

The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold

School Lane, Northwold, Thetford, IP26 5NB

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Up to now, boys made too little progress in mathematics and the standards they reached were too low.
- Pupils' calculation skills have not been developed well until this year. As a result, there are gaps in the understanding of some pupils.
- Pupils' progress in different subjects and different year groups is inconsistent, because the quality of teaching across the school is not consistent.
- Work is not always set at the right level for pupils, mostly in Years 4 and 5.
- The effectiveness of marking and the use of pupil targets are inconsistent. These are not sufficiently helping pupils to improve their work or move to the next level in their learning.
- The presentation of pupils' work, especially in Years 4 and 5, limits pupils' progress.
- Teachers rely too much on the headteacher to check the progress of pupils in their class and there are not enough formal meetings to discuss pupils' progress.
- The school policy for teaching and learning is not detailed enough to provide a clear basis for improving weaker teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She accurately identified the main areas for improvement, and well-supported by the mathematics subject leader, governors and staff, has taken swift action to raise standards and increase rates of progress.
- Standards and rates of progress in mathematics are now beginning to improve.
- Teaching in the Reception year, Year 1 and Year 6 is good, and at times outstanding.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Pupils develop their skills through interesting activities in a range of subjects. These activities provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills.
- The school provides very good support for pupils with a range of particular needs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition the inspector made a number of shorter visits to other lessons in each class.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body and from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, data regarding pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring information on school performance, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector met parents informally at the start of the school day. She took into account a letter from one parent, the responses to a recent school survey and the 21 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although 8% are from families with Gypsy Roma/ traveller backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and forces children) is below average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, as well as those supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- The school does not use other places where pupils can learn away from school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has four classes, three of which are for pupils of mixed ages. All Year 6 pupils are in one, single-age class.
- The school has had four headteachers in the last five years. The current headteacher has been in post for two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013 improving the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring work is always set at the right level for pupils
 - ensuring calculation skills are developed effectively throughout the school
 - making sure that all teachers enable pupils to use their targets to help them make the next steps in their learning
 - making sure that marking always identifies successes in pupils' work and shows them how they can improve their work and making sure that pupils have time to make the suggested improvements
 - improving the presentation of pupils' work, including handwriting, punctuation and spelling.
- By June 2013 improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupil progress by:
 - increasing the level of accountability of teachers for their pupils' progress by holding half-termly meetings to check the progress made by pupils, based on teachers' analysis of progress information
 - revising the teaching and learning policy as a basis for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the school with varying levels of skills but overall these are typical of children nationally. Until recently, children in their Reception year made only expected progress, and entered Year 1 with average attainment. Now, provision for children in their Reception Year is enabling all children to make good progress, and some to make outstanding progress.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 was until 2012 as expected, with pupils reaching broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils are now beginning to make better progress, as shown by the proportion reaching the expected level in the Year 1 test for phonics (the sounds made by letters), which was well-above average.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 pupils gained average standards overall and in English, reflecting a remarkable improvement in progress in writing.
- Standards and progress in mathematics, although improved, remained low because boys did not make enough progress from the end of Key Stage 1.
- The progress made by pupils, including boys, through the school has improved but boys' progress is still inconsistent between year groups and subjects. Girls' progress is more consistent, and most make good progress. In all subjects progress is slower in Years 4 and 5.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make variable but mostly good progress, particularly in mathematics, due to one-to-one support by teachers and well-trained teaching assistants.
- Likewise pupils eligible for pupil premium and Gypsy Roma/traveller pupils make variable but now mostly good progress. The average points scores at the end of Year 6 confirm that the school is successfully narrowing the gap between standards reached by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school. It is weakest in Years 4 and 5. Children in other year groups benefit from better teaching and those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 gain from teaching which can be outstanding.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and pupils now use their knowledge of the sounds made by letters well when reading new, unknown words.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developed well in most classes through themes and topics, and pupils are interested in the 'real-life' situations that form a basis for their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics, especially of number work, is improving. Staff training, the development of the calculation policy, purchase of suitable equipment and better teaching are helping pupils to improve their understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A strong emphasis has been placed on giving pupils opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems and investigate challenges.

