

Bishop Alexander Primary and Nursery School

Wolsey Road, Newark, NG24 2BQ

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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 are not making consistently good progress in mathematics
- Boys' progress is not as good as that of girls, especially in writing.
- Some teaching requires improvement. This is because the work in some classes is not always matched to the needs of individual pupils, especially those of middle ability.
- There are variations in how well teachers mark pupils' work. Not all pupils are sure what they have to do next to reach their targets.
- Leaders have produced plans for improvement which focus on the right areas, but these do not have a sharp enough focus on ensuring that pupils' achieve well in all subjects.
- Leaders of subjects have only just begun to check on the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use their skills in mathematics to solve problems, particularly in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe at school and they are well looked after. As a result, behaviour in the school is good.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have eradicated all inadequate aspects found at the last inspection. There is a clear sense of purpose and determination to improve further.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, they listened to pupils reading, observed assemblies and breakfast club, and looked at a sample of the pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as analysing questionnaires completed by 25 members of staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan, policies, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, the school's own data on the progress and attainment of pupils, as well as records in relation to the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

David Carter Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathleen Campbell

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Bishop Alexander Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of girls compared to boys is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action is in line with what is found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above that which is found nationally. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
 - planning lessons which meets the learning needs of different pupils, particularly middle-ability pupils and boys in writing.
 - ensuring that marking provides pupils with information on how well they are making progress against their individual targets
- Increase the progress made by pupils in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the pupils have more opportunities to use their skills in calculations to solve problems
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in mathematics in other subjects
 - making sure that pupils' learning in mathematics is celebrated and promoted more across the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that plans for improvement have clear timescales and measurable targets, so that senior leaders and governors can check on how well the school is improving.
 - providing leaders in charge of subjects with more opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject
 - ensuring that checks made on the quality of teaching focus closely on its impact on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Girls' achievement is better than that of boys. Historically, girls have reached standards which are broadly average by the time they leave the school, but boys' attainment has tended to be below average. Boys and girls are now making similar rates of progress in reading and mathematics, but boys' progress in writing still lags behind that of girls.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics varies between classes, but it is no better than average overall. Pupils of middle ability, in particular, are not being challenged enough. This means not all of them make the expected rates of progress, and too few of them reach the higher levels. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to solve problems and apply their skills in different subjects.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is good. This is due to the systematic way in which phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been taught throughout the school. All classes are making good progress in reading and their attainment is broadly average, with the exception of pupils in the current Year 6. Past underachievement means that pupils in Year 6 have had more gains to make and their standards are below average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making the expected rates of progress, given their starting points, because of the targeted support which they receive.
- The additional support which the school has provided through pupil premium funding is having an impact on closing the gaps in attainment. Pupils supported through the pupil premium were two terms behind their classmates in 2012 in English and mathematics, but the gap is decreasing.
- Children enter the Nursery with levels of skills and understanding which are well below those typical for children of their age, especially in communication and language skills. They are now making good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are responding well to the stimulating learning environment. A range of interesting activities means they are actively involved in their learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed school because teachers make learning interesting. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work, especially when they were undertaking learning in their 'topic' areas. They collaborate well and are developing a good range of social skills, but they do not make enough academic progress to prepare them well enough for the move to their next stage of education.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is improving and the proportion that is good or outstanding has increased since the last inspection. Inadequate teaching is being eradicated. Nonetheless, teaching requires improvement because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- Lessons do not always meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils of middle ability are often provided with work which is not challenging enough to ensure that they make good progress, especially in mathematics. In some lessons, boys found the writing tasks were too challenging and teachers did not provide enough support to help them to make good progress.

- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in other subjects. For instance, in mathematics, pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to solve problems in their daily lessons or apply their skills when undertaking their 'topic' learning.
- Teachers' marking is regular, but it varies in quality. Pupils are not always clear what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. The comments which teachers make do not always make it clear what the pupils have to do next to reach their targets.
- Classrooms stimulate pupils because they are bright and display interesting pieces of information which can help them in their learning. Around the school, pupils' achievements in reading and writing are celebrated through eye-catching displays, as well as through the reward system during assemblies. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are less prominent and few pupils told inspectors that mathematics was their favourite subject.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good. Adults provide a range of different learning activities which are well matched to the levels of ability of the children. Children enjoy learning both indoors and outside and they are supported in developing their knowledge and understanding by adults talking to them about their learning.
- In the good or better teaching observed in Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils were engaged in meaningful learning throughout the lesson. Teachers checked on the learning of all pupils closely and intervened where pupils were finding the work too difficult or too easy. The activities were pitched at the right level for pupils and other adults supported pupils' learning well. For example, in an outstanding lesson, the teacher skilfully presented pupils in Year 5 with examples of how to use emotive language when writing. The teacher then checked on the progress of pupils during the lesson to provide timely support to a few pupils who were finding the work challenging. The clarity of his explanations and use of questions resulted in pupils being able to understand the work well, and they went on to produce some high quality pieces of writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe in school. They say that the adults take care of them well and they feel comfortable talking to them about any issues which might concern them. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that bullying might occur, it is always dealt with swiftly.
 - Pupils are taught about keeping safe both in school and in the community. They understand how to be safe in a range of situations, including when they use the internet. Pupils in Year 6 talked about how they had developed strategies to deal with situations where they are being persuaded by others to take substances which might be dangerous to their health.
 - Pupils' behaviour around school is good. They play well together during break-times and support each other. Pupils spoke about how the 'buddy system' ensures that no one is left to be on their own during lunchtimes.
 - Pupils know what is expected of them in lessons. They are responding well to the school's system of rewards and sanctions. As a result, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their learning in most lessons.
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- Since the last inspection, attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because the teachers make learning fun. They also enjoy attending the range of after-school clubs as well as the breakfast club, where behaviour is also good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is passionate about the school and he has worked closely with the senior leadership team to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, all inadequate aspects which were reported have been eradicated. Leadership requires improvement, however, as inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and not all groups of pupils are making good progress.
 - Systems for checking on the quality of teaching have been strengthened, but they do not focus sharply enough on the difference it is making to the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they are making over time. Not all members of staff with leadership responsibilities have been able to check on teaching and bring about improvements.
 - Leaders have developed plans which have focused upon relevant actions to bring about improvements. The plans however, do not contain milestones or sharp enough criteria based on pupils' progress to check the extent to which they are being successful. As a result, it is difficult for leaders and governors to make sure that actions are making the difference that was intended.
 - Leaders have put in place an effective system for checking on pupils' progress and they are able to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Intensive support for those at risk of underachieving, such as those supported through pupil premium funding, is ensuring that they are narrowing the gap with the rest of the pupils in the class.
 - Senior leaders have put in place a more robust system for reviewing the performance of teachers. Targets are set based on the progress which pupils make as well the contribution of teachers to whole-school priorities. Training needs are identified and are now established. Governors and senior leaders work closely together to ensure that decisions about pay increases are linked closely to performance.
 - Leaders identified the need to develop a curriculum which will engage all pupils, but in particular boys. New topics have been introduced and this is helping pupils to be more enthusiastic about their learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading and writing, but less opportunity for pupils to apply their skills in mathematics in other subjects.
 - The teaching and other activities at the school ensure that pupils develop socially, morally and spiritually. Although they have many opportunities to respond creatively, through music, art, dance, and drama, they have less opportunity to learn about other faiths and people from different cultures. As a result, this limits their cultural development.
 - The long-serving headteacher is highly regarded by parents, pupils and staff at the school. He ensures that parents receive regular information about what is happening at the school, as well as celebrating the success of individual pupils, classes and the school as a whole. Staff are fully supportive of his vision for the school and there is a determination and capacity to improve further.
 - The local authority has provided good support to the school since the last inspection. They
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arranged for the school to work with a local leader of education, and this has helped the school to secure improvements in teaching, achievement and behaviour.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the school well. Governors are well informed about the school's performance, both historically and currently, and about the quality of teaching. This enables them to challenge senior leaders about the rates of progress of groups of pupils and the standards which they reach. In particular, governors spoke about how they keep a close eye on the progress of those for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding. The governing body checks on the rates of improvement through regular visits to the school. These visits do not have as much impact as they could because governors are not able to check on whether the school is on track to meet its targets. This is because the school's plans for improvement do not have sharp criteria against which to measure success. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.
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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	122592
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	399709

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Watson
Headteacher	Clive Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2012
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