

Byfield School

Bell Lane, Byfield, Daventry, NN11 6US

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils do not always make good progress. Their attainment in mathematics is not high enough. Progress in this subject lags behind that in reading and writing.
- The school does not identify clearly enough the targets and small learning steps for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs. This impedes their progress.
- Teaching quality over time has not been good enough to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Not enough reviews of teaching and learning have taken place. Targets set for teachers in their annual appraisals do not point the way forward well enough to help them improve.
- The early years provision requires improvement. The outside area for children in the Reception class is restricted and lacks sparkle with some old equipment.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and their setting out of mathematics work.
- There is not a good enough system to teach spelling which is a weaker aspect of writing.
- Teachers do not consistently refer to the targets and stages of learning planned for the pupils so they know how well they are doing.
- Some parents feel that they are not informed regularly enough about matters that concern their children.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe.
- Good links with other schools enable ideas to be shared and help staff to learn from others.
- The school development plan is well written and maps out clearly the actions that need to be addressed.
- Good attention is paid to pupils' use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects, for example in science.
- Pupils love school, like their teachers and attend well. Their singing is a joy.
- Pupils take part enthusiastically in extra activities and there are good links with the local community.

Information about this inspection

- Eight lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, various members of staff, four governors including the chair, and a group of pupils.
- The inspector heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- He looked at pupils' work in different year groups and examined records of pupils' progress. He read the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and its development plan. A range of other documentation was examined including that relating to safeguarding.
- The views of the 11 staff members who responded to a written questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspectors looked at the 28 responses on Parent View, the government's website for parents' views about their children's school.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has a Reception class, which children attend full-time, and three other classes of mixed-age: Years 1/ 2, Years 3/ 4 and Years 5/ 6.
- There is a privately run nursery on site which was not part of the inspection. Most of these children transfer to the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday.
- Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is much lower than average. No pupil speaks English as an additional language.
- About one pupil in six has a disability or has special educational needs. This is around the national average.
- Around one pupil in seven is supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This is lower than the national average.
- The school has had staffing difficulties over the past nine months.
- A job share operates in the Reception class.
- There were only six pupils in the Year 6 group who left in 2014, of whom two had special educational needs, and seven the previous year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - improving the equipment and the appearance of the outside area in the Reception class so it is a more stimulating environment for learning
 - developing a whole school teaching approach to spelling
 - setting short step targets to meet the learning difficulties that disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs are experiencing so they make better progress
 - giving more attention to pupils' individual targets and the next learning stages that have been outlined for pupils so that they know how well they are doing
 - having higher expectations of handwriting.
- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics by:
 - giving more attention to mental calculation so the pupils can work more quickly
 - ensuring that pupils set out their work more carefully to support their accuracy.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - improving the system for staff's performance management so that the objectives are more clearly written and provide a clear target for improving pupils' progress and the professional development of individual members of staff
 - improving the communication links with parents so that they are kept fully and promptly informed of matters which affect their children.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Objectives set for teachers' performance are insufficiently clear, do not help teachers to develop their skills well enough nor to be challenged through targets linked to their pupils' progress. The means to measure performance are imprecise or lacking. Performance reviews do not extend to other staff.
- Staffing difficulties have disrupted arrangements for oversight of different subjects. Some are not directly overseen. Temporary oversight of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs does not ensure targets and small steps are being planned well enough.
- Insufficient reviews have taken place to improve teaching and learning. This is now being addressed through a long-term review plan.
- Some parents indicate that communication is not timely enough and they are not always kept fully informed. Responses from Parent View present mixed views of the school.
- The well-balanced curriculum, planned for a two-year period, ensures that mixed-age classes do not repeat work and helps pupils prepare for life in modern Britain. Religious education promotes tolerance and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils recently visited a Hindu temple.
- The school's good links with other local schools promote an exchange of ideas and supports the school's leadership.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school has a clear child protection policy. All persons who work with children are vetted.
- The grant for disadvantaged pupils provides individual teaching support for them. Those of a higher ability reach the higher level.
- All disadvantaged pupils are enabled to take a full part in school activities. There is no evidence of discrimination. The school strives to treat all pupils equally but weaker planning for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means that they do not always make good enough progress.
- The primary physical education (P.E.) sport grant has been wisely spent on consultants who have improved staff's teaching of different aspects of P.E.
- The well-written school development plan maps out clearly priorities for improvement specifying actions to be taken and targets to be achieved.
- The happy atmosphere encourages good behaviour and positive attitudes and relationships.
- The local authority has arranged support, for example linking it with an outstanding school. It had undertaken a review the day before the inspection and provided a written report for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body requires further improvement. The new Chair of the Governing Body is working to ensure that the governing body can play a more effective role. She is well informed in doing this through national training.
 - Governors are familiar with the spending of the pupil premium and sports grants and know the impact of the spending.
 - The governing body has expertise to interpret data and to challenge and ask questions about progress and attainment.
 - Governors regularly visit the school to support their understanding of teaching quality. They help in

