

Asquith Primary School

Asquith Street, Mansfield, NG18 3DG

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Children in the nursery and Reception get a good start to school life and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Teaching is good in most classes, and some teaching is outstanding.
- Marking in English books is good, and gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Pupils behave well and know how to stay safe. They play and work together well, and show good manners in and around school.
- Pupils say they like coming to school and particularly enjoy the topics that they study.
- The current headteacher leads the school well and, despite being in an acting role, has made changes which have improved teaching and learning.
- The leadership team and staff work well together to ensure that pupils are well cared for and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Governors are very clear about the strengths of school and hold senior leaders accountable for ensuring continued improvement.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is particularly good and pupils respond well to the good role models provided by all the adults in the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teachers do not have high enough expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve and miss opportunities to extend their learning.
- Although progress in mathematics is good, it is not yet as strong as in reading and writing. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to solve mathematical problems.
- Marking in some subjects is not as good as the marking in English books.
- Some members of the leadership team are new to the role and have not yet fully developed their leadership skills.
- Governors' visits to school are not always linked to improvement priorities, and their findings are not reported well enough to other governors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, three groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the results to be displayed, but the inspectors took account of 11 completed staff questionnaires as well as the school's own parents and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: information from the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; school improvement plans; leaders' records of classroom observations; safeguarding arrangements; and records of governing body meetings.
- They also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Johnstone	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or those with a parent in the armed services, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school is currently led by an acting headteacher, supported by an acting deputy headteacher.
- Due to staff absences, the senior leadership team has been newly formed this term. Some members of the team are new to the role of leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently communicate high expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve, by giving them harder work and encouraging them to think more deeply when responding to questions
 - pupils have more opportunities to use their calculations skills to solve mathematical problems
 - the good marking in English books is extended to all other subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of recently appointed subject leaders, so they take more responsibility for analysing pupils' progress and identifying areas for improvement
 - ensuring that governor visits to school are tightly focused on school improvement priorities and are routinely reported back to the governing body.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. They start in the nursery with skills well below those typical for their age. Although pupils in Year 6 last year left with standards that were below average, they had made good progress from very low starting points.
- Progress is good in the nursery and Reception because activities are planned carefully to develop the skills children need. For example, staff develop children's social skills by showing them how to behave considerately. When learning about circus skills, all the children in the nursery enjoyed the activities but were mindful of sharing equipment and not getting in each other's way.
- Pupils start in Key Stage 1 with skills still below average for their age, but good progress means that the gap between their attainment and the attainment of other pupils nationally is narrowing. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2, and the standards of work of pupils currently in Year 6 are broadly average.
- The results of the national screening check on how well pupils know the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Year 1 last year were below average. Good progress throughout the key stage means that reading standards by the end of Year 2, while still below average, are improving year on year.
- Progress in mathematics is not as consistently strong as in reading and writing. While pupils make good progress in most year groups, it is a little slower in Year 4.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make good progress. The funding is used effectively to enable them to be taught and supported in small groups or individually when needed. Any specific needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is provided to make sure they do not fall behind other pupils. As a result, national test results and school records show that their attainment by Year 6 in English and mathematics is similar to that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Well-briefed adults who are sensitive to the specific needs of individual pupils show a high level of care and support, both within the classroom and in small group or individual situations.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good because work is well matched to pupils' abilities. This means that they are able to make good progress. Teachers typically ask pupils challenging questions to check their understanding and also deepen their learning. It is not outstanding because they sometimes miss opportunities to extend the learning of the more-able pupils, and accept brief answers from them instead of making them think harder before responding.
- In the best lessons, the teachers' high expectations help to ensure that all pupils achieve really well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on factual writing, pupils were expected to check their own work against agreed success criteria. As a result, they had a clear understanding of their learning and talked knowledgeably about different nocturnal animals.

- Marking in English books is good. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work, and pupils respond well. Marking in other subjects, including mathematics, is not always so helpful. While pupils' work is corrected, the next steps in their learning are not clearly identified.
- In mathematics lessons pupils are encouraged to explain how they made their calculations. This ensures that they have a good understanding of the process. In some classes, however, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to use these calculation skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. Teachers plan work that is well matched to their abilities and needs. Pupils who have complex learning needs are taught alongside other pupils for most of the time, but also have individual or small group support when they need it. This means that they are able to take an active part in all class activities.
- Homework is set regularly and the school has clearly-understood expectations that all pupils will practise their reading at home. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 have recently started a new system whereby pupils can choose which subjects they work on each week. Pupils say they like this arrangement very much and that it really helps with their work in class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite to adults and each other. This is because good manners and appropriate responses are modelled for them by all adults in the school, from the nursery through to Year 6.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They could talk to the inspectors about different kinds of bullying including physical, name calling, and cyber bullying. They say that there is little bullying in the school, and that teachers and other adults always deal effectively with any problems that do occur.
- Pupils play well together and share equipment fairly. In games such as football, they show consideration for the rules and for each other. Play buddies take their roles seriously and keep an eye out for anyone who may need support.
- In lessons, pupils work well in groups and respond to the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. Those who find behaving well difficult are sensitively guided by adults and respond positively to the consistently used reward system.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and could confidently go to key members of staff with any problems they may have in school or at home. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the drug awareness training they receive.
- Attendance has improved. The school has worked hard with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend regularly. From being very low two years ago, attendance is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is currently being ably led by the acting headteacher. She has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve, and has moved it forward despite being in an acting capacity. Teaching has improved under her leadership and the change to topic-based lessons is

very popular with pupils and staff.

- Pupils' progress is tracked closely and any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and helped to catch up. Until recently, the responsibility for analysing the information collected on the school's performance has rested mainly with the headteacher. A new leadership team has been formed to share this responsibility, but the new leaders have not yet had the opportunity to fully develop their leadership skills.
- The new topic-based way of learning makes good use of visits to places of interest. These and visitors into school widen pupils' experiences and gives them a firm foundation for developing their learning about different subjects. The pupils' enthusiasm is reflected in their engagement in lessons and obvious enjoyment of learning. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils spoke knowledgeably about mining, having visited a coal mine recently.
- Teachers' performance is judged against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved. Teachers say they are given plenty of opportunities to improve their teaching through training and support in school.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination through ensuring that all pupils are listened to and all have the opportunity to succeed. No group of pupils makes less progress than others, and all pupils are fully involved in class activities regardless of ability or need.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Good links with local churches and a 'pilgrimage' to the cathedral support their spiritual development. During the inspection an assembly about honesty engaged all pupils in thinking about their own responses to different situations. Their good understanding of right and wrong is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and to each other.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. It has helped the acting headteacher and other leaders to ensure that the absence of the permanent headteacher does not have a detrimental effect on pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors give the school very good support. They challenge the senior leaders and hold them accountable for school improvement. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, and make sure that the plans to check how well teachers are doing are carried out. The Chair of the Governing Body meets regularly with the headteacher to make sure that governor meetings focus on school improvement issues. The governors have a very clear idea about how well pupils are doing and understand the importance of them making enough progress to close the gap between their skills when they start school and the standards they need to achieve by the time they leave. The school's finances are managed efficiently and governors have a detailed knowledge of how the pupil premium supports different pupils, both with their learning and through financial support for school trips and other activities. Individual governors visit the school regularly, but these visits are not always closely linked to checking on how well the school is improving and are not always effectively reported back to the rest of the governing body.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	132250
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	412237

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Oldknow
Headteacher	Clare Harding (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2010
Telephone number	01623 454969
Fax number	N/a
Email address	office@asquith.notts.sch.uk

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