

Winhills Primary School

Off Duck Lane, St Neots, PE19 2DX

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching and progress are not consistently good across the different subjects and year groups.
- Progress in writing requires improvement. The progress made in some year groups is too slow, and boys do not do as well as girls. Pupils are not good at writing long pieces of work.
- The progress made by girls in mathematics is not as good as that made by boys. Pupils have some difficulties in applying their calculating skills to solve problems.
- In some lessons more able pupils do not receive challenging enough work, and as a result they do not make as rapid progress as might be expected.
- The teaching of wider curriculum subjects, (subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics), is not consistently good or better. For example, marking is not as good in these areas.
- Leaders and managers, while very closely monitoring the standard of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, have been less detailed in their checks on other curriculum subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the academy opened, the progress made by pupils has rapidly improved, and it continues to improve because leadership is good.
- Pupils who need additional help make good progress.
- Opportunities to participate in clubs and other extra activities are good.
- Behaviour is good, because it is well managed by teachers. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils work well together and have a high level of respect for each other. Their positive attitudes to learning underpin their better progress.
- Governors provide effective challenge, and have supported the school to make the necessary changes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons. Three joint lesson observations were undertaken with the head of school. In addition, the inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work on display.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Local Governing Body (governors who have a specific responsibility for this school, within the trust), members of the Board of the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust and an external school improvement advisor.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, together with a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the school. They talked directly to parents during the inspection. In addition, the 18 responses received to a staff questionnaire were considered.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maxine Clewlow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a sponsored academy, which opened as a new school in July 2012. It is run by the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust, which also runs four other schools in the local area. The senior leadership team comprises an executive headteacher (who is also the substantive headteacher of a neighbouring school), a head of school and a deputy headteacher who has recently returned from a secondment at another Trust school.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional government funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children with a parent in the armed services and children in local authority care).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' standards and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure teaching in writing and mathematics is consistently good or better, and that pupils have plenty of effective practice in:
 - writing longer pieces of work in a wide variety of topics, ensuring that boys do as well as girls
 - using their number skills to solve real-life problems, ensuring that girls do as well as boys.
- Improve the teaching of the other subjects, (those taught in addition to English and mathematics) to good or better, by;
 - extending the detailed checks on reading, writing and mathematics to all subject areas, finding ways of recording assessments that will help managers check progress efficiently
 - making sure that pupils spend enough time studying a subject to make good progress
 - ensuring that marking is of good quality.
- Improve the progress made by more-able pupils, by;
 - ensuring that, in all lessons, they receive challenging enough work
 - checking their performance in subjects beyond reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The rate of progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, while improving, is inconsistent across year groups and subjects. Thus while overall standards are rising to around current national averages, not all pupils are yet making as much progress as might be expected.
- The rate of progress made by pupils across the school is not as strong in writing as in reading, particularly for boys. Pupils' progress is slowed because they do not have enough practice in using their writing skills in a wide variety of different contexts.
- While the majority of pupils are making good progress in mathematics, girls' achievement still lags behind boys. For example, during the inspection girls were seen to lack confidence when undertaking number problems. Pupils as a whole are not as good at using their calculating skills to work out problems from real life as they are at straightforward arithmetic.
- Standards are not consistently high enough in wider curriculum subjects, where the quality of teaching is not always good. The quality of work in pupils' folders is not consistently good enough in Years 1-5.
- Recently, standards in reading have accelerated markedly; the majority of pupils now enjoy their books and can read at expected levels, using phonic skills (knowledge of the sounds that letters make) to read unfamiliar words. This is due to improvements made to the teaching of reading.
- The majority of pupils join Reception with levels of development below those expected for their age. However, last year's Reception pupils made strong progress, and the majority reached a good level of development by the time they moved into Year 1. Rates of progress have further accelerated this year, because of improvements made to the provision.
- From a relatively low starting point in July 2012, current Year 6 pupils have made very rapid progress. Many pupils have made much better progress than might be expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium is good, and their achievement at least matches that of other pupils in the school. For example those who left the school in July 2013 were about two terms ahead of their classmates in writing and mathematics, and about the same level in reading. This is because provision for these pupils is very good, and over the course of their time in school any gaps that do exist are rapidly closed.
- The learning of disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, is also generally good. The school has a detailed knowledge of the needs of these pupils, and provides support and special help at an appropriate level.
- The school is using the new primary school sports funding to strengthen its sports provision for all pupils. They are benefiting from specialist sports coaches in a wide range of areas, from competitive ball sports to gymnastics. A good amount of curriculum time is being devoted to sport, and a wide range of choices are available as a consequence of more equipment. As a result pupils' enjoyment of sport has risen, and opportunities to develop more advanced skills through specialist teaching have increased.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time not enough teaching is good or better. Pupils learn rapidly or very rapidly in some reading, writing and mathematics sessions. However, work in pupils' books and information that shows how well pupils have been doing demonstrate that pupils have not received consistently good or better teaching over the last eighteen months.
- Teachers have not been giving higher-ability pupils consistently challenging enough work, so their progress is not as rapid as other groups. During the inspection some more-able pupils undertook tasks that were too easy. The progress of this group is not checked as well in other subjects as it is in English and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing has not been as strong as that for reading. While progress has improved since July 2012, books show that pupils seldom practise and extend their writing skills through tasks that demand they develop their ideas over several paragraphs. As a result, few have made better than expected progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is stronger than that of other curriculum subjects. The curriculum for Years 1 to 5 is organised around ability-based groupings for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils study other subjects in an 'Intensive Curriculum Experience (ICE)' zone. The quality of the teaching undertaken in this zone has been less rigorously monitored, and underperformance by some pupils has, until recently, not been a focus for improvement.
- Teaching in Year 6 is typically good or better. Work is well matched to what pupils need to learn next, and as a consequence pupils are making accelerated progress. Work in books is predominantly neat, and expectations are high. Pupils have made very good progress in reading, given the relatively low starting point of most pupils when the school opened in July 2012.
- Marking and assessment are rigorous in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are familiar with how well they are doing, and know how to improve their work. Marking is not as good in other subjects and topics.
- A team of 'school improvement teachers' support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. These teachers are shared across the Trust. They model, for other teachers, ways of teaching that can lead to effective learning, and this is supporting continued improvements in teaching across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Records that note any incidents of poor behaviour show that behaviour has improved significantly over the last eighteen months. Parents and pupils agree it is now better. This improvement means that pupils are able to focus fully on their learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics; such positive attitudes to learning are contributing strongly to the raising of standards.
- Pupils work very well together in groups, collaborating to support each other's learning. This is particularly evident when they are asked to share their work in groups or to the whole class. In such instances pupils speak confidently and articulately about their work.
- Pupils display good attitudes to their work, because teachers encourage them to take

