

Paddocks Primary School

Rochfort Avenue, Newmarket, CB8 0DL

Inspection dates

14–15 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The proportion of pupils making the progress they should varies between year groups.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, stronger in some year groups than others.
- Some teachers do not check on pupils' progress regularly enough during lessons so the pace of learning dips.
- Work is sometimes too hard or too easy for pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able.
- It is not always clear to pupils what they are to learn. Some pupils are not shown how to check how well they are doing, so they can help themselves better.
- The less effective teachers have not had enough guidance on how to improve.
- Responsibilities for leading improvements in the school have not been shared widely enough between teachers.
- Too little is done to give pupils an understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is better now than when the school was last inspected. Real life problems bring mathematics alive and lessons mostly link subjects more interestingly.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good. Increasingly, they enjoy their lessons.
- Positive relationships within the school lead to a strong sense of community.
- Recent teaching staff changes have generally led to improvements in how well pupils learn
- The school has been managed well through a period of great change.
- Governors are well trained, committed and know what the school needs to do to improve. As a result, the school is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and all teachers, with 11 lessons observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a number of short visits to lessons were made and teaching assistants were observed working with individuals and small groups.
- In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work books and listened to a few pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, other staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Account was taken of 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The school's own recent questionnaire, with 107 responses, was also considered. Account was also taken of 17 staff questionnaires.
- A number of documents were viewed including the school's own information on pupils' progress, the school's own self-evaluation, the local authority review, planning and monitoring documentation, records of how the money for pupil premium is spent, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paul Barraclough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded to include Year 5 and 6 pupils.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- This will be the first year in which the school has Year 6 pupils so there are no end of Key Stage 2 assessment data. The available evidence suggests that the school is on track to meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, about three quarters of teachers are new to the school.
- Each year group is taught in a separate class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - using the good teaching in the school as a model for all lessons
 - making sure that what pupils have to learn is always clear and precise so that they know what they are expected to achieve
 - making sure teachers plan and provide work that challenges pupils of all abilities, particularly the more-able pupils
 - checking pupils' understanding throughout each lesson to make sure the learning proceeds at the right pace
 - ensuring teachers check that pupils respond to the comments on their marked work.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning by:
 - defining precisely what is expected of teachers, including responsibilities of subject leadership
 - setting teachers clear targets to improve, and providing the necessary guidance and training
 - checking the results of these actions rigorously to plan for continued improvement.
- Clarify the school's plan for improvement so that the school's effectiveness becomes good by:
 - prioritising what needs to be done in a realistic time scale
 - allocating tasks to specific individuals or groups and holding them to account for completion.
- Give pupils a better understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom by:
 - increasing pupils' knowledge of diversity
 - developing pupils' skills for participating in our society

- offering greater opportunities for pupils to interact with others from different backgrounds.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are similar to those typically expected for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development is good so they settle into school quickly and start to benefit from all it offers. By the start of Year 1, they have made good progress.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average. This is largely due to consistently good teaching in the first three years, and activities which interest them, so they try hard. In the Reception class, children persevere and reach a good standard because their curiosity is aroused by the tasks they do. Outstanding relationships in Years 1 and 2 create trust so pupils willingly try new tasks. For example, one pupil willingly read his story and listened to others' suggestions of 'more powerful words'.
- Over the last few years, progress in reading, writing and mathematics has slowed in Years 3 and 4 so that attainment is a little below the county average for first schools by the end of Year 4.
- In Years 5 and 6, the rate of progress quickens again. The school's data, supported by inspection evidence, suggests that pupils in the present Year 6 are on track to leave the school with average standards. One Year 6 pupil summed this up: 'Our Year 5 was a massive catch-up year, we had to learn lots of things we should have known'.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is improving because pupils know what is expected of them and skills and techniques are built methodically until the end of Year 2. After that, there is no similarly cohesive system, so progress varies more.
- Pupils show more interest when subjects are linked, so new learning in one reinforces and practises what is known in another. For example, Year 6 pupils applied themselves well in using their knowledge of technology to produce work on 'myths and legends' in a visual presentation.
- Pupils' progress is checked more regularly and methodically than in the past and the information used effectively. For example, a recent dip in boys' writing has been put right through offering activities that boys find more interesting. In mathematics, pupils make more consistent progress because skills are regularly taught through real life and relevant activities, such as when Year 6 measured the playground and worked out the cost of resurfacing.
- The small number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make progress similar to their peers and reach similar levels in both English and mathematics. Extra funds are used well to provide more staff and resources chosen to interest them and meet their needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress, too. Teaching assistants are used well to give these pupils activities that precisely meet their needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has been generally good in the youngest and oldest years of the school, but inconsistent overall. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection varied from inadequate to outstanding. Overall, three-quarters of teaching is good or better, an improvement since the last inspection.

