

William Rhodes Primary School

Hunloke Avenue, Boythorpe, Chesterfield, S40 2NR

Inspection dates 22–23 October 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		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

- Pupils' achievement is not good. The proportions of pupils making better than expected progress in English and mathematics are lower than those found nationally.
- Too few pupils, when compared with national norms, reach above average standards of work in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In lessons, teachers do not always explain work clearly. Therefore, pupils do not always understand what they have to do and why.
- When teachers mark pupils' work they are not consistent in giving advice which pupils understand and which will help them to make good progress.
- Some pupils, usually the more able, say that the work they are given in lessons is too easy.
- Leaders' checks on teaching do not have a sufficiently sharp focus on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Their actions have not brought about consistently good teaching or accelerated pupils' progress.
- Governors do not do enough to hold the school to account for its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety are good. The school is a calm, well-ordered and welcoming community where pupils feel safe.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has been successful in narrowing the gaps in achievement between boys and girls.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to make sure that eligible pupils make progress at least as rapidly as other pupils.
- Children are taught well and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 16 lessons, one of them jointly with the headteacher, and made brief visits to several more. They examined the work in pupils' books and listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, and an officer representing the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- The team consulted the Parent View website, where 10 parents and carers had posted responses to the online questionnaire, and analysed 11 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pitt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority are from other ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school currently receives the pupil premium funding for more than half its pupils. This is well above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding which in this school applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is currently above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school part-way through a year or key stage is well above average.
- The school meets the government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that it is consistently good or better in all classes by making sure that:
 - teachers' explanations are always crystal clear so that pupils know what they have to do and why
 - when teachers mark pupils' work, they are consistent in giving advice which shows pupils what they need to do next to improve their work
 - when work has been marked, teachers check that pupils always understand and act upon the advice they are given.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics by offering greater challenge to pupils, so that more of them, including the more able and those who join the school part-way through a year or key stage, exceed national rates of progress and reach National Curriculum levels 5 or 6 by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - when leaders check the quality of teaching, they have a sharper focus on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics
 - governors, including those newly appointed, hold school leaders more rigorously to account for teachers' performance and pupils' achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which are below expectations for their age, and well below in communication and mathematics.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills are broadly average in English and mathematics when they start Year 1.
- Pupils make adequate progress as they move up the school from Year 1 to Year 6. Their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average at the end of Year 6. However, the proportions who exceed expected rates of progress, or reach above-average, standards are below those found nationally.
- In recent years there has been a marked difference in the achievement of boys and girls, and the school has done much to address this. There is now no significant difference in their achievement rates. However, the achievement of pupils who join the school part-way through a year or key stage is not as good as that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as the very small number who speak English as an additional language, achieve in line with other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers identify their needs accurately and provide support and guidance which enables them to make expected progress.
- The extra support given to pupils eligible for the pupil premium enables these pupils to make progress at least as rapidly as other pupils. By the end of Year 6 in 2012, the standards reached by this sizeable group were roughly half a term behind those of others in reading and mathematics and a term and a half behind in writing. These differences were smaller than those found nationally. In 2013 they were smaller still.
- The results of the national check on standards in phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 in 2012 were below average, but by the end of Year 2 the reading standards of this group of pupils were average.
- Some of the school's most able pupils exceed the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics, reaching National Curriculum level 5. However, the level of challenge offered to these pupils means that the proportions doing so are smaller than those found nationally. Some pupils told inspectors that the work they were given was too easy for them.
- The most-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with good understanding, showing above-average skills for their age. Others read more hesitantly. Sometimes they 'guess' words rather than reading them carefully. They could, however, show inspectors clearly how they successfully cope with words which are new to them using the 'sounding out' techniques which they have been taught.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are average. Pupils practise writing at length in different styles and for different audiences. In mathematics a new teaching scheme recently introduced across the school involves pupils more actively in their learning. This is engaging their interest and motivating them well. In both subjects, though, a lack of challenge can at times hold back progress and explains why pupils do not reach higher levels of attainment.

- Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception years and start the main school with standards which are broadly average

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching seen in the majority of lessons during the inspection was good. However, the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time, together with the inspectors' scrutiny of pupils work, show that it still requires improvement because it is not securing good achievement for pupils, especially the more able and those who join part way through the year or key stage.
- Where teaching is good, teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved. Teachers' explanations are clear and they make good use of visual aids and computer technology. Pupils often work in pairs or groups to discuss what they are learning. In one English lesson, for example, pupils watched a film clip about an air battle in World War Two. This engaged both boys and girls and inspired them to suggest lots of imaginative language which they then used in the writing task which followed.
- Where teaching is not good, teachers' explanations are not always clear so that pupils are not exactly sure how to set about their tasks or why they are doing them. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the lack of practical, real-life examples in the teacher's explanation about algebra made the explanation difficult to follow for some pupils. They were, therefore, not clear about how to complete the tasks that followed. This reduced motivation and slowed the pace of learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and conscientiously. However, there is inconsistency in the extent to which they give pupils feedback which enables them to improve their work. Sometimes their comments are detailed and helpful, but at other times they are too general. Some pupils told inspectors they did not always understand their teachers' comments, or that they did not always read or act upon them. Such comments are, therefore, not effective in encouraging pupils' involvement or promoting good progress.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and well organised. They are conscientious in giving support to those who need it. This is mostly in class, but occasionally in separate activities close by. The support teaching assistants provide ensures that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, who speak English as an additional language or who are eligible for extra help through the pupil premium funding, make progress at the same rate as other pupils. Their support enables these pupils to become more confident and positive about their learning.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff know children's needs well. They take every opportunity to develop children's language, observational and mathematical skills. The teaching areas, indoors and out, are stimulating and welcoming.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The school is a calm and ordered community where teachers can teach, and pupils can learn without disruption. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are treated with respect, and they, in turn, show respect and good manners towards others.
- From the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage expectations and routines are made clear. Behaviour is managed well. Teachers are skilful in 'nipping in the bud' any potentially disruptive behaviour and making sure that it does not disturb the work of other pupils.

- Both boys and girls say they are proud to belong to their school and to take on responsibilities to serve it. Older pupils serve as buddies for younger ones, pupils are monitors of various kinds, or they serve on the school council. Pupils help people less fortunate than themselves through charity fundraising.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. They are confident that teachers will handle it appropriately if it does occur. Older pupils understand about different types of bullying, such as internet-based bullying, and how to keep themselves safe from it.
- The school provides good support for those who need it. Inspectors saw evidence of how this support has enabled all pupils to be fully involved in the life of the school and make progress in line with other pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different people's backgrounds and beliefs even though almost all pupils are White British. They respond well to opportunities to reflect, and they respond imaginatively to art and music.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because the school has not yet managed to secure above-average attendance and because, very occasionally, some pupils have to be reminded about what is expected of them rather than behaving well of their own accord.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have high ambitions for the school, and appropriate priorities, based on an accurate view of the school's work. However, they have not yet managed to secure good achievement for pupils. Leadership and management are therefore not good.
- With support from the local authority, leaders and managers at all levels have addressed some of the areas for improvement noted at the last inspection. The Early years Foundation Stage is now well managed and effective, teachers have a more incisive view of pupils' capabilities, and pupils are now more involved in discussing their own learning and progress. However, leaders and managers have not made sure that enough pupils, particularly those who join the school at other than the usual times of year and the more able pupils, exceed expected progress or reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is checked by senior leaders who make sure that any promotions are only given when the impact on pupils' achievement shows that they are fully deserved. Teachers receive regular feedback about their performance and are keen to share ideas and improve. So far, however, this feedback has not had a sharp enough focus on raising standards in English and mathematics to a sufficiently high level.
- Staff speak highly of the support they have received from the local authority in helping them develop and improve their teaching skills. This includes confirming that teachers are accurate in their assessments of the levels that pupils are working at in English and mathematics. It means pupils and parents and carers can be confident that the information about pupils' standards, which the school gives them, is accurate.
- Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects which motivates pupils to learn. Out-of-school activities include sport and music. The daily breakfast club provides a calm and purposeful start to the day for those who use it. The gardening club, which looks after the school's impressive, award-winning gardens and allotment, is particularly popular.

- The school plans to use the new government primary school sport funding to allow more pupils in Key Stage 2 to have swimming lessons and to extend the range of sport activities which are offered. It will also measure the effectiveness of these developments.
- Leaders make sure there is no discrimination of any kind. All pupils, regardless of background or need, have access to everything the school offers. Parents and carers made very positive comments to inspectors about the school. Many hold it in high regard.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There are currently three vacancies on the governing body and some governors are relatively inexperienced. Longer-standing governors, well supported by the local authority, are aware of the issues facing the school, how its performance compares with that of schools nationally, and how it has successfully begun to tackle areas of weakness. They are not afraid to challenge decisions where necessary. However, in managing performance, they do not hold school leaders, and through them the teachers, to account with sufficient rigour for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. They check that finances are appropriately managed and make sure that teachers' pay awards are fully deserved. They know how the pupil premium is used to promote achievement and how this funding has helped narrow the differences in achievement between different groups of pupils. Governors make sure that the school's procedures for safeguarding children fully meet national requirements and that all children are kept safe.

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	112671
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424965

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toni Padley
Headteacher	Nigel Turner
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2011
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