

Bythams Primary School

Creeton Road, Little Bytham, Grantham, NG33 4PX

Inspection dates 28 January – 26 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- There have been significant improvements to the school since the previous inspection.
- The early years' provision is good. Children make good progress and are prepared well for Year 1.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are taught extremely well.
- Pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving rapidly.
- Good teaching helps all pupils, including those who need extra help and the most able, to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is improving because leaders, managers and governors keep a close check on how well pupils are doing. Leaders set teachers challenging targets and provide them with good quality training that helps them to improve their skills.
- Systems to safeguard pupils are robust. As a result, pupils feel safe and well looked after by adults.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils support each other well. Attitudes to learning are good.
- Attendance is above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Systems for leaders to check on pupils' progress are rigorous. This enables those pupils who need extra help to get the support they need.
- Governance is good. Governors offer increased challenge to the school.
- The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Although pupils are taught joined handwriting skills in dedicated sessions, not all teachers insist that pupils use these skills for written work in other subjects.
- While teachers' marking of pupils' work in literacy, helps pupils to think deeply and moves their learning forward well, it is not as effective in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Following the inspection on 28-29 January 2015 by the lead inspector, an additional inspector visited the school on 26 February 2015, to collect further evidence about achievement, teaching, and leadership and management.
- The lead inspector gathered evidence about teaching, by observing pupils' learning in seven lessons, three of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. He looked at pupils' work in class and talked to them about it to assess their understanding and attitudes to learning. The lead inspector scrutinised pupils' work with the senior leadership team. He observed a range of activities designed to support individuals and small groups of pupils. He listened to pupils read, met with a group of pupils and attended an assembly.
- On the second visit to the school, the additional inspector carried out a further detailed scrutiny of pupils' work with the headteacher. She met with a group of pupils representing all year groups. The additional inspector also scrutinised the school's records of pupils' current achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2. She visited every class in the school and talked with pupils informally.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors, staff, a representative of the local authority.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 11 staff. The lead inspector spoke to parents in the playground and considered the school's own survey of parents' views. The additional inspector took account of parental views in letters and email communications.
- Inspectors looked at the school's improvement plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, and arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The early years provision consists of one full-time Reception class.
- The school is part of the Swallows local cluster of five primary schools which share good practice and training opportunities.
- The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at about 2%, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, at just over a tenth, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year.
- 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.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2014. Prior to that, he was interim headteacher. The school has been through a period of staffing turbulence, during which there were five headteachers in three years and a high turnover of other teaching staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and achievement to outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - insist on high quality handwriting in pupils' work
 - extend the effective practice of teachers' marking of pupils' work in literacy to mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Led by a tenacious headteacher and supported well by the staff and governors, the school is moving forward at a good pace.
- The headteacher is working closely with all members of the school community to improve achievement and the quality of teaching. His determined efforts are ensuring that the current rate of improvement, stable staffing and good governance mean that the school now has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils' behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning are consistently good.
- Subject leaders' roles are developing well. They are clear about their roles in leading learning and their checks on the quality of teaching and learning have become frequent and rigorous. They carry out regular reviews of pupils' work. They can identify how the school's provision of additional training for staff and the work with the local Swallows primary cluster, have benefited their leadership practice.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make similar good progress as their peers. For example, provision of one-to-one tuition and extra support for literacy and numeracy skills, are proving successful in narrowing any gaps in attainment.
- Links with feeder and other schools help to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- The school has reviewed the range of subjects it teaches. This is effective. Leaders have begun to implement the school's preferred approach to assessment. The content of subjects, linked to topics, such as the Tudors, make learning both interesting and fun. Eye-catching displays around the school, which include samples of pupils' own work, and use of the 'forest school', are helping to stimulate both boys' and girls' interest in different subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Issues of right and wrong are covered in assemblies and classes, and by pupils' own efforts, such as when Year 4 pupils serve as 'Junior Police Constable School Officers' in the playground.
- The school's core values reflect and promote the values which underpin our British society. The local vicar takes a number of assemblies. Opportunities for pupils to use their imagination are increasing. The school is rigorous in its promotion of equal opportunities and in ensuring that there is no discrimination of any kind. Through these activities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively to develop staff skills across different sports, to link up with other schools and to increase the range of clubs and activities on offer. Pupils are increasing their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy being physically active and taking part in competitive sport. The impact of these initiatives was shown when pupils requested even more physical education and clubs to enrich their school experiences.
- Systems to check how well pupils are doing are meticulous. They identify those pupils who are in danger of falling behind or who are not making sufficient progress. This enables leaders to ensure these pupils get the extra help and support they need to thrive.
- Staff performance is managed effectively. Targets are linked to the school improvement plan. Promotion up the pay scales is connected to pupils' performance and achievement in lessons.
- The local authority has offered extensive support and guidance to the school. This support is less intense now that the school is good but is readily available.
- Links with parents occur through 'FoBS' (the Friends of Bythams School). Parents were highly positive about the school in discussion with the inspector, in the school's own survey and via the on-line Parent View. Typically, they say they are more than happy with the quality of teaching. They feel that the school

