

Hawthorn Community Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7HT

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors did not tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection promptly. This has resulted in a decline in the quality of teaching, leadership and standards.
- Until recently, the governing body has not effectively held leaders to account. Governors have been too willing to accept things at face value without questioning leaders in depth to assure themselves that the school is doing well.
- Subject leadership is weak. Leaders do not check the progress that pupils make across all subjects or focus on improving teaching in their subject.
- Although leaders allocate additional funding for primary sport or for disadvantaged pupils appropriately, they do not check closely the difference that the funding is making to pupils' achievements.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Too often, they do not step in swiftly to deal with misconceptions or build systematically on pupils' knowledge. This slows the progress pupils can make.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with opportunities to write at length so they can practise their spelling, punctuation and presentation skills.
- Not all teaching assistants use questions effectively to deepen pupils' understanding.
- The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is too low. This impedes the progress they make.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants are fully implementing the school's newly revised policies and its approaches to teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are providing strong leadership. They have begun to make important improvements to teaching, provision and outcomes over recent months.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development and welfare very well. Pupils behave very well. They are polite, keen learners.
- In some classes, pupils learn well because of teachers' clear explanations, high expectations and swift interventions that challenge pupils to a higher level of understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they can effectively improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility
 - analysing fully the impact of pupil premium funding, so that it can be used more effectively to accelerate the progress of the pupils it supports
 - using the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding more effectively to improve the quality of teaching of PE and increase pupils' participation in sports
 - implementing the recommendations of the recent review of governance to ensure that governance is of the highest quality
 - working more effectively with the relevant parents to improve pupils' rates of attendance
 - ensuring that all teachers and teaching assistants consistently apply the new policies and procedures in full.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including in the early years, to accelerate pupils' progress, by ensuring that:
 - teaching assistants develop their skills so that they clearly explain concepts and use questions effectively to improve pupils' understanding
 - teachers make full use of assessments to plan the next steps in learning so that pupils of all abilities can excel
 - teachers step in swiftly when pupils, of all abilities, are ready to learn something more difficult
 - teachers and teaching assistants have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, including in the presentation of their work
 - teachers provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to write at length so that they can secure the skills of spelling and punctuation they learn in their English lessons
 - teachers improve the clarity and precision of the teaching of mathematics so that they and teaching assistants tackle misconceptions and systematically build up pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding
 - leaders make effective use of the good practice to be found in some classes to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and the governing body were slow to respond to the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. They did not ensure that the school continued to improve. As a result, the effectiveness of leadership, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement declined. Since taking up her current post, the headteacher has taken hold of the situation and is now identifying clearly what improvements are needed and is taking action to bring them about.
- The leadership of subjects is weak. Subject leaders do not ensure that the training they provide to improve the quality of teaching is fully implemented by staff. Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics check at the end of the school year that teachers have covered the full curriculum content. They do not check the progress that pupils have made, however.
- Following the last inspection, leaders introduced a system to track the progress pupils make. Leaders have only been making effective use of this system over the past year. The headteacher now holds regular meetings with teachers to check pupils' progress. There are signs that pupils are beginning to make better progress but, as this is still a relatively new approach, the changes to teaching are not yet being consistently enough applied to have their full impact on pupils' progress.
- The government's funding for primary PE and sport is allocated to provide additional sporting opportunities for pupils and training for teachers. The school has recently been awarded the accolade of 'Kettering Sports School of the Year'. Leaders have not looked closely enough, however, at how successful the funding has been. They do not know with accuracy, for example, if the funding has improved pupils' participation in particular sports.
- The headteacher had not checked carefully enough that the school's use of pupil premium funding made a difference for the pupils who it supports, including those who are most able. The local authority, in agreement with the headteacher, commissioned a review into the school's use of this additional funding, which also identified this weakness. The leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who is also the inclusion leader, took up her post in January 2017. She acted immediately on the recommendations from this review and has allocated the funding more precisely. She is well placed to monitor the impact of this funding more sharply.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers well to hold them to account for pupils' progress. She uses the process well to provide additional support for teachers to improve their performance. The governing body ensures that the headteacher's performance management is a robust process.
- The headteacher has ensured that, since September 2015, the curriculum has been broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the national curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Teachers provide a range of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning, such as a visit to Wicksteed Park or the National Space Centre.
- Until recently, the headteacher has ensured that pupils who have special educational

needs and/or disabilities have received the support they needed. The new leader with responsibility for these pupils, in the short time she has been in post, has formed an accurate view of the provision for these pupils and what needs to be done to improve the support they receive and the progress they make.

- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Leaders ensure that the school's values are visible on displays around school and promoted well among pupils. Leaders ensure that school assemblies focus on a range of different values. Pupils visit the theatre and can learn to play a musical instrument.
- Over the past 18 months, the headteacher, ably supported by the highly effective deputy headteacher, has provided strong leadership. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have identified priorities for improvement. The headteacher has commissioned several external reviews to provide her with secure information from which to base the improvements she has begun to make. There are clear signs that her passionate and committed approach is beginning to have an impact on the quality of education and pupils are making faster progress.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, the governing body has not held leaders sufficiently to account. The governors have been too willing to accept the information leaders have provided without robust challenge to assure themselves of its accuracy.
- A recent review of governance and the appointment of a new chair of the governing body have reinvigorated the school's approach to governance. Several new governors have been appointed, bringing additional skills to the governing body.
- Governors have received useful training, for example in understanding assessment information, so that they have a better understanding of the school's provision and its performance. They have sharpened the focus of their meetings and ensured that their monitoring of the work of the school is closely linked to the priorities on the development plan. Consequently, they now have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and a better understanding of their own strategic role.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They acknowledge that the ways they have held all leaders to account have not been as sharply focused as they could have been. They are determined to continue to act on the advice from the recent review of governance to ensure that they are a highly effective governing body.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher commissioned a review of safeguarding in October 2016. She acted swiftly on the actions that were suggested, to ensure that safeguarding is of the highest quality.
- The headteacher works very closely with the school's business manager to ensure that the appropriate vetting checks take place before new staff or volunteers begin working at the school. As they arrive, visitors receive information to help them keep pupils and themselves safe, such as information about fire safety.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff receive up-to-date training in child protection

procedures and first aid. She reminds staff about safeguarding matters at meetings throughout the school year. Staff confidently told inspectors that they know how to raise a concern about a child's welfare, should one arise.

- The headteacher's record-keeping is orderly and secure. She works closely with parents and external agencies to provide support for families and children. She is tenacious and follows up concerns rigorously.
- Pupils and parents who spoke with inspectors all agreed that pupils are safe in school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when they use modern technology or when they cross the road. Pupils were confident that, if they had any worries, they could speak to a trusted adult in school who would take appropriate action to keep them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much throughout the school. Teachers do not reliably use assessment information to plan learning that is well matched to pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Sometimes, they do not provide pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging. This leads to pupils, particularly those who are most able, completing work that is too easy for them. This slows the progress that pupils make from their different starting points.
- Not all teachers step in successfully to address misconceptions or move pupils' learning to a higher level when they are ready. Some teachers do not explain new concepts clearly or do not encourage pupils to explain their answers. This hinders pupils from achieving the highest standards of which they may be capable.
- Too often teaching assistants do not use well-considered questions or clear explanations when they work with pupils. This means they are not deepening pupils' understanding effectively.
- Pupils' books, across a range of subjects, show that too often teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. In several classes, teachers accept work that is not well presented. Teachers do not ensure that pupils write at length, practising the spelling and punctuation skills they have learned in English lessons.
- In response to a recent parental questionnaire, the headteacher has changed the school's policy on providing homework for pupils. Some teachers have embraced the revised approach immediately, but a few have not implemented the new policy in full. Consequently, homework is not consistently well used across the school to promote learning.
- Some stronger teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain new information clearly to pupils. They take every opportunity to promote pupils' understanding across subjects. For example, during a guided reading session, the text referred to Tibet. The teacher grasped this opportunity and used a globe to show pupils where the country was.
- Some effective teachers move pupils on to the next level of understanding at every opportunity. They successfully develop pupils' vocabulary by intervening in pupils' discussions and making effective use of well-shaped questions. When this happens,

learning is interesting and captivating for pupils. This leads to a high level of engagement among pupils and rapid progress.

- Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are beginning to bear fruit. Some highly effective teaching of this skill throughout the school engages pupils well in lively sessions. In the best examples, teachers and teaching assistants build on pupils' previous knowledge and ensure that pupils enunciate the sounds correctly. Pupils use the letter sounds they have learned to help them spell, when they are writing, or to work out unfamiliar words when they are reading. Leaders recognise that the new approach to teaching phonics is not yet consistently strong and more training is needed, but early indications show that pupils are making faster progress in phonics this year.
- Leaders have revised the school's approach to teaching reading. Pupils can choose from a selection of books that are at the right level for them. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to reading. The library has been refurbished. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy using the library now, describing it as 'much more inviting'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils cooperate sensibly in class and play together happily on the playground.
- Pupils are confident and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy taking responsibility for tasks around school, such as representing their classmates on the school council. The school council meets weekly and organises successful fundraising events for pupils, such as dressing up for World Book Day.
- Pupils are proud to represent their school. During the inspection, for example, a group of pupils attended a poetry reading at the Kettering Eisteddfod.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that bullying and name-calling were very rare. They were confident that, if it did happen, an adult would deal with it swiftly and successfully.
- Pupils learn about a range of world religions and cultures. They spoke respectfully about people whose beliefs or lifestyles may be different to their own.
- While most pupils demonstrate a pride in their work, teachers do not ensure that all pupils consistently present their work to the best of their ability.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves very well in class and around the school. Pupils demonstrate their good manners in their interactions with adults and their peers. The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn.
- During playtime and lunchtime, pupils play sensibly together, well supervised by the adults. At the end of their break, pupils respond quickly and without fuss, lining up

promptly to return to their lessons.

- In lessons, pupils are generally attentive and keen to answer the teachers' questions. They are quick to get on with their work and do well, showing positive attitudes to learning. Pupils occasionally drift off task when teachers do not provide them with sufficiently challenging work.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average overall, demonstrating that they enjoy coming to school. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. The headteacher has identified a few pupils whose attendance is of particular concern. She works hard to engage with parents and, if necessary, external agencies to remedy this situation. However, the attendance of a few pupils remains stubbornly low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, the progress pupils made by the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with that seen nationally in writing and mathematics, but fell below the national average in reading.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016 compared favourably with that of other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics, but not favourably in reading.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Year 2 was broadly in line with that seen nationally in each of reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils achieved the greater depth of understanding, however, in each of these subjects. For these pupils, too many made slow progress from their starting points.
- The school's assessment information and a scrutiny of pupils' books show that current pupils are making stronger progress from their starting points this year. While improvements can be seen, pupils' progress varies throughout the school. It is not consistently strong in all year groups and across all subjects.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check in Year 1 was lower than that seen nationally. The recently introduced approach to teaching phonics is already showing clear signs of accelerating pupils' progress in this area.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made strong progress in comparison to their peers in 2016, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 who achieved the expected standard in writing and in mathematics were above the respective national averages.
- Similarly, in 2016, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 who achieved the expected standard in science and in spelling, punctuation and grammar were above the respective national averages.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level of understanding by the end of Year 6 in all of reading, writing and mathematics combined was slightly higher than that seen nationally.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years is not consistently good. Teachers do not use assessment well enough to plan learning that builds upon what children can already understand and do. Occasionally, teachers provide learning activities that are too difficult or too easy for children.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not reliably make sure that children understand what they have to do to be successful. For example, children sometimes undertake mathematical tasks without having the depth of understanding that is required. When this happens, children complete tasks by trial and error, but the intention underpinning the learning is missed.
- Occasionally, the most able children complete simple tasks quickly and easily without intervention from an adult to promote a greater depth of understanding or to encourage them to try something more difficult.
- Teachers and teaching assistants encourage children to try things for themselves, reassuring them gently. For example, during an activity to learn about subtraction, children had to knock over empty plastic bottles, by throwing bean bags. The adult thoughtfully moved the target nearer for a child so that she could successfully achieve this task.
- Teachers have established clear routines for children. Children join in with the activities available to them confidently, indicating that they feel secure in the school environment.
- The leader for the early years provision, who is the deputy headteacher, has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and aspects she would like to improve. For example, she has successfully supported the staff in developing the outdoor environment to promote wider aspects of learning for the children.
- The leader has forged close links with the nearby play school and other local pre-school providers. She and the Reception class staff visit these settings to get to know the children before they join the school. The leader invites parents to meetings to share useful information before their children start school. Children can visit the school on several occasions before they formally start full time. The leader and the staff team ensure that transition into school life is successful for the children so they all get off to a successful start.
- At the end of 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year rose markedly and was above the national average, indicating that more children were well prepared to start in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	121835
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10023290

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Brookes
Headteacher	Julie Clubley
Telephone number	01536 512204
Website	www.hawthornprimarykettering.co.uk
Email address	head@hawthorn.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The current headteacher started her tenure in July 2015.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed two assemblies and pupils' behaviour in the dining hall and around school at lunchtime. An inspector also visited the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, English leader, family support worker, leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and two newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors also held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during their breaktimes and in class. They also held a more formal discussion with two groups of pupils and heard two pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a sample of pupils' books from across the school jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- An inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and considered the 64 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to online surveys for staff or pupils.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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