

# Clarkson Infant and Nursery School

Trafford Road, Wisbech, PE13 2ES

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 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

- There is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Some lessons are rather slow to get going, and in others pupils are not expected complete enough work.
- In some lessons pupils lose concentration too readily, which interrupts the flow of learning.
- Marking does not always help the pupils to improve their work, or help the teachers to plan what the pupils need to learn next.
- Attendance is below average.
- Too few pupils are making good progress in reading and writing. Some pupils are not able to read or spell words that they should know confidently.
- Leaders and governors have not made enough improvements to teaching or pupils' progress since the last inspection because of disruption to the leadership of the school.
- Although the performance of pupils who receive extra funding is analysed in detail to identify the impact of the support they receive, this is not well established for all groups of pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in the Nursery is good and the pupils get off to a good start.
- Pupils behave well around the school and on the playground.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy at school.
- The interim headteacher has quickly evaluated the school's performance and identified where improvements are needed. She has set out a clear, well-focused plan for improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons and, in addition, made some short visits to lessons. They spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtime, and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, and policies for keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils’ books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, three members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 10 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. In addition, the views of 12 parents were gathered through discussions at the start of the school day. The inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rachel Morgan-Yates

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is about the same size as an average primary school.
- Eight out of 10 pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has doubled in the last two years, but is still below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action (pupils who need extra help with their learning) is average. The proportion supported through school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is also average.
- A third of the pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which is higher than the national average. This funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- The interim headteacher has been in post since September 2013. A new deputy joined the school at the same time.
- There have been several changes to the teaching staff since the school was last inspected.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - the work teachers set for pupils builds rapidly on what they already know and are able to do
  - lessons are conducted at a faster pace, fully engage boys, and retain their attention
  - the teachers' expectations of the volume and quality of work that pupils produce are consistently high.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise the standards they achieve in reading and writing by:
  - increasing their knowledge and use of the sounds that letters make to read and spell a broader range of words accurately
  - expecting them to write more frequently and for a range of purposes
  - providing them with clearer guidance and better resources to help them to write successfully
  - consistently marking their work in way which helps them to improve and which informs the teachers about what pupils need to learn next.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that all leaders:
  - play a full role in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching
  - focus sharply on monitoring the progress of all groups of pupils in order to evaluate the impact of the support they receive
  - work closely with the parents and carers of those pupils who are absent too frequently to improve their attendance.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most pupils are making the progress expected of them, but too few are making good progress in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Standards are typically average at the end of Year 2, although they fell last year in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics are consistently a little higher. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language do well in mathematics.
- Boys do not do as well as girls. The teachers plan activities with the intention of motivating and interesting boys, but the pace of learning in some lessons does not hold their interest long enough for them to make good progress and produce work of a high quality. Where it does – for example, when Year 1 pupils were measuring the playground using click wheels – they do well.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium are not making good enough progress to close the gaps between their results and those of their classmates. The school has used this funding to provide additional teaching. Although the gap narrowed a little in 2013, notably in mathematics, these pupils are still a term behind their classmates in reading and writing.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who successfully demonstrated their knowledge of the sounds that letters make rose sharply in 2013 and was in line with the national average. Most of the pupils who did not do as well as expected last year have now caught up. However, not all pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words, or to spell words accurately when they are writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the progress expected of them. Some pupils, although not all, do well as a result of the speech and language support that they receive. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very thoughtfully supported, with the result that they can access the full range of lessons and activities.
- The children start school with skills that are less well developed than those expected for their age. They do well in the Nursery, where their social skills and speech develop at a good pace. This gives the children a good platform, so that they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with a similar proportion reaching a good level of development to that found nationally.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching to rapidly increase the rate of progress that pupils make. Too many lessons fail to capitalise on the interest and enthusiasm that are generated among the pupils by an exciting start to a lesson. This is often because subsequent tasks set by the teacher do not build well enough on what pupils already know and are able to do.
- Sometimes introductions to lessons are too long and the teaching rather slow. When this happens, pupils become unsettled and the flow of the lesson is interrupted by the teacher having to regain their attention. This reduces the impact of the teaching and slows learning, with the consequence that pupils do not make good progress.
- The expectations placed upon pupils vary from class to class. Sometimes not enough is expected of pupils and they find the work too easy. At other times, very engaging scenarios are developed to motivate pupils, but they are not given enough guidance on how to succeed or, for example, lists of useful words that would help them to make good progress in their writing.

