

Riverside Primary School and Early Years Unit

Ainsworth Drive, The Meadows, Nottingham, NG2 1FX

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. Pupils of all abilities do not achieve as well as they should. Their progress in reading and writing is too slow and shows little sign of improvement.
- Many older pupils do not have the confidence and skills in reading to work out new words. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are weak across the school.
- Boys do not do as well as the girls. The school has not done enough to identify and address the gaps in pupils' skills.
- Too much of the teaching is inadequate. Teachers do not use assessment information to set work that challenges pupils. In some lessons, staff do not ensure all pupils understand what they are expected to do. At times, tasks set for boys in reading and writing do not hold their interest.
- Behaviour requires improvement because too many pupils arrive late for lessons and pupils' interest in learning sometimes lapses.
- The checks that leaders carry out on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous in identifying and addressing weaknesses. The school's view of its own effectiveness is inaccurate.
- Subject leaders and other managers do not have a strong grasp of their roles. This limits their ability to bring about improvement.
- The outdoor areas for the youngest children are not stimulating enough to encourage high-quality learning.
- Governors do not have a clear enough understanding of what data tell them about pupils' performance. They have not developed their key role in providing constructive challenge for leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has an accurate understanding of what makes teaching good and what has to be improved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 14 lessons and two shorter phonics activities, where children learned more about letters and the sounds they make. Some of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, the special educational needs coordinator and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. A discussion with a representative of the local authority took place over the telephone.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), but inspectors spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and heard some pupils read. They also looked at documents including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- A smaller percentage of pupils than average come from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Approximately 30% of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is more than double the national average. In this school, it provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is a little above average. The percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their primary school education is higher than average.
- A very small number of pupils with autism spectrum disorders are taught in a 'focus' group, which is soon to close; because of the very small numbers these pupils are not referred to within the report to avoid identifying individuals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is in a period of significant staff turbulence. Currently, only three of the ten classes are taught by permanent, full-time staff who have been in the school for more than four weeks. This term, an acting headteacher has taken on the role from within the staff team, as have two acting deputy headteachers. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader, special educational needs coordinator and safeguarding leader have all been recently appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good by:
 - eliminating inadequate teaching
 - making full use of assessment information to provide work that is achievable but challenging for different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that pupils clearly understand what they have to do in all activities
 - checking that tasks interest boys as well as girls, and motivate them to produce their best work.
- Accelerate the progress pupils make and raise standards by:
 - checking that all groups of pupils, and particularly the boys, are making good progress
 - ensuring that pupils know how to work out unfamiliar words and practise reading regularly to continue to improve their skills
 - enabling pupils to develop a secure understanding of how to spell accurately and how to write at greater length and in more depth.

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that leaders’ evaluations of strengths and weaknesses take full account of the range of information about standards and the progress made by different groups
 - developing the role of subject and other leaders in identifying and tackling areas for further improvement
 - providing stimulating outdoor areas for the youngest children
 - devising ways to ensure that pupils arrive promptly to school and are ready to start their lessons on time.

Ofsted has made recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, standards and progress have fallen, especially in Key Stage 2. Progress is uneven from class to class and is especially weak in Years 3 and 4. Across the school, progress in reading and writing is inadequate; progress in mathematics is a little better but still requires improvement.
- Children start in the Nursery or Reception groups with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, especially in their ability to communicate with others. They settle happily, but when they join Key Stage 1 their skills are still below average.
- There are wide variations in pupils' progress from class to class.
- Pupils' speaking skills across the school are often low and this has an adverse impact on their progress in all subjects. In 2013, standards in writing at the end of Year 6 were very low and had declined from previous years. Of particular concern was that boys' performance was well below that of girls, especially in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is still largely the case. Many pupils are not able to produce longer pieces of writing in sufficient depth and detail. For example, the work in Year 3 shows that plans for story writing are very limited, even for the more-able pupils.
- The school has put an emphasis recently on developing children's early understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Last year, children in Year 1 did better than average in checks of their phonic skills. This has not been the case for older pupils, who have not had the same early experiences. Therefore, their skills in working out unfamiliar words are insecure. Several boys said they do not like reading and read little at home.
- Standards and progress in mathematics have generally been better than in English. Many pupils say their favourite subject is mathematics because it is interesting. Nevertheless, progress still requires improvement to ensure that pupils can use the skills they have to solve problems speedily.
- The school's own checks show that pupils' progress is uneven as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are often making good progress. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils improved their writing about an imaginary creature. However, because of the inconsistencies in teaching over time, there are still significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils eligible for additional support from the pupil premium sometimes make faster progress than other groups, and attainment gaps are closing. In 2013, these pupils were about a year behind their classmates in reading, a little closer in writing, and about a term ahead in mathematics. These pupils sometimes receive additional support from teachers or teaching assistants, but there has been no detailed check of the effectiveness and impact of such additional support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress that is no better than that of their classmates. The support provided to them helps them to be included in all lessons and feel confident to learn. They are, however, still underachieving because of general weaknesses in teaching over time.

- Pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make similar overall progress to other pupils.
- More-able pupils make inadequate progress and few reach the higher levels in their work. This was shown in Year 2 last year, where the proportion reaching above the expected level was significantly lower than seen nationally in reading. In Year 6, fewer boys reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics than nationally, and no boys reached the higher levels in writing.
- Pupils who joined the school later than the usual starting point are making good progress in some year groups, but inconsistency in the quality of teaching has the same adverse effect on their progress as for pupils who have been at the school from the start.
- The school is using the new primary sports funding to extend the range and quality of activities provided for pupils. As yet, there have been few checks of the impact this is having on pupils' physical development, their understanding of healthy lifestyles, or their achievement.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The school has several temporary teachers, and senior leaders note the problems they have had recruiting staff. However, pupils' workbooks and school data show that weak teaching is not a recent issue; it has been evident for a long time. Teaching is inadequate because it has not dealt with gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers do not demonstrate a good understanding of the steps needed to move pupils on in their work.
- Teachers do not use the checks on recent work well enough to help pupils improve. This is seen particularly in work in Years 3 and 4, where tasks are clearly too hard for many less-able pupils and too easy for some more-able ones.
- There is too much inadequate teaching. For example, in Year 1, pupils made inadequate progress when finding rhyming words. This was because several pupils simply copied the ideas and actions of adults, and were given undemanding worksheets that did little to move their learning forward.
- Some staff, especially in Year 6, use questions well; for example, to seek alternatives to the words used in descriptive writing by a well-known author. Questions were also used well in Year 2 to encourage pupils to think of how to improve their work. In other lessons, staff accept simple answers from pupils, who could do better, and do not use follow-up questions to demand more of them.
- Teachers' explanations to pupils about what they have to do are sometimes unclear and confusing. For example, in Year 3 pupils became confused about using scales for measures of capacity and said, 'We have not been told how to do these, so we can't do it.'
- The effectiveness of the marking in pupils' books is very variable and mirrors the inconsistency of the teaching. Some identifies clearly what the pupils have done well and where they can improve their work. In other books, marking is cursory and fails to guide pupils clearly on what they need to do next. Some books show pupils the targets they are expected to achieve, while others do not.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, planning is insufficiently clear for temporary staff to know how to move children's learning forward. There is some inadequate practice. The limited outdoor

resources are not used well enough for the youngest children when working outside, resulting in some simply running around in an unfocused manner. An area of strength is the good knowledge that Early Years Foundation Stage staff have in teaching the children about letters and the sounds they make.

