

# Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School

Latham Street, Brigstock, Kettering, NN14 3HD

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and governing body have built an effective team of teaching and support staff.
- The early years is good. It is well run and most children make good or better progress. An above-average proportion reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- There are good systems for the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school.
- The school is improving steadily and well.
- Leaders and governors evaluate accurately both teaching and the school's effectiveness. They identify and tackle any weaknesses promptly and effectively.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe at school and adults pay good attention to their welfare.
- Between them, staff and governors have wide-ranging professional qualifications and expertise in the safeguarding of children.
- Pupils achieve well and leave with attainment that is above average.
- Consistently good teaching, and attention to the pupils' personal as well as their academic development, result in the pupils' good behaviour, attitudes to learning and understanding of how to be and stay safe.
- A good community spirit, and atmosphere of mutual respect exists throughout the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in spelling are not as high as those in English grammar and punctuation.
- Progress in mathematics is not as good as that in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in seven lessons, as well as registration times and assemblies; four lessons involved joint observations with the headteacher.
- In addition, the inspector observed the school's 'Day 10' work during the afternoon of the first inspection day. During the afternoon of every tenth school day, the whole school follows a common theme where aspects, skills and learning from across the whole range of subjects are brought together; the whole school is divided into six mixed-age classes, including pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work, heard a sample of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 reading and met with groups of pupils. Many informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- Discussions and conversations were held with the headteacher, including in his role as special educational needs coordinator. Discussions were held with the class teachers, including in their roles as subject coordinators; a separate meeting was held with the school's early years coordinator. A conversation was held with a specialist sports coach employed by the school.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body; this included one of the Joint Chairs of the Governing Body, the governor responsible for safeguarding at the school and parent governors. A meeting was also held with the local authority's senior school improvement manager, who acts as the school's improvement adviser.
- A wide range of school documents were reviewed. These included the school's improvement plans, policies and reports on its strengths and aspects for development, monitoring records and reports, safeguarding records, curriculum materials, information provided for families, and governing body documents. The school's data, including records of pupils' progress, were also reviewed.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to an inspection questionnaire for school staff.
- The online questionnaire, Parent View, was completed by 79 respondents, and their views were taken into consideration. The inspector also considered 10 written submissions provided by parents during the inspection. The 42 responses to the school's own annual survey of its parents, last carried out in October 2014, were also taken into account.
- The inspector talked with parents at the school gate, and spoke with parents who asked to speak to him individually. In addition, the inspector had a meeting with the Chair of the school's Parents and Friends Association.
- Ofsted's decision to inspect the school was mainly due to issues arising from two qualifying complaints in relation to the safeguarding of children at the school. The inspector was not required to investigate the complaints; these had already been examined separately and independently by the appropriate bodies. The actions taken by the school and local authority in response to the complaints were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspector's judgements.

## Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed to this post in September 2013.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Very few come from other heritage backgrounds or speak English as an additional language; none are at an early stage of English language development.
- Children attending the Reception class do so full time, although there is a system of phased entry during the first half of the autumn term. There is a single Reception class; the other three classes have mixed year groups: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Because the number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is higher than in other year groups, these pupils are taught in separate classes each morning, including for literacy and numeracy.
- At some 12%, the proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This is the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- At 5%, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. There are currently no pupils attending the school who have a statement of special educational needs or an Education and Healthcare plan.
- The school is part of the Corby cluster of local primary schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their mental calculation and problem-solving skills across the full range of the subjects.
- Raise pupils' achievement in their spelling work by developing a more consistent approach across the school to the promotion of this specific aspect of their English work by:
  - ensuring teachers are more rigorous in bringing spelling errors to the pupils attention when marking their work or checking on their work in lessons
  - making more use of dictionaries and other spelling aids in all lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- In explaining why this is a good school, one parent summed up the views of many, writing, 'There has been a real drive over the past four terms to give pupils an excellent, improved environment in which to prosper, in terms of curriculum, buildings, projects and resources. There has also been a much higher profile related to values of caring, being part of a community and respect.'
- No parent who spoke to the inspector during the inspection, or any of the letters submitted, had anything but praise for the school and its staff. There was particular appreciation of the headteacher's leadership. The inspection findings support these parents' views. As another parent wrote: 'My experience suggests that the school is moving forward – the teaching is more focused and the efforts to continue developing the school appear to be thoughtful and effective. I feel lucky that my children are there, and always have.'
- As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' progress continues to be good. However, national data show that, over the past five years, there have been some ups and downs in the standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6. The new headteacher has explored thoroughly the possible reasons for this, and has put in train a number of increasingly successful initiatives concerning teaching and learning which are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- The monitoring of learning and teaching is good. School records show this is undertaken regularly, professionally, sensitively and positively. The records of the headteacher's lesson observations show that both teaching and learning are considered not only in terms of the individual lessons themselves but also in respect of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time. This is developmental, not only in helping teachers to improve their skills but also in supporting further the pupils' achievements.
- Teachers and their assistants are responsive to the school's ways of ensuring accountability for their work. As a result, performance management is being linked to their professional development and is successfully improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- During the inspection, the headteacher's observations concerning the impact of his colleagues' teaching on pupils' learning proved thoughtful and well-considered. In his approach to observing lessons, the headteacher has also been supported well through joint observations with the local authority's school improvement adviser.
- The local authority monitors the school regularly. The improvement adviser is playing a helpful role in aiding the new headteacher to establish links with other local schools across the authority. This is enabling the school to start to build a network of partner schools to help quality assure the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers do check on each other's work, but appreciate any opportunity to validate their assessments with others from outside the school itself.
- Outside of the links made through the early years Reception class and for Year 2, there have been more limited channels through which the school can validate its assessments for other year groups. As a small village school, it is also seeking partners with whom to collaborate in establishing its own, preferred approach to assessments following the removal of National Curriculum levels. This is indicative of the school's forward thinking.
- The headteacher is ably supported by the other teachers, all of whom hold posts of responsibility as subject coordinators. Discussions with staff show that there is good teamwork, and all teachers play a valued role in supporting the leadership and management of the school. As a result, development and improvement planning is well focused and the school's self-evaluation is accurate.
- The school has a very positive approach to promoting equality of opportunity. This is to be seen in action, for example, through the 'Day 10' activities where pupils from all year groups mix and work together well. This reflects the good quality of the pupils' social development. Pupils can be sure that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are also being prepared well for life in a wider society and modern Britain, particularly in the ways they develop open minds to the different viewpoints, beliefs and ideas of others.

- The school's inclusive approach is reflected in its curriculum. Teachers have considered carefully how what is taught may be made relevant for their pupils. The teaching provides a wide range of interesting and relevant experiences for pupils which engage them and promotes well their learning and development.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is being spent effectively. Discussions with staff and the sports coach, a qualified teacher and lead teacher for sport, employed by the school show that pupils are benefiting not only through increased opportunities for competitive sport, such as Tag Rugby, but also through the creation of a school sports council and young leader training. Staff have benefited from specialist expertise in their review of sport-related policies and development planning.
- Senior leaders and governors check that pupil premium funding has been used to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. Such funding is being used effectively to provide specialist and individual tuition so that these pupils make at least good progress. It has also been used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have full access to enrichment activities, including trips and visits; in this it is also being linked well with the additional sports funding.
- The school ensures that all the required policies and practices for safeguarding pupils are in place and implemented. A thorough safeguarding review has recently been carried out. A number of the governors are in various social care professions. They bring a wealth of experience in safeguarding, child protection and health and safety. Governors make good use of their qualifications and day-to-day working experience in their monitoring of the school's effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The impact of the good governance is reflected in the views of parents, typical of which was: 'We feel the school is going from strength to strength and we thank the governors for all their hard work to ensure the school continues to evolve to meet the changing demands placed on it.'
  - Governors show a strong commitment to the school; there is a close working partnership between the governing body and school staff. This means that governors have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school and its pupils.
  - Through the reports they receive, governors gain a good understanding of the school's data; there is a clear appreciation of how well the school is performing. Governors are properly involved in the monitoring of performance management and are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching.
  - Through new appointments, governors are ensuring that teaching is being enhanced and developed well, for example in mathematics. The governing body ensures that teachers' salaries are linked to pupils' progress, teaching quality and the national *Teachers' Standards*. The governing body checks carefully that all legal requirements are met.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good, as are their attitudes to learning. Teachers and other adults work together to ensure good teamwork and positive working relationships. The pupils appreciate these qualities which are reflected in their attitudes towards each other. In lessons, pupils concentrate well on their work. They listen carefully to each other's ideas and value each other's views.
- There is a positive sense of community throughout the school. Older pupils take on responsibility readily, including through, for example, the young leaders scheme, where they help each other at playtimes.
- The pupils themselves admit that they are not perfect and sometimes have the occasional 'squabble' or disagreement. However, pupils appreciate the ways that staff help them to resolve and respect differences. In this, pupils are being prepared well as future young citizens.
- Attendance is above average.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The impact of this was again summed up by a parent, who said: 'We have complete satisfaction with the pastoral care given to our children. Staff lead by example, demonstrating the importance of respect, teamwork and consideration. Our children feel safe in school and have friends across the full range of year groups. This respect shown to the children is vital to their development and builds confidence immeasurably.'
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of personal risk and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils of all ages look out for and take care of each other. The school records entirely properly any incidents where bullying or behaviour may be a problem. Exclusions are very rare and no incidents of racist intolerance have had to be reported. The pupils themselves say that bullying is not a problem and describe each other's behaviour as good.
- During an assembly introducing 'Bullying Week', pupils of all ages showed that they understand the hurtful nature and consequences of bullying. When a Reception child described bullying as 'Saying mean things over and over again', a Year 6 pupil added, 'It's not just saying things but doing them'. Others showed excellent understanding of potential threats to them through, for example, social media and the internet. Pupils know well that they must 'Record It; Report It; Don't Support It.'