supports their children's personal and academic achievement well. They cite many examples of pupils' increased self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of attending Bythams school.

- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and ensures that pupils at risk of not doing well are protected.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is good. Governors know the school through visits, discussion with parents and staff and the observations they undertake. With continued improvement as a priority, governors told the inspector about how they have developed the level of challenge they offer the school, for example, through regular discussion about levels of pupil achievement. Governors have had training to understand what the data is telling them and use it to ask probing questions.
- Governors are trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures. They ensure that the management of staff performance, including of the headteacher, is linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. They know about the quality of teaching through classroom visits, reviews of books, and governors' links to individual subjects. They recognise good teaching in the discussions which follow. Underperformance is tackled through the priorities in the school improvement plan and a programme of further training and support for staff.
- Governors check on the impact of pupil premium spending to help disadvantaged pupils. The school and its governors are currently reviewing the effectiveness of this work as part of their efforts to continue closing any remaining gaps in pupils' attainment with others in the school and nationally.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They are punctual to lessons, have the correct equipment and take pride in their uniform. Pupils are proud of their litter-free school. One pupil said, 'Everyone works together to make the school better.' They feel protective of each other. This shared contribution to each other's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their readiness to take on responsibility on the school council and as playground leaders and 'buddies'. Consequently, there is no extreme or discriminatory behaviour.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils know that they are in the school to learn. As a result, lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils pay attention to the teacher, support staff and each other.
- Pupils understand and follow the school's behaviour codes. This helps them to feel safe, behave well and contributes well to their learning. In an assembly during the inspection, pupils' close attention to the teacher in charge led to high quality singing, including harmony. Instructions did not need to be repeated.
- Attendance is above average. Persistent absence rates are low. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe. As one said, 'Nobody in this school would try to be mean because we are really friendly.' Parents agree that pupils are safe in the school. Safeguarding includes checks on all visitors to the school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, fit and healthy. They know the importance of exercise and diet. Systems to protect pupils at risk of not doing well are clearly defined and well developed. Outside agencies, such as local social services, are involved whenever appropriate.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They are aware of the different forms that bullying may take, such as pushing, name calling and cyber-bullying. They say that any problems are resolved quickly and are confident that they could approach any adult in the school with any problems.
- Staff are trained in safeguarding procedures, as are governors. Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is leading to pupils' good achievement. Positive relationships are evident between adults and pupils. Adults foster a positive climate for learning in which pupils are encouraged to 'have a go' at an answer or to give their view. This contributes well to pupils' good progress.
- The most-able pupils respond well to demanding work. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed at length the dilemmas facing Demetrius in Shakespeare's play, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', as he sought to resolve a difficulties within a relationship.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers make good use of questions to determine understanding, have very secure subject knowledge and work closely with other adults and the pupils to drive learning forward. Teachers are continually pushing to extend pupils' horizons.
- Pupils make progress at a good rate because teachers give pupils good examples as a prompt for their own work. Consequently, pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and what they have to do.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils have regular opportunities to read in class and can earn a book of their choice by meeting 'Book Mark' criteria. The impact of recent training for staff on promoting reading and literacy skills is now becoming more apparent in results.
- The school is reviewing its calculations policy to ensure that pupils' computational skills can be even more effectively promoted. Teachers are focusing on helping pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems in real-life situations. In addition, staff use 'impact assessment sheets' to track pupils' progress during an intervention to ensure progress rates increase.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in class by adults who know their needs and work closely with them. Adults draw pictures, diagrams, show pupils good examples of what they need to do and use practical resources which helps them to better understand new ideas.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and carefully during lessons and in their books, including homework. Presentation has improved, for example, through the growing emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. On the whole, pupils write neatly and legibly in their work books. Although they practise writing in a joined script, as required by the national scheme of work, in handwriting sessions, this is not routinely transferred into their work in different subjects.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work in literacy lets them know how well they are doing and how their work could be improved. They are given lots of opportunities to revisit their written work and improve it, for example, by adding more adventurous vocabulary or by writing more complex sentences. This helps pupils to make good progress in developing writing skills. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work in mathematics is not as strong as it is in English.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with typical levels of skill and understanding for their age. Their physical and creative development is stronger than their personal, social and communication skills. The school is working effectively to address this. Children make good progress in the Reception class.
- From this good start in the early years, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 is average, but it is rising steadily because of teachers' increased emphasis on guiding pupils in their reading and developing practical mathematical skills. Work seen in pupils' books demonstrates good and improving progress rates.
- All pupils have achieved very well in the Year 1 phonics screening check in the last two years, as did those who took the Year 2 re-test. The school has been in the top 2% nationally for phonics. Current

