

Queen Mary Avenue Infant School

Queen Mary Avenue, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire DN35 7SY

Inspection dates

10–11 May 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The new headteacher has worked tirelessly to bring about improvements. However, the impact of her actions is not evident yet.
- Until recently, governors have not held leaders to account sufficiently for pupils' learning.
- The work of middle leaders is not having enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- Improvements in teaching have been too recent to fully address the gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, the standards that pupils are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics remain low.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, especially for the most able pupils.
- The quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is too variable.
- In some classes, pupils have too few opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills in different subjects.
- The work that pupils do is sometimes poorly presented and untidy.
- In their writing, pupils are often making errors in basic punctuation and are spelling simple everyday words incorrectly.
- In mathematics, pupils are not using their arithmetic skills to solve problems regularly enough.
- Attendance is below the national average and levels of persistent absence are high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Children in the early years do not make good progress from their starting points.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is thoroughly committed to bringing about improvements in the school.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They show respect to adults and their peers.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and parents are confident that their children are well looked after.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils in all classes make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - expectations are high for all pupils, especially the most able, by giving them work that is sufficiently challenging
 - in mathematics, there is more investigative, problem-solving work for pupils
 - in writing, pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills in subjects such as science, history and geography
 - pupils use basic punctuation accurately in their writing and spell simple everyday words correctly
 - pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work improves
 - teaching in the early years is carefully focused on children's learning needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing middle leaders' roles in improving the school
 - ensuring that in all classes subjects other than English and mathematics are taught in sufficient depth
 - improving attendance so that pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, do not miss out on their learning.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since taking up her post during November 2015, the headteacher has had to steer the school through a period of instability over a short period of time. She is only now in a position to address fully the inconsistencies in some teaching and improve the progress pupils make.
- The headteacher has had to take on single-handedly various roles in the school. She has a clear vision for the school and is backed by a supportive governing body. However, numerous changes in staffing since the last inspection have delayed improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are taking some action to bring about improvements but their roles have not been developed fully and the impact of their work is not yet evident. As a result, the standards that pupils achieve remain too low.
- School leaders have an overview of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the progress these pupils make is not closely monitored to ensure that funding is used to good effect.
- Leaders' actions to improve attendance have had some impact and overall attendance is improving. However, leaders are aware that this improvement is not rapid enough, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum is too inconsistent across the school. Although all national curriculum subjects are addressed, the depth of which some subjects are taught, such as science, history and geography, is too variable.
- Some curriculum topics are enhanced by school visits. For example, during the topic 'Under the sea', pupils visited a public aquarium. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as music and art.
- Since the last inspection, an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has been undertaken and leaders have developed plans to support disadvantaged pupils. Evidence collected during the inspection suggests that support for disadvantaged pupils is having some impact, and the progress they are currently making, although limited, is showing some improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Pupils study different religions and take part in a range of activities, such as Chinese New Year and an African theme day. Assemblies promote acceptance of differences and the school's values, which include courage, respect, responsibility and self-confidence, underpin the work of the school. As a result, pupils are developing a growing appreciation of British values.
- Leaders have developed robust systems for managing teachers' performance and checking the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers now have clear targets that relate to school improvement and leaders provide training to support teachers' development.

- Effective use is made of the primary school physical education and sport funding. It provides after-school sports clubs, such as Zumba classes where parents can participate alongside their children. Specialist coaches are employed to teach pupils and to improve teaching skills. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are adopting healthier lifestyles.
- The headteacher is receiving valuable and effective support from Humberston Church of England Primary School, a designated national support school.

Governance

- Over time, the governing body has not held leaders to account sufficiently for pupils' learning and outcomes. Governors had an inaccurate view of the school's work and, until the appointment of the current headteacher, had an ill-informed understanding of teaching and learning.
- Over the last few months, governors have given strong support to the headteacher during a very turbulent period. Since her appointment, the headteacher has had to deal with a wide range of issues affecting the running of the school. Governors have been highly supportive and have ensured that the new headteacher has received effective support and guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's records of checking and vetting staff are thorough and compliant. Systems for recording concerns with the designated person for safeguarding are effective. Responses and referrals to other agencies are prompt and followed up.
- There is a strong culture for safeguarding in the school and staff understand the school's systems for reporting concerns. Leaders work well with parents and other agencies to ensure that children and families are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has been too variable across the school and expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low. As a result, too few pupils make good progress to meet the standards expected of them.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Teaching does not consistently build on what these pupils can do, know and understand.
- Too often, pupils, especially the most able, are not encouraged to use interesting and adventurous vocabulary to enliven their written work. Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills in other subjects.
- Over recent weeks, there has been an emphasis on improving pupils' skills in arithmetic and basic calculation work. However, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to problem-solving activities and investigation work are not consistent and, at times, insufficiently demanding.

- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is too infrequent in a minority of classes. Consequently, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and understanding in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- In some classes, pupils do not take pride in their work and teachers do not consistently challenge them to improve their presentation.
- The quality of teaching has improved during the past term, due to the school becoming more stable and prudent appointments being made. Better teaching is plugging gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, these improvements are not yet fully established in all classes and subjects, and some variations remain.
- As a result of effective professional development, the teaching of phonics is improving. This has led to a raising of standards for most pupils.
- There are positive relationships in classes between adults and pupils. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who need additional help or are struggling with their work.
- School leaders have been proactive in addressing the low outcomes of some boys when they entered key stage 1. Targeted intervention has resulted in a noticeable improvement in their progress and a good proportion of these pupils have caught up with their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents feel their children are well cared for. Pupils and parents say that teachers are approachable and deal with any worries or concerns they may have.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They show a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Pupils have positive relationships with staff and each other. They cooperate well together in lessons to share ideas. The school is harmonious and inclusive.
- The school's breakfast club provides a caring and safe environment for the pupils who attend.
- There is a range of after-school clubs, which allow pupils to engage in additional activities. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the film club, which several of them attend, and there are numerous opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities and a healthy lifestyle club after school. Recently, staff organised a sleepover for pupils at the school with the aim of developing independence and life skills such as cooking.
- A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that not all pupils take a pride in their work. Although pupils' work in most books is neatly presented, in several books the quality of handwriting and overall presentation lacks care and attention.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' conduct around the school is good and the school is an orderly environment. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and they show mostly good attitudes to learning. Off-task behaviour is rare and only in a minority of classes did inspectors observe a small number of pupils lose interest in what they were learning.
- Parents have a positive view of behaviour and the way the school helps pupils to behave appropriately. Parents whom inspectors spoke to agreed that school leaders and staff deal well with any rare incidents of bullying that happen.
- Despite concerted efforts by school leaders to improve attendance, it remains below average, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Overall, attendance for pupils currently in the school is improving. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils who regularly miss school remains high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historical weaknesses in teaching have led to underachievement at the end of key stage 1. Since the last inspection, attainment and pupils' progress have remained below average for reading, writing and mathematics. The legacy of underachievement can still be seen and the rate of current pupils' progress, while improving, remains too uneven, especially for those pupils who are most able. Consequently, a substantial proportion of pupils are not prepared for their next stage of learning.
- After a period of instability, teaching staff are now more established and school leaders are taking effective action to improve pupils' achievement. There are some signs that this is having a positive impact. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve need to be higher if they are to make more rapid progress and catch up on lost learning.
- Standards in writing are low. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that too frequently, pupils, especially the most able, are using simple description and sentence structures in their writing. Basic punctuation errors and the misspelling of simple everyday words are also evident in some pupils' work.
- The rates of progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently in the school are uneven. Although evidence collected during the inspection shows that several of these pupils make good progress, some make very little.
- As they develop their arithmetic skills in mathematics, pupils are not consistently using what they have learned to solve appropriate and challenging problems, or to think and reason mathematically. This slows progress, especially for most-able pupils.
- In some classes, standards in subjects other than English and mathematics are low because they are not taught consistently well or in sufficient depth. Teachers are also missing opportunities to improve standards in writing because pupils are not developing and improving their writing skills in other subjects often enough.
- Current progress for disadvantaged pupils, including those disadvantaged pupils who are most able, is variable. However, inspection evidence suggests that progress for these pupils currently in the school is improving because of the additional support they receive.

- Pupils enjoy reading and many of them show appropriate fluency and comprehension for their age and ability. The progress current pupils make in phonics is improving because teachers are delivering more effective lessons following the quality professional development teachers have recently received.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the Nursery Year with knowledge and skills that are below those that are typical for their age and stage of development. During their time in the early years, they make typical progress. The proportion achieving a good level of development is below that found nationally. This means that a substantial number of children are not ready for Year 1.
- Over time, leadership and management in the early years require improvement because they have not ensured consistently good teaching across the provision. As a result, children's progress has not been good, especially for those children who are most able. School leaders have well thought out and immediate plans to improve the leadership of the early years, but they have yet to be implemented fully.
- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable. More recently, teaching has improved. Both Nursery and Reception staff are now working closer together to plan good learning activities for children, and more accurate procedures to assess children's progress are being developed. As a result, teaching has improved but is too soon to assess its impact.
- Children typically understand classroom routines well. They move swiftly from one activity to another, and they are able to learn and play independently and with some resilience and concentration. Just occasionally, a small minority of children lose focus with adult-led learning activities.
- Indoor activities offer stimulating and well-planned opportunities to entice and engage children, particularly activities that develop their creative skills. The outdoor learning environment provides several activities that cover a range of areas for development. For example, physical development and an understanding of the world are enhanced through the planting areas and the mud kitchen.
- Children are kept safe and their welfare, health and well-being are given high priority. The site is secure and effective policies and procedures make sure that children are kept safe from harm.
- Children's behaviour and personal development and welfare are good. They respond well to adults and mix together happily. They are good at sharing resources with each other and take turns.
- Historical evidence shows that girls make more rapid progress and achieve higher outcomes than boys. This is compounded by boys' starting points being lower than girls, particularly in communication and language, literacy and mathematics. School leaders and early years staff are addressing this, for example by choosing books that appeal to boys and rotating learning activities during free flow so that boys remain on task.

- Relationships with parents are strong. Staff meet with parents regularly to discuss their children's progress. At the start of each morning, parents are encouraged to stay for a while and join in with the activities their children are doing.
- School leaders are aware of the noticeably low outcomes for disadvantaged children when compared with the outcomes of other children nationally. There is now a sharper focus on the assessment of children's progress, including those children who are disadvantaged, so that intervention can be targeted more precisely. Inspection evidence indicates that disadvantaged children are making better progress than previously, as a result.

School details

Unique reference number	117733
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019731

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Date
Headteacher	Kerry Lakin
Telephone number	01472 230 230
Website	www.queenmaryinfants.org.uk
Email address	office@qma.nelcmail.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than that found nationally.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils each morning.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average.
- There have been numerous changes in staffing since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed during November 2015.

- Children attend the Nursery part time.
- The school has had formal support from Humberston Church of England Primary School, a designated national support school. This support was brokered through the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes in the school. Several were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work from all classes was scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils selected to read were from both year groups in key stage 1.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, two members of the governing body and the headteacher of the national support school.
- Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school outside lessons, including on the playgrounds during breaks and in the dining hall.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's view of its own performance, school improvement plans, and information on attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 free-text opinions from parents and the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also took account of the five online questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Alan Chaffey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Soutar	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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