## The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching was summed up by one parent when writing: 'We are happy with our children's progress, which is essentially down to the staff dedicating themselves to knowing the pupils inside out, and knowing how to motivate, nurture and guide them as happy and secure members of the school and community.' Inspection findings confirm that teaching is consistently good across the school.
- School records show that teachers understand well the strengths and specific learning needs of individual pupils across the full range of ability, from those who need additional help with their learning to the most-able pupils. Pupils of all abilities respond well to the daily challenges offered by the teaching. This is raising standards steadily throughout the school.
- Working relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and their pupils are good. Teachers have suitably high expectations of both themselves and their pupils; staff are ambitious to help pupils to succeed. Pupils learn well because teachers know and understand them well as individuals. They match tasks well to the various subject skills the pupils need to succeed and make good progress. The pupils appreciate this and, as a result, almost always try to do their best.
- Teachers have considered carefully how they can accelerate pupils' progress even further through their marking. They have chosen to introduce an approach where colour-coded marking gives immediate visual clues to the pupils as to what they did well and what to improve. Naturally, pupils are pleased when they get a 'Green for Good' mark, and are excited when receiving a 'Blue for Brilliant'. Moreover, they talk most about the 'Pink for Think' marking and associated teacher comments. Pupils clearly understand that the 'Pink' flags an opportunity for them to reflect on their work and to see how they can improve. However, there has not always been sufficient emphasis on the correction of spelling through both the teaching and marking, or on encouraging pupils to use dictionaries and other spelling aids in lessons.
- The teaching of reading and writing, and the development of a love of books, is good throughout the school. The success of the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics), in both the early years and Key Stage 1, helps the pupils to make good progress in accessing information. Most pupils in Year 1 have attained above the expected standard in the national screening check. When hearing pupils read, pupils said how much they enjoy reading, both at home and at school. Teachers encourage pupils to tackle a wide range of both fact and fiction books; this helps develop their appreciation of good writing.
- The teaching of mathematics has been a relative weakness compared with that of English. The headteacher has ensured that there is now a whole-school focus on the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics; this is starting to improve standards and close the in-school gap between pupils' attainment in the subject and their reading and writing work. Discussions with pupils show that their calculation and problem-solving skills are now being more systematically developed by their teachers, particularly through