data suggest that results will be lower this year but still above the national picture.

- Results at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were broadly average overall, but a marked improvement on the previous year, especially in reading and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils reached the highest Level 6 than was seen nationally. Writing was weaker than other subjects. However, leaders have ensured that pupils' attainment continues to rise and that standards are catching up to above average levels, including in writing.
- Year 6 pupils made good and often better progress in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. Current assessment information shows that most pupils in all other year groups are working at or above those expected for their age. The vast majority are making good progress, as confirmed by work in their books.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make good rates of progress similar to other pupils. In 2014, the number of pupils in Year 6 eligible for funding was too small to enable effective comparisons to be made with the national picture. Across the school, gaps in attainment with other pupils are now closing at a good rate.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. They did best in mathematics and reading but did less well in writing at the highest levels in 2014. The school has taken prompt action to address this with extra training for staff in extending writing skills, for example through use of film as a stimulus. In mathematics, additional work on applying mathematical skills is making a difference.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making progress broadly in line with the other pupils. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that their needs are met effectively.
- Pupils who join the school at different times of the year are welcomed into the school community. Early assessments are made of pupils' existing knowledge and skills so they can get the help they need. Parents are kept well informed about how their children are doing. As a result, these new pupils settle in quickly and make good progress, similar to their peers.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the Reception class. The number of children reaching a good level of development was above average in 2013 and 2014. Current data indicate that children are in line to achieve similar results in 2015. Children enter Year 1 well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is good. Staff work well together. They know the children well and make good use of the wide range of resources on offer, including both the indoor and outdoor areas, to promote learning for all groups of children. Children spoke excitedly to the inspector and the headteacher about the dens they had constructed in the 'forest schools' area and were keen to show their efforts.
- Behaviour is good. Children are attentive, listening carefully to instructions and using materials responsibly. They apply themselves to their work with little disruption, share, take turns and listen while others are speaking. They readily approach the adults if they have any difficulties and know that they will be listened to. Consequently, they feel safe.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Work is planned carefully and the activities done by each adult are linked well to previous learning. Careful records are kept of children's attainment and progress. Home visits and information from nursery settings mean that the school has a good understanding of the needs of the children when they arrive in Reception. Links with parents are developing well.

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	120506
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	453605

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Thomas
Headteacher	Richard Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2013
Telephone number	01780 410275
Email address	office@bythams.lincs.sch.uk

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