responsibility for their own learning. This has led to rapid improvements in behaviour in lessons, and in the capacity of pupils to become fully involved in understanding what they are learning and why, and what they are aiming for.

- Effective use is made of rewards and sanctions, and good behaviour is actively promoted through celebratory assemblies. The 'Truly Trusted' scheme, which awards more responsibility to those pupils with a strong track record of good behaviour, is particularly well received by pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are very well cared for, and parents and pupils universally say that the school is a welcoming and happy place within which to learn. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe, including when using devices that are connected to the internet.
- Bullying is rare, and that which does occur is very rapidly dealt with by staff through mediation and discussion with pupils in groups. Pupils enjoy going out to play, because they say that they feel comfortable playing in different year groups and have people to turn to if they feel lonely.

The leadership and management are good

- Since opening the academy, the highly effective executive headteacher, ably supported by the head of school, has made many changes to improve the school. Together they have placed high expectations on the teachers, who are working together to make improvements, and they have taken swift and direct action to tackle underperformance. Feedback given in the staff survey shows that morale is very high, and teachers are proud to work in the school. As a consequence, behaviour has improved and standards are rising, with rates of progress accelerating rapidly over the last eighteen months.
- Senior leaders and managers have a good understanding of the priority areas of the school, and its own self-evaluation closely matches the findings of inspectors. Teachers with overall responsibility for performance in reading, writing and mathematics, and those in charge of specific year groups, have a good understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils. For example, they have clearly-formulated plans to address relative shortfalls in progress.
- Whilst leaders have ensured that there is no discrimination within the school, they have identified priority areas to make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make good progress in every area of learning. These include, for example, making sure that teaching is consistently good in all subjects.
- Improvements to teaching in reading, writing and mathematics (the core subjects) have led to a rapid rise in achievement in these subjects. Teaching is not as strong in other curriculum areas. Although managers regularly review the overall effectiveness of the wider curriculum through visits to the 'Intensive Curriculum Experience Zone', the quality of teaching delivered within these areas is not as formally assessed as for core subject areas. The school has recently recognised this issue, and very recently started implementing plans to improve the teaching.
- The school makes good use of the information that it collects that shows how well pupils are doing in reading, writing, and mathematics. Data is analysed by computer to assess performance on an individual, group and whole school basis. However, the information collected for wider curriculum areas is much less detailed and recorded in paper format only. Managers find it harder to analyse this information, and do not have the ability to so easily find patterns of under-performance across different groups.

- The coordination of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Accurate records are maintained of each pupil's needs, and these are used to plan appropriate support and monitor impact. As a result these pupils make good progress.
 - The range of opportunities provided by the curriculum is good. However, while the curriculum is well planned, variations in the quality of teaching means that wider subject areas are not always covered rigorously enough. For example, the learning records of some pupils show that they have spent a disproportionate amount of time undertaking activities that they particularly enjoyed, at the expense of their progress in those subject areas of less interest to them, but of equal importance to their learning.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies are thought provoking and encourage care and compassion for others. Pupils take advantage of the very wide range of opportunities to engage in art, sport, music, and drama, some of which is delivered through a multi-cultural context. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils were seen enjoying Indian drumming, receiving expert tuition from a visiting tutor. Many pupils and parents say that this breadth of opportunity sits in sharp contrast to their previous experiences of schooling.
 - The school has rigorous safeguarding procedures which go beyond the minimum required by the law. Good levels of training means that all staff are relentless in ensuring that any concern is dealt with quickly and diligently.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The local governing body, and the multi academy trust, are highly ambitious for the academy. They have supported the school to take tackle underperformance and have not shied away from taking difficult decisions for the benefit of the pupils at the school. This has led to improvements in teaching and learning.
 - The governors have an understanding of what data shows about the academy's performance in relation to other schools nationally. Governors monitor the academy's improving performance and oversee the performance management of senior leaders closely. They are aware of the positive impact of pupil premium funding on the pupils' achievements, although have less awareness of the specific sums involved.
 - They are very well aware of the link between teachers' performance and pay. Governors receive good information from the executive headteacher, and use this to challenge and support senior leaders robustly. For example, they employ a reporting external advisor to offer significant and well-informed challenge. Where necessary they also broker additional support from other schools in the Trust to meet the needs of the pupils. Their robust monitoring programme ensures that statutory requirements are met.

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	138280
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	408828

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cornell
Executive Headteacher	Susannah Connell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01480 211626
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