

Blakesley Church of England Primary School

The Green, Blakesley, Towcester, NN12 8RD

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2014

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		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Most pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is too slow. The standards reached in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are lower than those in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers' expectations of what some pupils, particularly those who are more able, can achieve are too low.
- Teachers do not question pupils well enough to challenge their thinking and extend their knowledge.
- In some lessons, pupils do not get on with their work fast enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Not all teachers and managers are sufficiently involved in helping the headteacher to drive school improvement.
- The governing body has yet to fully implement the recommendations of a recent external review.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has introduced changes that are helping pupils to make faster progress and to raise standards.
- Pupils make at least the expected progress in reading and writing, and there is some good teaching on which the school can build.
- Pupils have a good understanding of personal safety and get on with each other well.
- The governing body now checks more closely on the work of the school and is working well with the headteacher to improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of shorter visits to lessons and attended an assembly. He heard some of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and local authority representatives.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan.
- The inspector took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and eight questionnaires returned by members of staff. He also spoke with a number of parents.

Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds. None speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4 to 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Very few pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and other eligible groups.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club during term time.
- The religious nature of the school is inspected separately by the diocese.
- Since the last inspection, there have been some changes in staff. The headteacher was appointed in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve but especially the more able
 - ensuring all pupils settle quickly to their tasks and work with sustained concentration
 - developing teachers' skills in asking questions which challenge pupils working at different levels
 - building on and sharing the good practice within the school and working more closely with colleagues in other schools.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics in by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - developing teachers' skills and knowledge in the teaching of mathematics
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the leadership of the school by:
 - developing the skills of all teachers in analysing attainment and progress data and in supporting the headteacher to improve outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that the governing body implements the recommendations of the recent external review.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Most pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are below average. Although standards in mathematics are broadly average at the end of Year 2 they are consistently lower than those in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in developing their mathematical skills because the teachers' expectations of some pupils, especially the more able, are not high enough. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to consolidate and practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. Their understanding of number, such as the value of ten and a hundred, and their skills in undertaking mental calculations are not sufficiently well developed.
- The majority of children enter the Reception class with levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age. The children get off to a good start and all make at least the expected progress and, by the end of the year, most have acquired the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of a typical five-year-old.
- Pupils' progress in developing their reading skills is at least in line with expectations. The proportion reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 checks of pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) was marginally above the national average in 2013. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' reading skills are as expected for their age. Most of the older pupils read with confidence and expression. They can talk about their favourite authors and recommend books to their friends. In the 2013 Year 2 and Year 6 assessments, standards in reading were higher than those in writing and mathematics.
- Standards in writing are broadly average but are rising. This is partly due to changes in the way the curriculum is organised, a greater emphasis on the teaching of basic grammar and encouraging pupils to suggest how they can improve their own and their classmates' writing. Pupils in Year 6 use adjectives, metaphors and similes to help bring their writing to life and to stimulate interest.
- The school's own data show that pupils' progress is accelerating. This is as a result of improved teaching, more robust teacher assessments and better use of assessment information to pitch the work at a level which is appropriate for the pupils. Teachers generally have higher expectations of all pupils, especially the more able, in reading and writing.
- Pupil premium money is used appropriately to support individual pupils and helps them to be fully included in school and class activities. For example, funding is used to employ additional teaching assistants and to subsidise educational visits and extra-curricular activities. There were too few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium to compare their attainment with that of their classmates in 2013 without identifying individuals. School data shows that these pupils are making at least similar progress to other pupils.
- From their various starting points, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least the expected progress. Their progress is checked carefully by the headteacher and, if necessary, additional support is provided.
- The primary school sports funding has been allocated appropriately. Pupils enjoy taking part in competitions with other schools. They did well to win a recent golf tournament. Pupils have a good understanding of how sport contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement and teachers do not always have high enough expectations of some pupils, especially the more able, notably in mathematics and to a lesser extent in English. At times, work lacks challenge and does not provide opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and knowledge, for example, by teachers asking supplementary questions.
- In some lessons, checks to make certain that pupils understand what is expected of them are not carried out soon enough. As a result, pupils' attitude to learning slips as they lose interest and concentration.
- Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work in mathematics. This is partly because some teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is insecure.
- There is some good teaching on which the school can build. Teachers have liaised with colleagues in other schools, attended courses and regularly discuss with the headteacher their teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They have responded positively to the suggestions to improve outcomes for pupils. However, the advice from experienced colleagues working in other schools has not been implemented consistently. Scrutiny of pupils' exercise books and assessment records show that teaching is not yet good in all classes.
- Where teaching is most effective, time is not wasted, teachers have high expectations and are clear what they expect pupils of different abilities to achieve in the lesson. They set pupils appropriate tasks and provide guidance on how the work should be undertaken. Good use is made of resources to support learning and to consolidate pupils' understanding. The learning support assistants are deployed effectively to work with individuals and groups.
- Most pupils know their targets and teachers make regular reference to them in lessons. There are many examples of good marking in pupils' English books. Praise is used effectively and pupils are usually offered guidance as to how to improve their work.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers use a range of strategies to manage and promote pupils' good behaviour. They work closely with teaching assistants and try to ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**require improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because some pupils are too slow to settle to work and do not work with sustained concentration. Some talk with their friends for too long on non-task related matters. In lessons that capture their interests they work well.
- The school's policy on promoting good behaviour is followed with reasonable consistency. When action is needed, it is taken: there have been a few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. These have been reported to the governing body.
- Pupils are proud of their school. There is no litter. Displays and equipment are treated with respect. Pupils move calmly around the school and show respect for each other and for adults. They are polite and well-mannered in the way they speak to adults and to each other. They know about different types of bullying, for example name-calling, fighting, racial, religious or

