also been funded. In 2012, attainment for pupils receiving the funding was two terms behind those not eligible for it in English and one term behind in mathematics. This year, due to improved action by leaders and managers to track progress and target the money, progress has accelerated and the gap is closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not led to good achievement over time because there are inconsistencies in practices within and across subjects, and the good teaching seen has not been sustained for long enough.
- In the less effective teaching, the main weaknesses are in planning. The work given to pupils,

from the Nursery onwards, is not closely based on the levels at which they work. It is too hard or too easy for them. Very occasionally, all pupils get the same work, whatever their ability. The result is the same: that is, the pace of learning and progress slows down. Pupils lose interest in their learning.

- Teachers' planning does not focus enough on making writing interesting for boys, through providing imaginative tasks that boys can relate to and enjoy.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable. Some is excellent, such as in Year 6 literacy. Sometimes, marking informs pupils what they have achieved, but not what to do next in order to make more progress. Although pupils have literacy and numeracy targets, they are not given enough importance in lessons. Opportunities are irregular for pupils to work towards those targets in other lessons and further develop their skills.
- However, there is a quickly improving picture of teaching and during the inspection, most of the teaching in literacy and numeracy was good.
- Where teaching is best, progress accelerates. In a good mixed Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils made quick progress in building-up their literacy skills because the carefully constructed tasks incorporated writing and decision-making, was well matched to the different abilities, and resulted in pupils writing sentences that described very powerfully a story character.
- In another example of good practice, Year 3 and 4 pupils assessed the accuracy of other pupils' responses in creating similes and metaphors. This gave them practice in thinking critically but pupils do not regularly evaluate their own learning or that of others.
- In mathematics, teaching is increasingly more carefully planned to give pupils chances to use their skills in problem-solving and this leads to good learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are provided with daily reading opportunities. They are given lots of chances to develop and practise their reading and writing skills in other lessons, and some opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards each other in lessons, round the school and in the playground are good. The pupils know the way they are expected to behave because the staff explain the school rules to them and remind them of the importance of treating others with politeness and respect.
 - The school supports those pupils who do not conform to the school's expectations so that they improve their attitudes towards learning and to each other. The few examples of restless behaviour that the inspectors saw were due to lessons that did not interest pupils.
 - Pupils and parents agree that the school provides a safe environment for learning. They say there is little bullying. Pupils know who to get help from if they feel they are being bullied. They know that bullying can take a variety of forms, such as racial and religious.
 - From Nursery, pupils develop a good awareness of potentially unsafe situations and how to stay safe, ranging from talking to strangers, road safety, drug abuse and cyber-bullying.
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- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, including representing their class on the school council and being food buddies and class monitors. This helps them develop a range of personal skills such as working in a team, and treating people fairly.
- Most pupils attend regularly but just a few do not. The school's myriad of strategies to raise attendance are making a difference and attendance is broadly average overall. The school knows that not all pupils and parents understand the link between attendance and progress and this continues to be a priority.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully overseen the amalgamation of the two schools. With good support from the senior team, all aspects are improving and standards are rising. The school is well-placed to make further improvements because leadership is a strength.
- The starting point for the school's improvements is the careful checking of pupils' progress from regularly collected information. Meetings with subject leaders and class teachers set the agenda for addressing any under-achievement and ensure the staff's accountability for pupils' progress. As a result, standards are rising through the school.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The senior team judges teaching accurately and matches school improvement planning and staff training on their findings. Training is meeting individual teacher's needs well and rapidly increasing the proportion of good teaching. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good.
- The annual process of setting targets for teachers bases them accurately on priorities that are designed to accelerate pupils' progress. Targets are increasingly measureable and pay rises are closely related to meeting targets over a sustained period of time.
- Most subject leaders are effective in strengthening the school's work. They provide support and training, including workshops for staff and have action plans for their subjects which they are working through to further improve the teaching and leadership in their areas.
- The subjects taught focus mainly on literacy and numeracy. Pupils enjoy the themed work which supports well their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, along with the good opportunities to develop their personal skills and cultural awareness. A good range of after-school activities and visits and visitors enriches pupils' learning. All pupils can participate in them, which shows the school provides equality of opportunity and there is no discrimination.
- The strong partnerships with the Bulwell Education Improvement Partnership and the Nottingham Learning Trust benefit staff by sharing good practice in teaching and leadership, and training for teaching assistants.
- The local authority provides appropriate support, such as helping with staff appointments and paying occasional visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body checks that policies are regularly reviewed and up-to-date, including the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, which meet the statutory requirements. The

headteacher keeps the governors very well-informed of the school's work and progress. Governors understand, from training and from information received, how well the school is performing. The governors understand the merits of more regular, detailed conversations with subject leaders in order to broaden further their expertise in helping to improve the school. The governors know how pupil premium money is allocated and its impact on pupils' progress, and the procedures and expectations of teachers' performance targets. Governors know enough about the school to be able to challenge its work, including a good focus on the inconsistencies that still remain.

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 | 136232 |
| Local authority | Nottingham |
| Inspection number | 400273 |

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

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| Type of school | Select |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 300 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Michele Hyde |
| Headteacher | Alison Tones |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0115 9155755 |
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