

North Somercotes CofE Primary School

Warren Road, North Somercotes, Louth, LN11 7QB

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress in all year groups is strong and they achieve well.
- Reading is a particular strength, and pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing and the presentation of their work have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Children in Reception make particularly rapid gains in building confident reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Pupils are taught well across the school and teaching assistants provide effective support for learning.
- Interesting activities engage pupils' curiosity and interest. Discussions and questioning by the teacher help pupils to extend their thinking skills and express their views.
- In lessons, pupils work together well and contribute enthusiastically. They concentrate well and persevere with tasks.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they say they really enjoy lessons. They have confidence in the adults who look after them and feel safe.
- Good leadership and management have ensured that weaknesses identified are tackled and improvements made. Regular checks made on the quality of teaching are helping the school to improve.
- Governors have strengthened school leadership because they know how well the school is doing, and hold leaders to account for improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Just occasionally, teachers do not make sure pupils complete enough work or move on to harder work when they are ready.
- Pupils are not encouraged to aim even higher by assessing their own work and identifying targets for improvement.
- The school does not yet make full use of the best practice in teaching that exists in the school to help the most able pupils to reach their full potential.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed seven teachers and visited 16 lessons. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, and other middle leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' work, looked in their exercise books, listened to them read and observed them in one assembly.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, information on pupils' progress, and documents related to safeguarding and key reports and policies.
- The inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day, took account of the 43 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also analysed 14 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Rees-Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Somercotes Church of England Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils attend from the village and the surrounding area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Reception-aged children. There are single-age classes from Years 1 to 6. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are taught together in two mixed-age groups each afternoon and Wednesday morning.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which in this school supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school works in a collaborative partnership and helps two local primary schools, and has links to local secondary schools.
- The headteacher was appointed after the school was given a Notice to Improve in March 2011, and a new deputy headteacher in September 2011. One new teacher joined the school in September 2012.
- There is a pre-school on the school site. It is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding to maximise pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure that activities in lessons keep pupils alert, interested and challenged, so they complete more work and learn as well as they can
 - encouraging pupils to aim high by assessing their own work and identifying targets for improvement
 - making the most of the expertise that exists in the school to improve teaching and fully challenge the most able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Given the differing numbers in the year groups, there is variation in attainment, and pupils joining and leaving the school at various times sometimes affect results. However, generally, children come into school in Reception showing levels of development below those typical for their age and leave the school in Year 6 with attainment that is above average.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class, particularly in developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Almost all pupils start Year 1 with knowledge and understanding that are at higher levels of development than those usually found for their age.
- Over time, pupils' progress has been stronger in Reception and Key Stage 2 than across Key Stage 1. However, samples of pupils' work seen and the school's tracking show that pupils' progress across all year groups is now uniformly strong in English and mathematics. Pupils currently in Years 1 to 6 are on course to achieve well and attain levels that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Any pupils at risk of falling behind receive timely and effective support to accelerate their learning.
- In 2013 attainment in Key Stage 1 was higher in writing and mathematics than in reading. Since then, pupils' progress in reading has accelerated because this has been a focus of the school's effective improvement work. Attainment is rising as a result. Year 1 pupils tackle difficult texts and use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) with considerable confidence and perseverance to read unknown words with accuracy.
- Reading is a strength across the school. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 read with considerable enthusiasm and share their favourite books with each other. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good reading habits and, for example, appreciate humour in stories. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was well above the national average in 2012, but below expectations in 2013 due to staffing difficulties.
- Pupils say that the most helpful thing they do is exchange ideas with a partner before they start to write. Standards in writing have improved dramatically. This is due to the opportunities all pupils have to write at length in a range of subjects, with high expectations from teachers for the standards pupils must reach. In the national tests, many more pupils reach the higher levels in writing than seen nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in line with their classmates. Their additional needs are well understood and additional help is provided so that they learn successfully.
- The very small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 means that it is not appropriate to comment on their attainment without potentially identifying individuals. School records and samples of work show that the current progress of this group of pupils is similar to other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics because of good teaching from their class teacher and effective funded support in small group work.
- As part of their drive to raise aspirations and make the school even more effective, leaders have rightly set a target to increase the proportion of the more-pupils working at the high national curriculum Level 6 by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school typically promotes pupils' good progress in English and mathematics. Activities provided for different groups of pupils mostly help them to make good progress, and additional support is given where necessary to accelerate learning. Good, and often outstanding, teaching ensures that pupils of different abilities have equally good chances to achieve well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are close and productive, and learning in lessons is purposeful and enjoyable. Pupils comment that teachers are 'strict but fair' and that they are 'always treated with respect'. A very strong value is placed on effective learning. All viewpoints and responses from pupils are highly appreciated. Teachers make clear at the start of every lesson what pupils are expected to learn, and the high level of challenge set helps pupils to achieve as well as they can. The requirement that all pupils extend their knowledge of key facts has improved pupils' ability to apply their problem-solving skills in numeracy. This makes a very significant contribution to the rapid rates of pupils' learning.
- Pupils' work indicates that they mostly finish tasks and try their best. Topic work in history and geography in Year 6, for example, is well presented and shows that pupils care about and take pride in their work. Pupils help each other when working in groups, for example when using tablet computers to record an instructional video on the components of an electrical circuit in science.
- Teachers use a variety of exciting and creative approaches to meet and respond to pupils' different learning needs. For example, in Year 1, pupils were studying a film of the sequences of solving a Rubik's Cube as preparation for explaining the events that happen in their stories. In Year 6, pupils were analysing the author's point of view in a section from their story book, identifying a variety of language devices in readiness for their own writing. They demonstrated a sophisticated use of language that was advanced for their age, linked to learning about sentence structure in prose.
- Teachers quickly assess new pupils' starting points and give them work to move their learning forward. As a result, they make up any lost ground rapidly and learn as successfully as others.
- In Reception, children make rapid gains in counting, and with reading and writing, because basic skills are exceptionally well taught. Teaching ensures that they can apply their knowledge of phonics to read unknown words. These strong gains are clearly reflected in the samples of work seen in Reception.
- Teaching assistants have good expertise and provide valuable support for different groups of pupils, including helping less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, to get the most out of the work they are set. Their contribution also ensures that Reception children listen well and concentrate hard on challenging work.
- The use of targets, to help pupils understand what they need to improve, is developing and becoming fully established. The next challenge is for pupils to assess their own work in detail and set themselves clear goals for improvement. Marking typically gives pupils clear information about how to improve; pupils value the comments made and respond to them in future work.
- There are occasions when teachers do not make the best use of time available in lessons. This happens when not enough work is covered, or more-able pupils in particular are not moved on to more demanding work when they are clearly ready for it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond with considerable enthusiasm when asked about why they like coming to school. They are proud to show the range of certificates they receive in assembly for their good work and effort. They come to school regularly and attendance is improving due to the school's effective actions and parents' support.
- Pupils get on well together and know that discrimination is not tolerated, as a result of thinking about the school's core values. Older pupils organise a range of play activities at break and lunch times and ensure that nobody feels left out. At the end of play sessions they come into classrooms sensibly and safely, ready for learning.
- Pupils say that lessons are interesting, for example when they use tablet computers to research the pros and cons for debating moral issues such as justice and equality. Occasionally, a few pupils lose some interest when they are not stimulated by having the chance to work on their own on harder work or at a pace that suits them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure in school and they say there is no bullying. Older pupils often take on responsibility as 'peer mediators' to resolve any minor disagreements. Their involvement in a current enterprise project shows how well they use teamwork to successfully tackle corporate aims. Pupils have a clear awareness of e-safety and the potential dangers of cyber bullying and using the internet.
- Parents and staff rightly think that pupils' behaviour and their safety are strong aspects of the school. New pupils coming into the school are welcomed and quickly made to feel part of the school community. Parents' responses to the online survey are highly positive about the school and about how well their children are cared for and like coming to school. These were cited by parents as reasons why they choose this school and would recommend it to others.
- Pupils say that it is very unusual for their learning to be disrupted and that this has improved over the recent past, because relationships and behaviour in the school were not always as positive as they are now. This improvement is also reflected in the school's behaviour log.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management ensure that teaching enables pupils to achieve well. The determined headteacher has quickly tackled the areas of the school which required improvement and has begun to move things forward. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress has enabled leaders to improve achievement, and robust monitoring and effective training have strengthened the quality of teaching.
- Highly effective leadership and management of Reception underpin the very positive start children receive. Expert and well-informed leadership of the work to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs leads to these pupils achieving well. Subject leaders, especially for English and mathematics, are very effective and the governors support their work strongly, particularly in the development of their action plans.
- Staff work together as a team to implement change. The school's work to improve reading, writing and presentation has been successful. Leaders, including governors, recognise that they have not yet made the most of sharing the expertise within the school to focus teaching on ensuring challenging Level 6 activities are available for the most able pupils, or to establish more routinely outstanding teaching.