mental mathematics work. However, the full impact of this work is on course to be seen in the 2015 national tests.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Some of the reasons for the pupils' good achievement were seen in the letters from parents, for example: 'Pupils are happy, well taught, suitably challenged, stimulated and cared for. The creative and holistic nature of the school provide them with a secure foundation for their future education.'
- Children join the school in the Reception Year with skills and development which are broadly typical for their age. Pupils make good progress, and improve their attainment, in each year group. They achieve this because the school sets pupils understandable targets which are linked clearly to the objectives for each lesson; these are also reinforced well through the ways the teachers mark the pupils' work.
- Because year groups are so small, the teaching focuses on individual pupils rather than groups. This is because, as with the current Year 6, one single pupil may typically represent around 10% or more of any single year group. This means that comparing the performance of the school's pupils with similar groups nationally, such as the more able, those with disabilities or special educational needs, or those who may be disadvantaged, with similar pupils nationally may, potentially, identify individual pupils.
- However, when taking the school as a whole, most disadvantaged pupils make equally good progress as their classmates, in both English and mathematics, because of the individual attention they receive from both their teachers and teaching assistants. In some cases, school and national data show such pupils as being the most successful in their class or year group in terms of the progress they make.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their individual needs, both personal and academic, are met well through effective planning and teaching. Their progress is monitored well by the headteacher as special educational needs coordinator. Similarly, the school's more able groups in different subjects, and its most able individuals make good progress because they respond well to the challenges provided to help them release their talents.
- By Year 6, pupils have developed into confident readers whose skills are above average in terms of their accuracy and fluency of reading, their ability to tackle new vocabulary, and the ways they interpret text. This continues the success achieved by Year 6 pupils in 2014 when their reading skills were above average and the equivalent of some two terms in advance of all other pupils nationally.
- Pupils achieve very well in their writing work, and standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average. In 2014 the pupils were over two terms ahead of their peers nationally, with boys performing particularly well. This is in no small part due to the ways the school promotes and develops pupils' critical and analytical skills; pupils think carefully about their work and reflect upon it. Some fine poetry around Remembrance Day and the First World War was seen from Year 6 pupils. There was an excellent focus on using the best words, in the best order, to maximise the impact of the imagery.
- In 2014, the pupils fell short in their English grammar, punctuation and spelling test. This was not due to the grammar and punctuation, which their writing work shows is above average, but due to weaknesses in spelling. Pupils certainly have the vocabulary, and where they are uncertain as to spelling their phonetic approach almost always makes sense; this is as a result of the school's success in the teaching of letters and sounds. However, there has been an inconsistent approach to the systematic teaching of spelling; the impact of the school's effectiveness in resolving this weakness has still to be seen.
- Attainment in mathematics is weaker than that in English. In the latest 2014 national tests pupils' attainment was average overall. A new mathematics coordinator has been appointed to help raise standards and close the gap with English. Teachers are now working on how the pupils may be given increased opportunities to develop their calculation and problem-solving skills across the full range of the subjects being taught. To support this, a 'Day 10' mathematics course is currently being planned.

**The early years provision is good**

- Effective leadership ensures that provision and children's achievement in the early years is consistently good. Most children arrive in the Reception year with knowledge, skills and understanding typical for their age. An above average proportion move into Year 1 having achieved a good level of development.
- Thorough procedures are in place to check children's starting points when they join the school. Subsequently, conscientious tracking of children's early development enables staff to intervene quickly when they identify gaps in children's learning or where children are exceeding expectations. The adults working in the Reception class have proved themselves to be skilful practitioners. Teaching in the Reception class is consistently good.
- Children make a good start in developing their social skills as well as their early reading, writing and number skills because the provision ensures that there is ample opportunity for them to practise and reinforce them. As with the rest of the school, there is a balanced approach to ensuring children's personal as well as learning needs are supported and developed. Good, productive links between home and school aid both families and school staff well in this; parents praise the school's holistic approach.
- Children's safety, health and general welfare have a suitably high priority; they are kept safe in an environment that stimulates their curiosity and enables them to thrive. There is a good balance of activities which encourage children to develop well both independently and collectively. The foundations for children's interest in learning are being established firmly in the Reception class. Children develop as happy and confident learners who enjoy coming to school.
- There are cooperative and productive working relationships established between the Reception teacher and the Class 1 and 2 teacher. There can be 'free-flow' between the two classes, and this benefits well both Reception and Year 1 pupils in particular. The most able Reception children can gain from working alongside Year 1 pupils, for example in ability groupings for phonics work. Year 1 and 2 pupils gain confidence from the ways their teachers work together.
- Reception children were seen to benefit very well from their active participation in the 'Day 10' activities. Children were able to work alongside pupils from all other year groups on an art and design theme of 'Trees'. Learning for all proved most exciting whether camouflaging with leaves the clay 'bugs' they had made in the school's excellent environment area to creating coloured circles in the style of Kandinsky. The high quality of some of the school's artwork is reflected in the fact that the children's current work on creating a 'Tree of Life' in the style of Kerry Darlington is being followed on Twitter by the artist herself.



## 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>	122011
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	454436

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Abigail Marsden-Findlay and Tim Cullinan [Joint Chairs of the Governing Body]
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Garley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 373282
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