- Teaching assistants provide a very mixed quality of support to pupils. Some staff, working with the youngest children, provide very good help and guidance, including in phonics, while others provide little effective help. This is also seen with older pupils. Pupils supported through pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those speaking English as an additional language, all receive variable support that is not always effective in helping them to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils lose interest in lessons and cannot see much purpose in what they are doing. Occasionally, pupils offer little to discussions because they are bored. Where teaching is more engaging, especially in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attitudes are more positive and they respond enthusiastically.
- The work in pupils' books show that many try hard with their work and present this neatly and tidily. In a few classes, work is untidy, often crossed out or of low quality; spelling is poor, as is the attention given to grammar and punctuation.
- Behaviour is not inadequate because most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, especially when they are well taught. Most behave well in and around school and get on happily together. This is seen in the dining hall, when boys and girls chat happily to each other with minimal adult supervision.
- Pupils are mostly friendly and polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. Nearly all behave well when moving around school and, during current building work, when playing on the small playground space available. Most pupils enjoy school, though a few older boys say they do not like reading and rarely do this out of school. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Attendance has improved and is in line with national averages. The small numbers of persistent absentees attend more regularly following the introduction of recent sanctions. A concern, though, is the very large number of pupils who arrive a little after the start of the school day and are not ready for their first lesson. For example, inspectors observed 24 pupils arriving late. Staff do not always record these late arrivals and the school has not taken strong enough action to address such issues.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Those parents who offered a view think their children are kept safe and have no major concerns.
- Pupils can explain what bullying is and the types of bullying that could occur, including cyber-bullying. Pupils indicate they feel safe and are confident that, if they have any concerns, the staff would take these seriously. Pupils say there is no tension between groups from different backgrounds and that one of the things they like most about school is making friends.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The school is in a period of considerable staff change, with all senior and subject leaders and several class teachers in temporary roles pending the appointment of new staff. Of particular

concern is that leaders judge the current quality of education as good in all areas: this is far from accurate and is due to inadequate monitoring procedures. The school does not have the capacity to improve without additional support.

- The checks made of data, the work in pupils' books and of the quality of teaching all indicate that senior leaders have not been rigorous enough in recognising inadequate practice and driving improvement. The school has not made sufficient progress in tackling areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, such as in writing.
- Leaders responsible for different key stages, subjects and the special educational needs coordinator, do not have a clear grasp of strengths or what to improve in their areas of responsibility. This is because staff do not carry out checks on the work in pupils' books, or on teaching, rigorously enough to make sure that suggestions for improvement have been acted upon.
- There are some positives in the current leadership. The acting headteacher has a good understanding of what makes teaching effective and, in joint lesson observations, accurately identifies what works well and areas for further improvement. In this period of staff turbulence, and during major building work, she is providing a calm steer to day-to-day activities. The newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader also has a secure understanding of the role and many well-considered plans to improve the learning environment for the children.
- The school has an appropriate cycle to check teachers' performance. This is linked to pay rises. However, this is not strongly based on the standards achieved, and some staff are rewarded with additional payments when there is limited evidence of their impact in key areas. Training needs are identified but training activities have had little impact on raising standards, especially for the boys. Because of these weaknesses, newly qualified teachers may not currently be appointed.
- Pupils like the topics that they work on. There are some enrichment activities, including the work of specialist staff to teach music that results, for example, in very high-quality drumming and singing work with the older pupils. Such activities, alongside those in assemblies and lessons, contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the school does not always ensure that boys are sufficiently interested in their work to try their best.
- Funding for the pupil premium has been spent on additional staffing to provide individual and small-group support for pupils. Similarly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and also pupils learning English as an additional language, are all supported to some degree. The school is fully committed to the principle of equality of opportunity but does not measure the effectiveness of such initiatives to identify what impact they are having on how well particular groups of pupils are doing.
- The school uses sports funding to employ a sports coach who works in school one day a week. He currently works with four classes to improve their coordination and physical skills in a range of activities. While the school planned that staff would also attend such activities to improve their teaching skills, this is not consistently taken up and therefore is not making a significant impact overall.
- The local authority has provided too little support because it believed the school to be effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has been ineffective in securing better teaching and achievement. This is because governors do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's weaknesses. Governors

have not looked in sufficient depth at pupils' performance. As a result, they do not have a good enough understanding of data to identify concerns; for example, about boys' achievement. The governing body has not been successful in requiring leaders and managers to explain and account for variations in pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. The governors do not effectively evaluate the use of the pupil premium or primary sports funding. School improvement planning and self-evaluation procedures have not involved governors well enough. The links to school expenditure, for example through additional staff payments, are weak because they do not clearly relate to performance, either in the classroom or in key roles. Some governors visit the school regularly but these visits do not have a specific focus so give governors little insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have not always worked closely with the school and are therefore not in a strong enough position to develop their role in challenging leaders in a constructive manner. Nonetheless, governors ensure that the school meets national requirements for safeguarding the pupils.

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	134843
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	440647

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fred Manning
Acting headteacher	Linda Brook
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2011
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