- Pupils' work is marked conscientiously, but the quality of the feedback provided for them is inconsistent and does not make a big enough impact on their progress. Comments and reminders for the pupils are not routinely followed up or addressed in the next piece of work. Furthermore, marking is not being used well enough to identify what pupils need to learn next.
- Where teaching does move learning on at a good pace, introductions are lively and succinct, and pupils are fully engaged and maintain their concentration. The tasks that they are set challenge all ability groups, including the most able, and are modified during the lesson to make sure that pupils continue to concentrate and work hard.
- The teaching in the Nursery is good. Children make good progress because they are consistently interested and engaged by means of a good balance of activities led by adults and those that they choose themselves. Learning flows freely from indoors to out, where the children learn through a broad range of well-thought-out activities.

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

### **requires improvement**

- At times learning is punctuated by unsettled behaviour, pupils lose concentration, and lessons do not flow smoothly. This means that learning stops and starts, which prevents pupils from extending their knowledge and skills at a good pace. In some instances pupils take too long to respond to their teachers' instructions.
- Attendance is below average but is improving. The interim headteacher has raised awareness among parents about the importance of regular attendance, and is now closely tracking the attendance of different groups. The attendance of some pupils who speak English as an additional language, and some who are eligible for free school meals, is too low.
- Around the school, in the playground and during assemblies the pupils behave well. Pupils say that this is typical and that they feel safe and happy at playtimes, being unaware of any bullying. They feel they are well looked after at lunchtimes and enjoy the opportunities that they are given to play with their friends.
- Teaching assistants provide very thoughtful care and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school works closely with parents and carers and a range of agencies to provide appropriate support for the very few pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leaders and governors have not created the momentum for improvement since the last inspection. There has been considerable disruption to the work of the school, and several changes of leadership. The quality of teaching and the standards that the pupils achieve have been maintained, except in writing last year. However, improvement has been limited.
- Currently, the interim headteacher is giving clear direction, which is appreciated by members of staff. Parents, too, commented on recent improvements. The interim headteacher has set out a clear, well-targeted plan to raise attainment, based on an accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Teachers' appraisal targets are aligned to the drive to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Other members of staff with leadership responsibilities are not sufficiently involved in improving the quality of teaching, or in holding their colleagues to account for the progress that pupils

make. The teachers who lead English and mathematics are new to their roles and have had little time to influence the quality of teaching or have an impact on the pupils' progress.

- Systems to track pupils' progress and meetings to make sure that pupils are doing as well as they should are now in place. The interim headteacher has introduced greater rigour to this process. Although the impact of the pupil premium is carefully evaluated the teaching and support for other groups is not analysed in the same detail.
- The subjects that the pupils are taught are often linked through interesting themes such as the Japan topic in Year 2. Some of the activities that emanate from this topic are not tailored well enough to the pupils' needs to ensure they make good progress. Nevertheless, this topic is an example of how the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broadened.
- The interim headteacher has considered the best use of the recent sports funding. Plans are in place to extend after-school sports opportunities, and to join the local secondary school sports partnership, whose teachers will provide training. Currently the pupils perform well in physical education because these lessons are taught by specialist sports coaches.
- The local authority has provided a broad range of support for the school through a period of disruption. Local authority officers have made several visits to the school since the start of this school year to help the interim headteacher improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement for all groups of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has made considerable improvement to its systems and procedures related to the school's finances over the last year. It has reviewed its role, and through an audit identified where it needs to extend its work. Governors visit the school and carry out a range of checks so that they know that it is safe and what is happening in it. They are now receiving reports about the teachers' performance and pupils' progress, but these aspects of their work are not well-established. Currently, governors are not sufficiently involved in the school's self-evaluation although they are set to play a role in evaluating the impact of the school's improvement plans. The governors ensure that appraisal is carried out, and that any pay awards are closely linked to improved performance. Governors know how the pupil premium funds are spent, but they say that they 'need more detail' to evaluate its impact. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, but the school's website does not.

## 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>	110649
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425200

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Barker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Dowling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 584867
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