- All teachers, including those who are newly qualified, and teaching assistants have clear targets for improvement, which are monitored regularly. This has had an exceptional effect on raising the quality of teaching and learning across the school since the last inspection because everyone knows exactly what is required of them. Training needs and pay rises are linked closely and effectively to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The strong caring environment has an immense impact on the daily life of the school. It places high value on developing pupils' basic literacy skills, expression of feeling, enjoyment and ability to follow their own lines of inquiry.
- Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through regular opportunities to reflect and pray during assemblies and at the start of lunchtime. The taught curriculum includes literacy practice at every opportunity and connects subjects and areas of learning through imaginative approaches which support pupils' understanding and personal skills. The creative and expressive arts are strongly promoted. The rich displays of pupils' artwork around the school confirm this. As a result of all this, pupils make significant gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are well prepared to help support their children's progress at home. For example, pupils' reading diaries include a detailed commentary that shows parents reinforce the reading skills learned in the classroom. Parents comment on the impressive way the school helps their children brave outdoor challenges, such as on the residential visit to Cherrygarth, and the extent to which the resilience they learn in these situations gives them determination to achieve well in the classroom.
- Leaders have used the additional money from the primary school sports funding to provide additional training for staff and to increase pupils' participation in sport. Attendance at the after-school sports club has increased since the beginning of September 2013. There are several sports events with other schools in the locality which pupils enjoy. These improvements and the school's award for 'Food for Life' contribute well to pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority rightly has confidence in the headteacher and has judged that the school requires only a light level of support. Additional support was provided during the change in leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school, supporting and challenging school leaders well. The governors regularly review their own effectiveness to ensure that they maximise their impact on improving pupils' achievement. Governors understand how well pupils achieve when compared with other schools nationally and they challenge school leaders to expect high quality teaching from all teachers. Appropriate monitoring procedures ensure that governors have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance and experience are linked to pay. Governors understand the specific needs of the school and work closely with leaders to see the improvement plans through. They check on the use of pupil premium funding and how well it is improving pupils' progress. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding. They have undertaken appropriate training to make sure that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

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	120692
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	430712

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rik Coleman
Headteacher	Paul Floyd
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2012
Telephone number	01507 358221
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