- In some classes pupils are given work that is either too easy or too hard, especially in mathematics.
- The pace of learning is often too slow, mostly in the Year 4 and 5 class, where time is not used to best effect.
- All pupils have targets, but these are only used effectively in Year 6. Here they are referred to in lessons and in marking, and pupils confirm that the targets are helping them to move to the next level in their learning.
- The effectiveness of marking is inconsistent. Where work is marked well, as in Year 6, pupils know how to improve their work. Too often work is not marked effectively and does not lead to improvement, and at times, work is not marked.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give good support and comment on pupils' work in most classes. Teachers' questioning is variable but mostly it develops pupils' thinking skills well.
- Pupils assess their work or that of their classmates. As targets and the use of criteria which let pupils know if their work is successful are not always well enough planned (except in Year 6), these assessments do not have enough impact on improving their work.
- The presentation of pupils' work is mostly acceptable but too little attention has been paid by most teachers to the need for pupils to produce neat well-formed handwriting with correct spelling and punctuation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and show a good level of respect and care for each other and for adults.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and say that this is rare in school and is dealt with effectively by adults.
- Careful attention is paid to ensuring pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils are interested in their lessons, are attentive and work well. Where lessons are stimulating and challenging, pupils are inspired and highly motivated.
- Teaching for children and pupils in the reception and Year 1 class makes sure that they are confident, independent learners. This is not followed up sufficiently as they move through the school, although independence is now being promoted by the headteacher and the mathematics subject leader.
- The school provides highly effective care for pupils, some of whom have a number of circumstances which could potentially cause significant barriers to their learning. Safeguarding is thorough and is a priority.
- Despite some persistent absence, which is largely unavoidable, attendance is above the national average, as it is strongly encouraged by the school.

- All pupils contribute to decision making in the school, through the 'family groups' and the school council.

The leadership and management are good

- Thorough checking of the rates of pupil progress, the quality of teaching and pupils' understanding of basic concepts by the headteacher and the mathematics subject leader has meant that the school has a thorough understanding of weaknesses and strengths in the school.
- Led by the headteacher, rapid action was taken to raise standards in English, and as a result, they improved from very low in 2011 to just above average in 2012.
- To raise standards in mathematics, the subject leader has undertaken training to become a specialist teacher in mathematics. The subsequent action taken in school is helping pupils' understanding of mathematics. Further plans, such as the 'representation project' are in place to accelerate improvement in mathematics.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are carried out regularly, and are accurate, with good suggestions for improvement. They are not, however, underpinned by a clearly-defined teaching and learning policy which sets out the school's expectations.
- Relationships in the school are good. Staff are keen to improve their practice and improve the standards reached by pupils. Teachers are aware that they are accountable for the progress of pupils in their class, but they are not expected to analyse the data which shows the progress they have made or to regularly meet formally to discuss these with the headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator.
- Because rates of progress are inconsistent, and achievement requires improvement, equality of opportunity is not secure. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form, and the school does all it can to promote inclusion.
- Relationships with parents are strongly promoted and information is shared on the school website. The school is open to parents' comments, suggestions and concerns.
- The local authority has given effective support to the school, including developing the headteacher's skills in analysing data, improving the teaching of mathematics and support for weaker teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the areas where the school requires improvement and its areas of strengths. They hold the headteacher accountable for the school's performance, particularly for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body are well-trained and apply their range of different skills to benefit the school. They effectively manage the performance of the headteacher and staff. Systems are in place for the approval of pay awards so that these are always tied to how well staff help pupils to achieve. Governors make sure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are consistently applied. They know how the school budget is spent and make sure, for example, that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used well to support pupils' achievement. This funding has been spent on additional staffing to support pupils in improving their skills in English and mathematics, to provide additional equipment to support their learning and to cover the cost of a supply teacher to teach the class when teachers attend training to improve mathematics or writing. The school is effective in

narrowing any gap between the attainment of individuals eligible for the funding and other 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	121122
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	402005

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Muir
Headteacher	Carole Reich
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
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