

Edith Weston Primary School

Weston Road, Edith Weston, Oakham, LE15 8HQ

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils do not make rapid enough progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Too much of the work teachers set for the more-able pupils is not demanding enough.
- Lessons are not always pitched at the right level for pupils who find learning difficult and those who join the school partway through their schooling.
- Pupils lack the confidence to explore new ideas or topics by themselves and tend to wait to be prompted by teachers.
- The progress that pupils make has not been sufficiently well monitored by leaders.
- School leaders have not been effective since the last inspection in improving the quality of teaching or helping pupils to learn at a faster rate.
- Subject leaders do not have the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Pupils' play is sometimes overly boisterous and pupils call out in some lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in the Nursery and Reception class is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and their attendance is above average.
- The children learn through a wide range of interesting topics and themes, and the provision for their moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- The recent federation with another school is beginning to help the school to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, and made four visits to the Reception and Nursery class. Eight of these observations were made jointly with members of the school leadership team.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons, at lunchtimes and at playtimes. He also interviewed a group of pupils, and listened to a number of children read.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and the 'learning journeys' of children in the Nursery and Reception class.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including its data about pupils' current and recent progress, its planning and monitoring documentation, and its records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and subject leaders, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The number of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) was too small for the results to be made available to the inspector.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 12 members of staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who come from a minority ethnic group or who speak English as an additional language fluctuates because of the high turnover of pupils, but at the time of the inspection is above average.
- Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. However, a much higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for pupil premium funding because they have a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Pupils frequently join or leave partway through their primary school education. This is due to the fact that a large number of the pupils are from service families.
- In September 2013, the school entered a 'soft federation' with another school. From this date, the headteacher of that school became the executive headteacher of both schools. In addition, a member of the leadership team of the federation school was appointed School Leader.
- There has been significant staff turnover in recent years. All teachers currently serving have been appointed since September 2012.
- The number of pupils in Year 6 in 2013 was too small for the government's floor standards to be applicable.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that the work teachers set pupils, particularly the most able, is always appropriately challenging
 - making better use of the information the school holds on the achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, especially those who join the school partway through their schooling, so that the work they are given is not too hard for them to understand
 - making pupils more confident and resilient learners by encouraging them to explore ideas and problems for themselves, and not to wait to be prompted or helped by their teachers
 - teachers reinforcing the school's expectations regarding behaviour around corridors and in the playground and stressing the importance of pupils not calling out in lessons.
- Improve achievement, including that by the most-able pupils, and especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - requiring pupils to take more care over spelling and punctuation in their written work
 - raising pupils' awareness of when they need to adapt their styles and vocabulary when writing for different audiences and different purposes
 - strengthening pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - giving pupils more opportunity to develop their skills in speaking and listening in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring whole-school systems used to track the progress of individual pupils and groups are robust and accurate and used to inform teachers' subsequent lesson planning

- improving the skills of subject leaders so that they make a better contribution to the school's improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment levels vary because the size of each cohort is small, and many pupils leave and arrive in the school at different points in their schooling. Children generally start in the Nursery and Reception class with speaking and listening skills, as well as skills and understanding in mathematics, which are below those typically seen in children of their age. By the end of their time in the Reception class, most children have caught up, and have therefore made good progress.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, however, and despite the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' attainment is below average, especially in mathematics. It remains below average during pupils' time in Key Stage 2, in both writing and mathematics.
- Pupils frequently make punctuation and spelling mistakes in their written work, especially when they are asked to write at length. Pupils do not have the writing skills to confidently tackle the challenge of writing for different purposes, such as when writing a letter to persuade the reader of their point of view, or when writing in the style of a newspaper article. In mathematics, there are weaknesses in pupils' problem-solving skills.
- There were too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals leaving Year 6 in 2013 to permit a judgement on their attainment in English and mathematics; there is too great a risk of individuals being identified. Across the school in other classes, these and other eligible pupils generally do better than other pupils in reading and writing but make less progress in mathematics. The school has spent the pupil premium funding on additional resources and one-to-one teaching, and this is helping younger pupils to make faster progress as they move through the school.
- The progress of pupils who join the school partway through Key Stages 1 and 2 is similar, overall to that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected, but seldom more rapid, progress from their different starting points. This is equally true of pupils who join the school part way through each key stage, partly because information on their attainment on entry is not always used effectively to plan their lessons.
- Pupils do not have well-developed skills in speaking and listening. For those who join the school in the Nursery and Reception classes, vocabulary and speaking skills are less advanced than would normally be expected, as is the children's understanding of what adults say to them. While the school tries to make up for this, it is evident that, as they progress through the school, pupils do not use and understand spoken language as effectively as other pupils of their age, and this has had a detrimental effect on their writing skills and their understanding of texts.
- Despite their difficulties in other subjects, pupils read increasingly well as they move through the school. Their broadly average scores in the national phonics check in Year 1 (on pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make) and their average scores in the Year 6 national test show they make good progress from their various starting points in reading. Pupils talk readily about the books they have read, and read frequently in school and regularly to an adult at home.
- Recent developments in teaching are beginning to inspire pupils to be more adventurous in their learning, particularly in writing, and this is having a positive impact on the development of their skills. In mathematics, pupils are now given challenges which require them to apply their

