

# Linton Primary School

Main Street, Linton, Swadlincote, DE12 6QA

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress has not been consistently strong since the last inspection. Standards have fluctuated as a result. They have recovered from a recent dip and are average.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding closely enough in lessons and their feedback to pupils is not precise. As a result, pupils do not understand how to improve their work.
- Work set by teachers does not always provide suitable challenge for all groups of pupils. Often this is because teachers do not make the best use of all the information they have already gathered about pupils' progress.
- Behaviour and safety require improvement because pupils sometimes lose interest in their work and do not engage fully.
- Not enough attention is paid to help pupils discuss what they are learning in lessons or to enable them to practise their calculation skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils do not have sufficiently strong skills in writing longer pieces of work in English and in other subjects.
- Despite recent improvements, efforts made by senior leaders and governors have not been enough to make consistent gains in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They have not held teachers to account sufficiently for inconsistencies.
- Checks made by leaders and governors do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and on the learning of particular groups, such as the most able and those who are disadvantaged.
- Some assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is not accurate, particularly for those pupils of average ability.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly made an accurate assessment of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
- Across the school, pupils' skills in phonics (linking the sounds that letters make) are getting stronger and achievement in reading is improving.
- Children do well in Nursery and Reception.
- Most pupils behave sensibly and feel safe at school.
- Enrichment activities provided by the school broaden pupils' learning and add to their enjoyment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons or parts of lessons, including three lessons observed jointly with the headteacher. Additionally, inspectors reviewed a small sample of last year’s written work to check the quality of teaching in the school.
- Meetings were held with a randomly selected group of pupils and with senior and subject leaders. The inspectors met the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school’s records of current pupils’ progress, a summary of the school’s self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, records of behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account the 37 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, along with the school’s latest survey of parents’ opinions and communications received from parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the nine questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Webb

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be or have been eligible for free school meals and those cared for by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school uses its local authority's alternative provision (Kirk Hallam pupil referral unit) for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in Year 6.
- The headteacher joined the school the school in September 2014.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress in all lessons and over time by making sure that teachers:
  - demand more from all groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
  - check pupils' progress closely and give them precise feedback on what they have done well and what they need to improve
  - routinely use all the assessment information at their disposal, including pupils' responses to their questioning, marking and data, when planning their daily lessons.
- Improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to:
  - develop their spoken language
  - write at length and with increasing clarity across the curriculum
  - use their calculation skills in a wider range of tasks, including solving mathematical problems.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, and that of the governing body, by:
  - making rigorous checks on the impact of teaching on the progress different groups of pupils make in lessons and in their written work
  - ensuring that all teachers assess pupils' work accurately
  - governors effectively challenging senior leaders, including subject leaders, to improve teaching and achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been able to eliminate fluctuations in the school's performance. Over the years, this has resulted in an alternating pattern of improvement followed by decline. The new headteacher has already made tackling persistent inconsistencies her highest priority.
- Checks made by senior and other leaders on teaching during lessons and in their reviews of pupils' written work are not sufficiently focused on the impact teaching makes on the progress and achievement of different groups. This means that the senior leaders and the governing body do not always have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in order to hold teachers and subject leaders to account for its weaknesses.
- The school is developing its own way of assessing pupils' progress and achievement. Links between assessment and the planning for the curriculum are not yet fully established. Currently, assessment data are used to identify pupils who would benefit from extra help and also to assist in grouping pupils for the teaching of phonics and, at times, for other subjects. The most-able pupils are not always best served because work set for them does not stretch them enough. Often the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from the additional support they receive from teaching assistants to meet their short-term individual targets.
- Subject leaders have a broad understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. They make effective contribution to the tracking and reviewing of pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics. However, what they have done so far is not enough to help the school eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The use of the pupil premium has not proven consistently effective because the eligible pupils still attain standards markedly below others in the school. In some years, however, their attainment is close to others or even better. Senior leaders and governors recognise that they have not, hitherto, maintained a sharp enough oversight of the use of this funding.
- The curriculum continues to provide breadth and balance, and it contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic skills and their personal development, including their awareness of cultural diversity in modern Britain. It is routinely supplemented with a range of enrichment activities.
- Arrangements for the management of teachers' performance are clearly designed to establish links between decisions on their pay and their performance in the classroom. Teachers feel supported by the training opportunities they receive as they take into account targets set for them to achieve.
- The use of primary school sport funding has increased pupils' participation in a wider range of physical activities. External experts are deployed to refine pupils' skills and enhance their chances of doing well in competitive activities. Pupils enjoy participating in physical activities and feel that these are helping them to keep healthy and fit.
- The school has used the local authority support well for the Early Years Foundation Stage, including its outdoor provision. The impact of its support for the monitoring of teaching is yet to be fully felt.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is adequately informed about the school's performance data and how it compares with other schools nationally. It is aware of the strengths in teaching but is less well informed about the details of its weaknesses. As a result, the governing body has not been able to challenge leaders about these in order to help to drive improvements.
  - Governors strongly support the idea of linking decisions on teachers' pay to their effectiveness in enabling pupils to make progress. They feel that they are now in a better position to hold senior and other leaders to account for the inconsistencies in the school's performance.
  - The governing body is fully aware of the need to maintain regular oversight of the use of the pupil premium and its impact on eligible pupils' learning and attainment. A review of governance and use of

pupil premium is recommended to enable governors to be more effective in supporting and checking the key priorities of teaching and pupils' achievement.

