

Ancaster CofE Primary School

Mercia Drive, Ancaster, Grantham, NG32 3QQ

Inspection dates 17–18 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The very large majority of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes.
- Standards for pupils currently on roll have improved markedly in the last two years.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and are often outstanding in Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are eligible for additional funding make good progress due to the support they receive and the special arrangements the school makes for them.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at break times. They say they feel very safe and that bullying is unusual, though they know what to do if it might occur.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are above the national average.
- The headteacher has had a highly positive impact on the effectiveness of learning throughout the school. Teachers are held to account but also given good guidance on how their teaching might be improved. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve rapidly, and both are better than they were at the time of the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, usually when tasks are not planned accurately enough to fully meet all pupils' learning needs.
- Subject leaders do not yet check closely enough on the amount of learning taking place in the subjects for which they have responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.
- He observed 10 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher, taught by five teachers. He also made short visits to classrooms and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings and conversations were held with four groups of pupils, members of staff including senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 19 written responses to the staff questionnaire from adults in the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including: data on pupils' progress; the school development plan; performance management documentation; records of meetings of the governing body; and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ancaster is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Currently, all classes except Reception class are taught in mixed-age groups. This arrangement varies from year to year, as class sizes vary when new pupils enter or leave the school.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at times other than the usual is well above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Pupils are educated on-site. There is no regular alternative off-site provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate achievement and raise standards in English and mathematics even higher by:
 - eradicating inconsistencies in teaching
 - ensuring that work is set for all pupils at levels which are neither too easy nor too hard.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that subject leaders take a more active role in improving their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in this school is good, irrespective of pupils' starting points. These can vary widely from year to year and even within each of the relatively small cohorts. In 2012, the proportion of pupils making expected progress and the proportion making more than expected progress in English and mathematics were high.
- Children get off to a very good start when they join Reception class. They quickly learn and adopt the school's motto: 'Be the very best you can be'.
- Despite arriving with a range of pre-school experiences, children settle quickly into their new learning environment. This is because of the effective work carried out by school staff with families before children enter the school. The good relationships children develop here provide a very good foundation for their good personal development as they move through the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are thoughtful and caring and listen carefully and politely to their teachers' guidance and to their fellow pupils' views. They hold strong views about equality and fairness because of the relentless focus the school places on these values. Their attitudes to learning are good, but they sometimes lose focus and attention when teaching is not matched closely enough to their learning needs.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above average in Year 6 in 2012, with these pupils being about two terms in advance of the national average in all areas.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is rising rapidly as the cumulative impact of high-quality teaching throughout Key Stage 1 and Reception class begins to be fully felt.
- The school's reliable and easy to understand tracking system shows that pupils are continuing to make better than expected progress in both English and mathematics throughout the school.
- Pupils sustain concentration particularly well when work is of a practical nature. They like to be doing things. They are always prepared to try something new, or to find something out for themselves. When the work is appropriately challenging, they can be trusted to work independently or in small groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. The successful attention given to improving these pupils' literacy and numeracy skills ensures that they achieve well across a range of subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's accurate tracking shows that teaching has been good for the last two years, helping many pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Teaching observed during the inspection was good. A significant proportion of the teaching seen was outstanding. A smaller proportion required improvement. None of the teaching observed was judged to be inadequate.

- Teaching is characterised by excellent relationships between adults and pupils, and the good use of praise and rewards to encourage and motivate. Consequently, lessons run smoothly and pupils learn well.
- Lessons often start with a fast-paced activity which grabs pupils' attention and sharpens up their thinking skills. For example, calculation games or the stimulating use of information and communication technology, reinforce earlier learning and prepare pupils for new work or activities to come
- Pupils' reading and speaking skills are developed well as teachers encourage them to research information, and to discuss and explain their thoughts and ideas to each other.
- The best lessons are typically a hive of activity, with pupils working independently at appropriately challenging practical tasks which require them to think things through for themselves. Pupils like this way of working, they listen closely to guidance given without answers and they make rapid gains in understanding.
- Teachers' specifically targeted planning combined with well-organised support usually ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers' planning lacks a little accuracy. The work set does not always fully engage all pupils in learning and some low-level inattention inevitably arises. Pupils do not then make as much progress as they might.
- Pupils are often encouraged to reflect on the quality of the work they have completed. In addition, teachers assess pupils' understanding effectively and adapt their guidance either to extend or reinforce learning. The marking of pupils' work, with comments written in easy-to-understand language, is regular and informative. It gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well. Because activities both indoors and outdoors always have a clear purpose or intention, they quickly learn to socialise, share and learn as they play together.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average, and has improved significantly year on year for the last four years. The proportion of persistent absentees has fallen equally quickly.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They work well in pairs and small groups, offering and accepting mutual support to ensure good learning. Occasionally, they get a little restless in lessons when work set is either too hard, or more usually, too easy.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have good awareness of how to keep themselves safe outside school, for example when using the internet, or from substance abuse.
- They have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including gender-based abuse, but they say that bullying in school must be rare because they have never been bullied at school.
- The school's records indicate good behaviour over time, with very few reported incidents of

racism and no exclusions in the past few years.

- Pupils say that the school's system of rewards and sanctions is always applied fairly.
- Pupils leave school as well-mannered young citizens well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management are good

- The aspirational and energetic headteacher has successfully created a sense of purpose among staff and governors. Their morale is high, and they have high expectations for the quality of their own performance and what they want pupils to achieve.
- A new leadership structure has recently been established. Some staff new to middle and senior positions are at an early stage of establishing their roles in challenging, supporting and developing the effectiveness of their colleagues.
- The school responded well to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, successfully implementing measures that have secured rising standards over the last two years. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved radically.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate because it is linked objectively to the achievement of pupils. Development planning is thorough, and progress towards challenging targets is reviewed termly.
- The good curriculum has a clear focus on improving pupils' basic skills, but does not overlook wider interests. For example, pupils' colourful and attractive artwork is displayed around the school to celebrate and motivate, while music, and particularly whole-school singing, bring joy, enthusiasm and teamwork.
- The curriculum is kept under yearly review because the pupil population changes. This prevents unnecessary repeats in subject matter.
- School leaders ensure through their rigorous tracking that all pupils have equal opportunities. Consequently, no group of pupils underachieves. Through the curriculum and regular whole-school assemblies, pupils are consistently taught to be tolerant of diversity, to be understanding of different perspectives, and never to allow discrimination.
- The local authority provides effective support for developing the skills of school leaders and improving the quality of teaching in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. They know how well pupils are progressing, what standards they are reaching, and the impact teaching has on these outcomes. They know how the school's annual performance management and appraisal procedures work, and know that only the most successful teachers are rewarded. They ensure good value for money, having moved the school from a deficit to surplus budget while overseeing improvement in the quality of learning throughout the school in the same time period. The additional funding the school receives for pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is spent well to support personal development and to give additional curriculum opportunities. In 2012, pupils eligible for the premium reached higher standards than non-eligible pupils. All statutory duties are met, and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are

robust and effective. However, the majority of the governors' workload is borne unevenly by a few very effective members.

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	120512
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	405934

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Hartley
Headteacher	Katie Good
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2010
Telephone number	01400 230871
Fax number	01400 230871
Email address	enquiries@ancaster.lincs.sch.uk

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