

# Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School

Whitaker Close, Retford, DN22 7QH

**Inspection dates** 11–12 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Standards have fallen and although they are now improving again, too few pupils are making good progress.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good enough to accelerate progress so that standards rise quickly.
- Teachers do not consistently plan work at the right level for pupils of all abilities, so that their learning sometimes slows.
- Marking of pupils' work does not tell them how to improve their work and teachers do not always check that their advice has been taken.
- Teachers' questions do not take into account the levels at which pupils are working, and this means they do not build up their knowledge and understanding well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not get the same opportunities outdoors as in the classroom to practise and develop their reading, writing and number skills.
- Records of children's learning in the Nursery and Reception classes do not cover all aspects of learning.
- Pupils do not behave well or show good attitudes to learning when teaching does not motivate, interest and involve them. Sometimes, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their behaviour.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Subject leaders do not all have the skills or responsibility for checking, assessing and improving their area.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception class achieve well because teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given which help to develop their personal skills.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during lessons, at break and during lunch times. She met formally with a group of pupils to hear their views about their school and their learning.
- She listened to Key Stage 1 pupils reading and watched an assembly.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. She spoke with several parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation about the school's work, including information about the achievement of pupils, examples of their work, the school's improvement plan, governing body minutes and policies to safeguard the pupils.

## Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller in size than other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupil supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, those from armed service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is organised into two classes: Foundation 1 (the Nursery class) and Foundation 2 (the Reception class).
- The headteacher was appointed as permanent headteacher in February 2014. She was the acting headteacher from June 2013.

The school works in partnership with Nettleworth Infant School which supports the headteacher and provides coaching to strengthen teaching. The school is part of the Elizabethan Family of Schools, which comprises the Elizabethan Academy and nine primary schools. The schools share resources and a school improvement plan.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to make it consistently good or outstanding, to quicken pupils' progress and raise standards, by making sure that:
  - the activities given to pupils are planned carefully so that they are at the right level for pupils' ability and enable them to make at least good progress
  - marking tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work and teachers check that they take their advice
  - records of children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are added to regularly and cover all areas of learning
  - the questions that teachers ask pupils are carefully considered to enable them to build on their learning
  - the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides greater opportunities for the children to develop and practise their reading, writing and number skills.
- Make sure that behaviour in lessons is always at least good by ensuring that:
  - teaching interests, motivates and involves pupils
  - teachers always have very high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Improve the impact of leaders in quickening the pace of improvement by making sure that:
  - leaders are given responsibility for checking, assessing and improving specific aspects of the school's work
  - teachers have the skills and training to work out what information about pupils' progress is telling them about their achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards declined from above average at the last inspection to below average in 2012. They rose again to broadly average last year in reading, writing and mathematics. They are on track to be similar in 2014, but teaching is not sufficiently good to accelerate pupils' progress beyond that expected and standards are not rising as quickly as they should.
- Children join the Nursery class with levels of skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in reading, writing, number and in their personal development. They make the progress expected of them. Activities are not always carefully enough planned in the Nursery class to enable children of all abilities to make good or better progress. The range of activities available outdoors is not wide enough for children to develop and practise their skills, especially in reading, writing and number.
- In the national check on phonics (the sounds that letters make), the proportion of pupils in Year 1, both boys and girls, reaching the expected standard is in line with that nationally. It improved significantly from 2012. From the Nursery onwards, children develop a secure understanding of how letters are pronounced because phonics teaching is good and the children are regularly reminded to use the skills they have learnt, in other activities.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make very similar rates of progress to other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they receive extra, specific, one-to-one and small group help in phonics, language development and reading. This year, at the end of Year 2, the gap between the levels that pupils supported by the funding achieve, compared with those not supported, has narrowed from two and a half terms in reading, writing and mathematics last year to between half and one term now.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils because they are identified quickly and supported effectively in strengthening their reading, writing and number skills.
- Girls and boys make similar rates of progress. The gap in standards between the girls and boys has narrowed from last year because the school concentrates much more than previously on the achievement of all groups of pupils.
- The most-able pupils make good progress when activities make them really think, such as in the Reception class. Too often through the school, though, tasks are not demanding enough for them to develop their skills sufficiently quickly.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well because teaching is good and activities really encourage them to be curious and make decisions about what to do next.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils capable of reaching higher levels are not provided regularly with work that really makes them think. Teaching does not help pupils build on what they know when they start new work or solve problems.
- Pupils' work is sometimes too hard which also discourages them from concentrating and slows

their progress. Pupils lose enthusiasm for learning when teaching does not interest them or when it is too easy or hard. Occasionally, pupils have too many different things to learn, which confuses them and makes it harder for them to achieve their goals.