- The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, pupils lose concentration, which slows their progress. Often it is when teaching fails to capture their interest. Nevertheless, most pupils are keen to learn and get on with their work.
- Pupils assured inspectors that behaviour in school is mostly acceptable, which the inspection evidence endorses. Staff and most parents are satisfied with standards of behaviour in the school, although a few parents expressed some concerns.
- Most pupils, including children in the Nursery and Reception classes, conduct themselves responsibly in and around the school. They treat each other well and are courteous.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand different forms of bullying, including that which is prejudice-based or which relates to the misuse of the internet. They say bullying is rare, and, if it occurs, staff deal with it promptly.
- Attendance is average. Senior leaders remain alert to the slight decrease since the previous inspection and expressed determination to improve it.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teachers' routine monitoring of pupils' progress is not always rigorous. As a result, teachers do not gain an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. The feedback they give is not always precise enough to ensure that all groups, particularly the most-able and those who are eligible for the pupil premium, are challenged enough to make the best progress possible. The lack of incisive feedback does not help pupils to learn how to assess their own work and consider ways of improving it.
- Not all assessments made by teachers are accurate. Whereas teachers are consistently accurate in assessing the work of the most-able pupils, this is not always the case with pupils of average ability. Occasionally, their assessments are overly generous.
- Teachers do not often pool together the broad range of evidence to adapt their short- and long-term planning and to improve the effectiveness of their own teaching. Routinely, half-termly assessments and termly formal testing feed into a review of pupils' progress for identifying pupils who need extra help. In planning their next lessons, teachers do not make enough use of pupils' response to their questions or the mistakes they note in pupils' written work. Staff in Nursery and Reception are much better at doing this.
- Improved teaching of phonics has contributed to rising standards in reading. The teaching of writing provides a clear practical guidance for pupils to follow, which they find helpful when working on their own. The teaching of mathematics is improving, but opportunities for applying calculation skills are infrequent.
- The teaching assistants add considerably to the learning of the pupils who they work with. Often these groups find learning difficult and they benefit from the individual support they receive, in and away from the classroom.
- In a minority of lessons, teaching is engaging and pupils' excitement for learning is palpable. This is in contrast with lessons where teaching does not capture pupils' interest and results in pupils' lack of commitment to their learning.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- Although the most recent provisional results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and Reception show an improving picture, pupils' progress varies too much for achievement over time to be considered good.
- In 2013, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 dipped in reading, writing and mathematics from the previous year. The provisional results for 2014 show that they have recovered and are broadly average. As pupils usually enter Year 3 with broadly average attainment, standards at the end of Year 6 represent achievement that requires improvement. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to show a similar pattern of attainment.
- Progress in writing has been uneven but it is improving. Pupils are getting better at planning their writing and most are becoming competent in writing down their ideas clearly. The samples of written work examined during the inspection show that some pupils are not able to sustain their ideas for long.
- Most pupils are keen to join in discussions and express their ideas, although some are hesitant. Their skills in explaining what they have understood vary. Pupils have too few opportunities to give reasons for their ideas or to explain what they are doing.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is getting stronger, but not in all aspects. Their calculation skills are improving as they receive frequent opportunities to practise them. The use of calculation skills in solving practical, mathematical problems is less secure.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, the attainment in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils supported by the pupil premium was lower than that of the others in the school and other pupils nationally. Eligible pupils were nearly six terms behind others in the school and nearly five terms behind other pupils nationally and they made less progress than others. The provisional results for 2014 show that the gap has narrowed, but across the school there are eligible pupils who are not progressing as well as others and so are not catching up with them.
- Although more of the most-able pupils are on track to achieve what they are capable of, the progress and achievement of some is hampered when work set does not demand enough of them. They are routinely grouped by ability in lessons, particularly for English and mathematics, but the level of challenge provided to them is not always appropriate. The proportion of pupils achieving more than that could be expected for their age is growing across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, due to better identification of their needs.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Although many make the progress that they should in relation to their starting points and towards their identified individual goals, some do not.
- Progress in reading is good and pupils are keen to read. Systematic teaching of phonics and reading is helping pupils to read fluently, both for information and enjoyment. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have risen recently and are now close to the national figure.

**The early years provision****is good**

- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start in the Nursery at levels below those typical for their age. A majority of them make good progress and achieve at least the expected levels in literacy and numeracy. Most of the more-able exceed expectations for their age. The disabled children and those who have special educational needs make the progress that they should. At the end of Reception, children are well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- Adults plan for all aspects of children's learning, including learning outdoors. Their teaching ensures that children receive a balanced programme of activities containing those that are directed by adults and others which children choose for themselves. At times, adults do not intervene sufficiently to encourage children to

talk about and explain what they are trying to do. Children's progress when they are at work or at play is regularly assessed and recorded. Assessment notes in children's 'Learning Journeys' are rich in detail and a useful tool for planning the next stage of each child's learning.

- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe environment for learning. Children relate well to each other and to adults. They conduct themselves well and move around with care.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Parents are encouraged to work with the school and are regularly kept informed about their children's progress.

## 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>	112978
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441873

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	250
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Fereday
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Hollis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2012
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