- school and get involved with school events. Governors recognise the need to visit the school with a greater focus and have recently organised a programme of visits to review aspects of the school's work.
- Governors have driven forward a revision of the school's value statement so that it is more fitting for the pupils' safety and happiness.
 - The governing body asks for evidence in matters of pay progression and wants to improve its involvement in this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are interested in their work. They like school. They participate well in extra activities. Pupils' attendance is above average and they are punctual for school.
- Pupils agree that sometimes a few pupils 'fall-out' and that there are occasional behavioural incidents at lunchtime but these are diminishing. They get on well together and support one another in a happy family atmosphere.
- Democratically elected school council members, which give pupils an appreciation of British values, organise successful fund-raising events for different charities. Year 5 pupils help others and organise games in the playground.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying. All pupils have signed the school's anti-bullying charter. Pupils state that bullying does not take place.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are reminded at regular intervals about road safety and not talking to strangers. They appreciate the danger of drugs and smoking and say that 'smoking is silly'.
- Pupils are given good information about the dangers associated with the use of the internet. They are fully aware of the importance of e-safety.
- Visitors such as the police provide helpful reminders periodically of safety matters and pupils are also familiar with water safety. They know the harmful effects of illegal substances.
- Older pupils learn about cycling safety through taught courses.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to secure pupils' consistently good progress. It has been weaker in mathematics where attainment traditionally has not been as good as in writing and reading. However, spelling and handwriting are weaker taught aspects of writing. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the way pupils set out their mathematics work to help accuracy.
- Teachers' assessments of the pupils' work have not always been totally secure but reviews of work with staffs from other schools are helping to improve this.
- The targets and next learning stages for pupils' work are not attended to regularly enough so that pupils know how well they are doing and where they are heading with their work.
- Introductions to mathematics lessons do not consider pupils' different ages and skills sufficiently well. On some occasions not enough attention is paid to mental calculation. Staff pay good attention to grouping pupils by ability in the follow-up activities.

- Marking is good and recognises what the pupils have done well and helps with improvement. However, teachers do not always ensure that the pupils address the comments.
- Teachers question the pupils well to check their understanding. They secure pupils' interest by using game type activities. Younger children had to find words on a bingo card to practise reading a particular sound.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and help with small groups so that all pupils are included.
- Staff make good use of large electronic screens to present new learning which assists the pupils' concentration. These are clear and easy to read.
- Teachers pay good attention to grammar. Pupils always have written reminders in front of them.
- Teachers manage the pupils well and create a pleasant learning environment where happy relationships contribute to pupils' confidence in answering.
- Staff teach phonics (sounds that letters make) well. Pupils use these when reading unknown words. They group pupils by ability to help them make good progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Small year groups mean that each pupil has a disproportionate effect on data. Nevertheless, data over time, examination of current data and work samples indicate pupils' attainment is broadly average, but some pupils could do better.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is not as high as it could be because pupils do not develop mental skills well enough. Equally the often untidy setting out of their work, for example in columns when calculating, leads to errors.
- Pupils' spelling at the end of Year 6 has been below average because the school has not been teaching spelling rules systematically. Pupils' handwriting is immature and not enough Key Stage 2 pupils write in a joined style to speed up the flow of their work.
- The progress of pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs is inconsistent. The lack of precise learning steps, based on their difficulties, does not make it easy to check their progress.
- The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level in Key Stage 1 in 2014 was above average in reading and mathematics. The most-able Key Stage 1 pupils convert their good performance to an equally good performance by the end of Key Stage 2 whether in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Despite spelling weaknesses, pupils' attainment in writing is often good because teachers discuss ideas and model examples for the pupils. Pupils have good opportunities to apply their writing in other subjects. Years 5 and 6 pupils wrote movingly as a villager being attacked by the Vikings.
- There are few disadvantaged pupils in the school and so it is not possible to make comparisons without identifying individuals. Examination of pupils' progress data indicates that the few disadvantaged pupils make similar rates of progress to that of their classmates.
- As the numbers of pupils in Year 6 in the last two years have been so few, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons with the proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to the national average.
- Progress data and evidence of progress from pupils' work indicate that pupils are currently making broadly expected progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics but mathematics is not as strong.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Attainment on entry varies from year to year in the small groups who enter. One child's data can skew the overall position as can date of birth. In the past two years, about half the children entering the Reception class were summer born. School data shows variation in children's attainment both on entry and at the end of Reception. Overall they make expected progress in the Reception year.
- The two teachers who share the class jointly lead the provision taking responsibility for different aspects. They keep good records of evidence of the children's progress and value children's on-going work in thematic books. However, they do not use the assessment well enough to record the next steps for individual children to push them on with their learning.
- Teaching requires further improvement. The arrangement of staffing for the Reception class is complicated. In addition to the two part-time teachers, who are improving the way that they work together, there are three part-time teaching assistants. A communication book helps them to keep in touch with one another.
- The internal space is attractively arranged but the outside is rather uninspiring with some old unattractive equipment. The roof-cover leaks. Adult-sized concrete steps to the outside do not make it easy for free flow and the outside activities are usually timetabled.
- A good balance of adult-directed learning and self-chosen activities takes place. The children's personal development is good. Their behaviour is good and they relate well to one another. They show good levels of independence, for example, putting on their own aprons. They listen well, are cooperative and want to please.
- The staff have good links with the parents and offer home visits. Parents provide material for the records of evidence. There are good links with the private nursery but staff have yet to agree moderation procedures with them for the new intakes of children.

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	121802
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	448527

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Neal
Headteacher	Andrew Ward
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
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