- Marking does not regularly tell pupils what to do next to improve their work. When advice is given pupils do not take it and they repeat mistakes, which again slows their progress. Observations of children's development in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not recorded sufficiently regularly and do not show learning across all areas.
- Pupils read often. They love the stories that the teachers read to them and are sometimes spellbound. Reading areas in classrooms and round the school, though, are not bright or exciting and do not stimulate pupils to spend time there. Reading areas are not always easy to find because there is a lot of clutter in classrooms and corridors.
- Many displays show the variety of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school. Pupils really enjoyed the activities based on the Great Fire of London, which have enabled them to develop lots of skills, through, for example, making fire carts and designing houses and writing for a purpose. They write a lot but practise their numeracy skills less often.
- Children of all abilities achieve well in the Reception class. They have so many opportunities to speak, write and be creative, arising from interesting activities that include using computers. Questioning by the staff helps them to develop and broaden their thinking, spelling and writing skills well.
- Teaching assistants provide helpful support to pupils, with consistently good guidance in Year 2. Pupils were able to describe a giant more accurately, for example, because of the teaching assistant's very clear explanation of why it is so important to choose words carefully.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In Key Stage 1, some become restless and talk to their classmates when teaching does not interest them. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning vary and this confuses pupils.
- Pupils want to learn, and they work very hard and behave sensibly when the work interests them. Children behave well in Foundation 1 and 2 because from the time that they start school, they know what the staff expect of them.
- Pupils behave well in the playground and around the school. They have fun playing together in the well-equipped playground, which they keep very tidy. A few pupils take less care in classrooms and do not pick up their litter after their morning snacks.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know the site is safe. They speak confidently about what to do if there is a fire in the school. They know the dangers of talking to strangers and how important road safety is.
- Pupils say that there is only a little bullying, which the school deals with quickly and effectively. They know how wrong and hurtful it is to say and do unkind things.

- They are extremely proud of the jobs that the school gives them. Children in the Reception class are delighted to be helpers for the day and in the other classes, many pupils have responsibilities, ranging from taking the register to cleaning the white board. Such roles help to promote their social and moral development, while a range of other activities support their spiritual and cultural understanding appropriately.
- Pupils' attendance is improving. Broadly average for some time, it has been above average this school year because of the school's higher expectations and good systems to check attendance. Staff tackle below-average attendance and there are rewards for those pupils who attend very regularly. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has fallen to below average.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, the school declined in all aspects of its performance. Few systems were in place to enable leaders to check the work of the school, pupils' attainment and progress or how well the school was improving. In the months since her appointment, the new headteacher has begun to pull the school back up. She is also tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Much is expected of the staff, who appreciate their greater involvement in school improvement and responsibility for the school's performance. They check pupils' progress every half-term. Class teachers meet very regularly with the headteacher and are accountable for the achievement of their pupils. However, the headteacher knows that they do not all have fully secure skills or the training to enable them to work out exactly what information about pupils' progress is telling them about pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher has used her accurate understanding of the school's performance to establish good systems to check the school's work thoroughly and regularly. Subject leaders are gaining a better understanding of their roles in driving improvement but they are not yet clear what they are expected to check, assess and improve. Leadership is not sufficiently developed to enable responsibilities to be evenly shared out.
- The headteacher judges teaching accurately and links teachers' performance targets to the needs identified through lesson observations. Targets are all measurable, very well-matched to the goal of improving teaching and supported by a programme of staff training which the staff judge to be helpful. Teachers are not awarded a pay rise unless they meet all of their targets and their performance is good.
- Learning is planned to provide maximum opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and numeracy skills, both in discrete lessons and through topics. Pupils like the broad range of activities and visits and visitors which help them to learn more widely. Not all pupils have equal chances to achieve as well as they can because the work they are given, in particular, for pupils capable of reaching higher levels, does not regularly enable them to do so.
- The school is using the primary school sport funding appropriately to strengthen teachers' and teaching assistants' skills in teaching sports activities. Pupils are delighted with the extra after-school sports activities, such as rugby and athletics, in which a greater proportion of pupils participate.

- Most parents support all aspects of the school's work. They like the headteacher being in the playground at the start of the school day and find her very approachable. The school is encouraging parents' greater participation in school and their children's learning through offering parental courses such as in learning through play.
- Following a review of the school's work ten months ago, the local authority put in a programme of support, which continues, and which has led to changes in leadership and much improved governance. Links with an outstanding infant school and with the Elizabethan family of schools provide support for teaching, leadership and training that are helping the school to move forward.
- While the school's actions have yet to make a full impact on pupils' achievement, the school has turned a corner and leaders, including the governing body, now demonstrate their capacity to improve the school further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has an accurate knowledge of the school's work. Governors find out a good deal through their visits and discussion with staff. The governors ask the headteacher many questions, increasingly related to pupils' achievement. They know the school's expectations of pupils' rate of progress and the need to quicken it. They know the gap is narrowing between pupils supported through additional funding and those who are not. The governors meet with subject leaders and several governors visit lessons. They know that teaching requires improvement and that behaviour in lessons varies. They understand performance management procedures and what happens if teachers achieve or miss their targets. Consequently they are well-placed to both challenge and support the school.
  - The governing body has ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements.

## 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>	122556
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440590

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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>	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adele Mumby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2011
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