

Great Casterton CofE Primary School

Pickworth Road, Great Casterton, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 4AU

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		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 achieve well enough, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2. The progress that most pupils make requires improvement in order for them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Girls make slower progress than boys in some year groups, particularly in mathematics.
- While there is some good teaching, the quality varies between classes. Sometimes work is too easy or difficult for pupils, which means they do not make good progress.
- Some teachers give pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work, but others' guidance is too vague to be helpful.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Governors and senior leaders have not yet done enough to ensure that teaching and achievement are consistently good.
- Governors are very supportive and visit the school regularly, but do not check that senior leaders are improving teaching and achievement rapidly enough.
- Senior leaders carefully track pupils' progress. Subject leaders, however, have not developed their skills in analysing data so that they can use this to drive improvements.
- A significant minority of parents feel that leaders do not listen to their views about the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well in reading, and standards are high.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are polite and courteous and get on well together.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe in different situations.
- Senior leaders have accurately identified how the school can improve, and have recently taken the right actions to make this happen.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons, of which eight were seen together with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Informal discussions were also held with parents.
- The inspector took account of the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own parental and pupil questionnaires, individual communications from parents and the eight completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's checks on its performance, its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, records of behaviour and safety, school improvement plans, records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance, safeguarding arrangements and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is well below average.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who miss the Reception class and join the school in older year groups is above average.
- The headteacher leads another local school in addition to Great Casterton CE Primary School. Both schools share one governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise standards, particularly for girls, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects
 - ensuring that teachers provide work which challenges boys and girls of all abilities to make good progress in lessons
 - giving pupils consistently clear guidance to help them improve their work and making sure that they act on the advice.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring subject leaders have the skills to analyse pupils' progress and use the information to increase achievement
 - improving communications with parents so that they feel that their views are listened to.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Progress requires improvement. While there are pockets of good progress, for example in Reception, in Year 5 and in reading, this is not consistent in all year groups. The progress pupils make in reading and writing is better than in mathematics, and girls make slower progress than boys, particularly in mathematics. This is partly because they do not all see the importance of learning mathematics and sometimes rely on boys to answer teachers' questions.
- Pupils generally start with average standards and leave the school with average standards. The 2013 national test results showed that Year 6 pupils had not made enough progress since leaving Year 2. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made better progress. However, while they have made good progress in reading, progress in writing and mathematics requires improvement. Year 6 pupils are working at broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year, but they should be higher.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils who are supported by additional funding through the pupil premium usually make similar progress to other pupils. In some cases, they make better progress and any gaps between their attainment and that of their classmates are narrowing. In 2013, the proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding was too small to comment on their attainment without identifying individual pupils. Pupils who miss the Reception class and join the school in later years also make similar progress to their classmates.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading. This means that by Key Stage 2 most pupils are reading with good skills. The results of the most recent national screening check at the end of Year 1 on how well pupils know their phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words) were above average.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age, though slightly weaker in some areas. They make good progress, which means that they join Key Stage 1 with stronger skills. Nevertheless, in 2013 the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was below average. In the current class, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is much higher.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- While some teaching is good, this is not the case in all year groups. In some lessons, pupils are given work which is too easy or too hard for them, especially in mathematics. For example, even when pupils have demonstrated that they can complete a mathematical task, they continue to do more similar examples rather than moving on to develop new skills and understanding. This means they are not able to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities in different subjects to use and develop the skills they have learnt in literacy and numeracy. This means that girls, particularly, do not always see the practical use for mathematics. In other subjects, pupils rarely write at length and this limits the development of their writing skills.
- Some teachers give pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work, and make sure that they act in this advice. Others, however, give advice that is too vague to be helpful, so pupils are not as clear about how to improve their work.

- Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about lessons which are practical and interesting. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils excitedly investigated fruits and plants to see if there were links between size and number of peas in a pod or height and lengths of roots. They worked well together in groups to decide how to find out whether their hypotheses were correct. Meanwhile, Year 3 and 4 pupils quickly learnt new vocabulary in French when they were given the chance to practise by giving each other directions.
- Children in the Reception class have good opportunities to develop their skills, both indoors and outside. Some sessions are directed closely by adults, but children also have the chance to practise skills while playing. During the inspection children enjoyed singing songs and playing board and dice games to help them remember number facts to 10.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported individually or in small groups. Specific programmes of work are designed to help them make progress alongside their peers. Pupils respond well to the sensitive and encouraging manner of adults who help them. Pupils who are eligible for additional funding are similarly supported and their progress is at least as good as that of other pupils, and in some cases better.
- The new primary sports funding has been used to employ specialist coaches. They worked alongside class teachers to develop both pupils' and teachers' skills, as well as leading lunchtime and after-school sports activities. The funding is also used to give pupils more opportunities to participate in competitions against other schools. As a result, older pupils especially are developing stronger skills and positive attitudes to sport as they strive to get into the teams.
- Teachers build good relationships in lessons so that pupils feel confident to offer answers and share ideas. Teachers encourage mutual respect, both in their comments and the way they treat pupils, and pupils respond well to these good role models.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are pleasant and polite and look out for each other. As one commented, 'We all get on well together.' They say they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle in well.
- Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including physical bullying and name-calling. All pupils spoken to said that although there has been bullying in the past, there is now little or no bullying in the school. Sometimes pupils 'fall out' or have arguments, but if they cannot resolve the situation themselves, an adult will always help.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that access to the building is secure, and staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment. Recent reviews and improvements to safety policies mean that leaders check even more rigorously that pupils are kept safe at all times. Pupils value the 'box of worries' which gives them the opportunity to talk to the headteacher about anything concerning them.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They talked knowledgeably about safety when using the internet and each year group learns about different aspects of road safety. For example, older pupils learn about riding their bikes safely while younger ones learn to walk safely to school. During the inspection Year 2 pupils were involved in a 'Walk Wise' activity.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and told the inspector that their teachers always help

them in lessons. Even when work is too easy for them, pupils diligently do what the teacher has asked. Disruptions to lessons are rare.

- While a few parents have expressed their concern about behaviour, most say that their children are happy at school and that pupils are well behaved. During the inspection, there were no incidents of poor behaviour observed.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders rigorously check how well pupils are doing. Recent changes to the way they do this have helped identify areas where improvements are needed, but the actions taken to address the areas of concern have not yet made a difference to pupils' achievement and standards.
- Subject leaders check how well their subjects are taught and how well pupils are doing. However, they are reliant on the headteacher to analyse pupil progress data and provide them with the information. This means that they have not developed their own skills of analysis to help them drive improvements more effectively in their subjects.
- The appraisal system for checking teachers' performance, introduced last year, is contributing to improving the quality of teaching. Individual targets are used by the headteacher and the governing body to confirm that pay rises and promotion are justified by results. The headteacher has made sure that performance is reviewed regularly during the year to identify those who need help to improve.
- The school works closely with its federated school and has formed strong partnerships with other local schools. This gives teachers opportunities to share ideas and expertise, and pupils from different schools the chance to work and play together. Recent links with a school further afield provide opportunities to work with pupils from more diverse backgrounds and to learn about other faiths and cultures.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education underpins all the school does. Close links with the church supports strong spiritual development. A focus on values such as courage and respect supports pupils in dealing with everyday situations. The school aims to promote equality of opportunity to make sure that no groups of pupils achieve less well than others, and has taken action to improve girls' achievement.
- The local authority has, until recently, judged the school to require minimal support. However, it has helped the school review its safeguarding arrangements and there are annual visits from the Early Years Advisor.
- During the inspection and through Parent View, a significant minority of parents expressed their concerns about the way the school responded to their views. Other parents expressed their support for the school and said how well they feel their children are cared for.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive and visit the school regularly to check how well it is doing. They understand the strengths of the school and how it needs to improve, but do not challenge senior leaders on how quickly the school's actions are improving pupils' achievement.
 - Governors felt that as a small school, they all know each other and communications with parents are good. However, they accept that more formal communication could be improved and are committed to ensuring that parents feel their views are listened to and appropriate

actions taken.

- Governors manage the school’s finances effectively and know that the additional funding is helping eligible pupils to make better progress. They understand how the new primary school sports funding is used to extend physical education opportunities and is helping pupils develop positive attitudes to sport. Governors appreciate that the new appraisal system should be contributing to improving teaching, but are not clear about how effective this is. They understand the need to make sure that teachers’ pay rises are linked to the progress their pupils make.
- Governors make sure that national requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met and regularly review their procedures to ensure they are effective.

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	120185
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	443821

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Jo Saunders
Headteacher	Clare Rowbotham
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2010
Telephone number	01780 762417
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