cyber-bullying. There are no reported cases of racist behaviour.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school because 'it's a small and friendly school, we know each other and all the teachers. They are kind.' Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried and are confident they will be listened to.
- Pupils also have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know about the potential dangers when using computers to access the internet and when on educational visits.
- Pupils' attendance is above average for primary schools. This, combined with improvements in the quality of teaching, is helping them to increase the rate of pupils' learning.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- In this small school, the headteacher and the governing body rightly expect all teachers to contribute towards the leadership and management of the school. Currently, not all teachers are sufficiently involved in helping to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Their skills in analysing and using whole school assessment data are not sufficiently well developed.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. In a relatively short space of time, she has correctly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses, drawn up a detailed school development plan, managed staffing difficulties well and introduced more robust assessment procedures. Parents acknowledge and appreciate the improvements in the school.
- Supported by the governing body, the measures taken by the headteacher to promote staff development, improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress are beginning to have an impact. The school's more rigorous, robust self-evaluation and the quickening rate of progress across the school indicate that it has the capacity to improve.
- In all classes, there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and, where possible, brought together through a whole-school theme. Pupils and parents commented on the success of the topic on Africa and said how they enjoyed working across the age ranges. They look forward to the next theme on Rio-de-Janeiro.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example through music tuition, educational visits, and taking part in inter-school sporting activities.
- Following the appointment of the headteacher the local authority has provided the school with good support. Officers have helped the governing body to set the headteacher's performance targets and supported the headteacher in checking on the quality of teaching and in analysing data. As a newly appointed headteacher, she has received effective support from an experienced colleague.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors want to ensure that they do the best they can to help take the school forward and following discussions with the local authority, sought an external review of their performance. This identified a few aspects of their work that require improvement. The outcomes of the review have still to be discussed at a governing body meeting, however, the Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher have actioned some of the recommendations already. Governors attend training sessions and are currently undertaking an audit of their skills so that

their areas of expertise are put to best use. The governing body has acknowledged that in the past, governors have not asked sufficiently searching questions of senior leaders. This has now changed. There is a greater focus on ensuring that pupils' progress is tracked and questions asked if pupils are not making at least the expected progress. They know where teaching is good and where additional support is needed. Governors know how targets are set for teachers to improve, and the process for rewarding good teaching. The governing body monitors the school's budget appropriately and makes sure that the primary sports funding and the pupil premium allocation are spent as intended. The sports funding is being used to employ sports coaches, for staff professional development and to promote sporting activities with other schools. Pupil premium money has mainly been spent on additional staffing to support individuals and groups of pupils in developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. There are suitable processes in place to monitor and to check on the effectiveness of the expenditure. Governors and the headteacher are keen to promote good relationships within the school and the local community. Discrimination of any sort will not be tolerated. The governing body ensures that pupils are kept safe and that the school meets the latest requirements for safeguarding.

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	121959
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	430716

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hyatt
Headteacher	Lucy Burman
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012
Telephone number	01327 860257
Fax number	01327 860257
Email address	bursar@blakesley.northants-ecl.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