mathematical knowledge in new situations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to challenge pupils sufficiently, especially the more-able pupils. Teachers have not consistently planned lessons well enough to develop pupils' knowledge and skills because they have not had an accurate picture of what each pupil is already able to do. This has meant that, in the past, too many pupils, particularly the most able and some of those who are new to the school, have not made as much progress as they needed to and were not always confident when asked to tackle new work; for example, solving a problem in mathematics.
- Although the new leadership team has taken rapid action to improve the standards of teaching, the work given to less-able and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs sometimes allows pupils to sit back and wait for the teachers to help them. They are not sufficiently ambitious or self-reliant in their learning and this prevents them developing the skills and understanding in writing and mathematics that they need to make good progress.
- Although pupils' work is marked frequently and teachers give pupils clear guidance to help them improve their work, teachers do not ensure that pupils act on this advice.
- Nonetheless, as a result of action taken by leaders, teaching is becoming increasingly effective. During the inspection, the majority of lessons observed were good. The information held by the school on the progress of current pupils shows that nearly all of them are making the progress they should and some are making more than expected progress. However, these improvements, are too recent to show measurable impact on pupils' achievement over time.
- Progress was good when pupils were well motivated and challenged; lessons were stimulating and led to some imaginative and accurate writing. Pupils talked freely about their writing with classmates as well as adults, and frequently made a plan before putting pen to paper. This approach has given them the confidence to experiment with new words and phrases, and a sense of achievement in the finished piece of work. Teachers have begun to make similar improvements in mathematics to develop pupils' problem-solving skills so that they become stronger.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils are occasionally a little boisterous in lessons and as they move around the school, and the inspector observed some inappropriate calling out during lessons.
- Although pupils enjoy their lessons, and respond well to challenges when these are given, they are not ambitious in their learning and lack confidence. They are often reluctant, for example, to express their own ideas aloud or in writing or to take part in discussions about a topic. Even older pupils tend to answer questions with just a single word or a short sentence. While they are content to carry out requests from the teacher, they do not propose ideas of their own about how to take their learning forward.
- There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions since the last inspection.
- The school's work to ensure pupils are safe and secure is good. All safeguarding arrangements

are met and they are reviewed regularly. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

- Bullying is very rare, and is dealt with effectively by adults. There is no evidence of pupils using discriminatory language and an air of mutual respect is apparent in all classes and activities across the whole school.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they can talk about what the school teaches them about road safety, and about how to be safe when using the internet, and how to be safe with people they do not know.
- Attendance has improved and it is above average. The school follows up immediately on any unexplained absence. Although persistent absence is rare, the school provides strong support to parents to help boost the attendance of these pupils.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- After a period of instability, in which leadership did not succeed in improving either teaching or learning sufficiently, the new leadership team is striving to raise standards. While it is too early to see how well the recent improvements will be sustained, there are already many signs that leaders' work is having a positive effect on the morale of staff and the quality of teaching.
 - Leaders have an accurate view of the school and know how it needs to improve. In particular, they have pinpointed the need to raise teachers' aspirations and their expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have written an action plan which correctly addresses the areas which require improvement and have set about implementing it without delay. Although more needs to be done, particularly to develop the role and contribution of subject leaders, there is already clear evidence of improvements apparent across the school.
 - Appropriate targets are set for teachers to improve their work and leaders check closely on the progress that pupils in each class make. They have introduced more effective systems for tracking each pupil's progress, so that weaker teaching can be identified more effectively and extra help can be given to teachers and pupils who need it.
 - Pupils say they enjoy learning through the school's well-planned range of topics and themes. These contribute strongly to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The topics are supported by a number of additional visits and activities, as well as after-school clubs. For example, pupils enjoy learning Mandarin, representing the school in sporting activities, and some pupils recently took part in a Shakespeare workshop. The school has used the additional primary sports funding to develop teachers' skills and confidence in teaching dance and gymnastics, and to increase pupils' participation in a wide range of sporting activities.
 - The local authority has promoted the school's federation links with another local primary school, through which pupils can access a wider range of activities. These arrangements also offer opportunities for training to the teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are beginning to contribute to the way in which the school checks how well it is doing. They recognise their responsibility to challenge as well as support senior leaders.
 - They take careful note of the achievement of pupils, including that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and have challenged previous leaders about the school's performance in this respect.
 - Governors know how teaching is being monitored and where it needs to improve. They know

how it is being developed by the school leadership team. They ensure that teachers' pay is now linked closely to their performance and impact on achievement. They are aware of how pupil premium and sports funding are spent and the impact these are having.

- Governors acknowledge the instability the school has had, and its effects on staff morale, and have supported the move to federation status as they recognised the benefits that this would have.
- They ensure that policies and procedures are up to date, including those relating to safeguarding, and ensure that these are followed consistently by all staff.

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	120042
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	430726

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	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Jarron
Headteacher	Sharon Milner (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2012
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