- In some classes, pupils' understanding is regularly checked during the lesson and the tasks changed if pupils need more or less practice. In such classes, all pupils work at the right level and make good progress. In other classes where work is not well matched, some pupils struggle while others coast. On occasion, although more-able pupils are given extra challenge, this does not speed up their progress because the work is unrelated to the lesson's aim.
- In most classes, marking gives pupils a very clear guide to what they have achieved and the next steps they must take. Some teachers, such as in Year 6, give pupils the time they need to read and respond. However, most teachers do not check sufficiently that pupils are applying this guidance to their new work.
- The purpose of the lesson and what they need to do to achieve well is not always clear to pupils. They are still learning how to judge their own progress, and that of their peers. Teachers rarely give them enough opportunities to practise analysing their own work and articulating what has been done well, what could be improved and suggestions for how this may be achieved.
- In the younger classes, the teaching of phonics is organised well so pupils enjoy these short sessions and make good progress.
- Teamwork amongst staff has improved. For example, teachers work in pairs to look at learning and talk about how it may be improved. They gain a clearer idea of the learning in the years before and after their own so they are better able to plan how one year builds on the last, and to share ideas.
- Where specialist teaching is used in physical education, learning is outstanding because pupils benefit from precise instruction leading to improvements in technique and skill levels.
- Teaching assistants generally give useful support to pupils who need extra help because they know these pupils and their individual needs well.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons more because they make interesting links between one subject and another, and teachers give them interesting practical activities that they can do together. Mathematics skills are particularly well practised in real life problems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is generally outstanding, and this makes a very positive contribution to their learning. Almost all of parents and carers responding to Parent View agree.
- On the very rare occasions that standards of behaviour slip, pupils are very well supported and managed by staff so that they can quickly and successfully be reintegrated back into class.
- Paddocks is a very harmonious community with a real 'family-feel' because all, staff and pupils alike, show respect for one another. Pupils enjoy working together; they listen to each other's views, respond to them and take pride in each other's achievements.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school, and their parents and carers agree. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare and they know teachers will deal with them quickly and effectively, lunchtime supervisors less so.

- Attendance is a little above average. Staff and outside agencies work well together, and with parents and carers, to try to resolve any persistent absence.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to make a contribution to the school. For example, they enjoy checking that electricity is not wasted and growing their own fruit and vegetables. The eldest pupils, however, have few of the responsibilities most pupils of their age enjoy.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, try hard in lessons and show interest. Behaviour and safety is not outstanding because a small number are passive learners who often work within themselves.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and governors share a clear plan to improve the school, based on an accurate local authority review and guidance. Current priorities are based on this review and the areas of improvement are consistent with those identified by this inspection.
- The termly plans to improve the school include the right areas, but they are too general, overly ambitious and often do not name the person responsible, so there is little accountability.
- Improvements since the last inspection have been achieved while managing the change from first to primary school. Since the last inspection, better use is made of space, particularly for small group work with specific individuals and groups.
- Staff changes have been managed well, so that the school has been able to recruit high quality teachers who have made a contribution to recent improvements.
- School leaders have tackled some underperformance, but more remains to be done. Although the quality of teaching is checked regularly, where teaching requires improvement not enough guidance and training has been provided to address areas of weakness. A relatively high number of staff feel they need more training.
- The leadership team is now more active in checking how the school is doing, but roles and responsibilities of other staff are not clearly defined. As a consequence, their role in developing the areas for which they are each responsible is not clear enough.
- Although the curriculum is better than when the school was last inspected, the approach to the development of pupils' skills, such as literacy and numeracy, is inconsistent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted effectively but, while lessons give pupils an understanding of different cultures, little is done to prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society.
- The school is strongly focused on making sure every pupil has similar chances. No one is discriminated against. The school head and governors are constantly striving to strengthen the partnership with parents and carers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is now stronger than when the school was last inspected. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have begun to question the school much more. Performance management is used increasingly and

underperformance tackled. Governors undertake training conscientiously and this is useful in their role. They have a good range of skills and backgrounds and make an effective team. The school's finances are efficiently managed with a very clear plan for how the pupil premium is spent. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding.

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	124565
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402273

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Pearce
Headteacher	Gerry Sexton
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2010
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