

Pulham Church of England Primary School

Harleston Road, Pulham Market, Diss, IP21 4SZ

Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 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.

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching in almost all lessons is good. Work is set that helps pupils learn, whatever their ability.
- Pulham Primary is a harmonious community built on mutual respect.
- Pupils thrive because staff know them as unique individuals and care for them very well.
- Their progress is carefully checked and, if any fall behind, extra help given so they catch up.
- Pupils generally behave well and enjoy very positive relationships with staff and each other. They feel safe in school.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons because staff make them interesting.
- Pupils appreciate that they have a real say in their school and any changes made. They respond to this opportunity outstandingly, fully accepting that with rights come responsibilities.
- The acting headteacher has made important improvements. She fully involves staff in driving the school forward.
- Staff form an increasingly effective team, willingly sharing ideas and expertise.
- The strong focus on training and developing staff's skills is very helpful to the quickening pace of pupils' progress.
- School leaders and governors are very clear about the school's strengths and areas that need improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There remain some inconsistencies in teaching. On occasions, additional adults are not used effectively, and pupils are sometimes less active in their own learning than they should be because teachers talk too much.
- Teachers do not share good practice enough to agree a common approach to learning.
- Too little is done to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 11 lessons and all teachers. All but three were observed jointly with the acting headteacher. In addition, a number of short visits to lessons were made and learning support assistants were observed working with small groups.
- The inspector also listened to a few pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, teachers, other staff and representatives from the local authority.
- Account was taken of 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and a small number of other letters from parents. 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, planning and monitoring documentation, the records of how the school uses its funding, especially 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

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- 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. There are no pupils at this school in local authority care nor from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Some pupils are taught off-site as part of an agreement with the local authority.
- All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since October 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers share the best practice that exists in the school to agree a 'whole school' approach
 - pupils are more actively involved in all elements of learning by reducing the time they spend listening to teachers talking
 - additional adults are used equally effectively to support learning in all parts of lessons.
- Give pupils a better understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom by developing their skills for participation in our multicultural society.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Skill levels vary greatly when children start school but most are below those typically expected for their age. This is particularly so in writing. Almost all pupils make good progress from their various starting points as they move through year groups.
- In 2012, every Year 6 pupil reached the expected level or above in English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, writing skills have improved partly because more opportunities have been provided for pupils to practise them in other subjects. Pulham is a relatively small school and the numbers of pupils in each year group, and their differing abilities, vary greatly from year-to-year.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class because of the support and encouragement the staff provide. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating well-planned activities, so they persevere and do well.
- Progress through the school is good because work is set at the right level. The rate of progress is routinely monitored to check pupils learn well, and to make changes if they do not. For example, the school identified that pupils who achieved above-average results at the end of Year 2 sometimes slipped so their results at the end of Year 6 were average. The causes of this have now been identified and corrected.
- Pupils try hard and enjoy short sessions focused on phonics (the teaching of the sounds letters make) because they are fun and interesting. They make very good progress in developing reading skills.
- Boys outnumber girls about two to one, but the school caters for this well. For girls, staff make sure they are not forgotten or marginalised. For boys, staff saw that many seemed turned off by reading and so purchased books likely to attract their interest more.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because extra funds are used well to provide more staff and equipment matched to their needs. As a result, gaps in performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and the others are closing. In 2012 there were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 to make any comment about their standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Again, each pupil's needs are accurately assessed. This information, and that from each day's lesson, is used to plan the next day's activities.
- The school has clear and sensible checks to make sure that pupils of the same age taught in different classes, over time, learn similarly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Nearly all teaching is good. Since the last inspection, tasks are much better matched to pupils' different abilities, so none are too easy or too hard. Information and communication technology is used better. Pupils undertake a good variety of activities, including research and drafting, on a more regular basis.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding during the lesson, and modify it accordingly. They are

aware of any pupils whose concentration drifts, or who struggle to grasp the learning, or are ready to move on quicker.

- Lessons flow smoothly because of the outstanding relationships between staff and pupils. For example, in a science investigation about electricity, pupils moved around the different activities with interest and perseverance.
- Pupils have a good and increasing understanding of how well they are doing. Regularly they make their own judgements, and compare them with what their teacher thinks. This is particularly helpful in understanding the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn, particularly when engrossed in the lesson's activities. Too often when the whole class is working together, however, pupils are given too few chances to contribute. On these occasions, the pace of learning drops.
- Additional adults support pupils' learning effectively when working with small groups or individuals needing extra help to catch up or move further ahead. At the last inspection, however, they were not deployed effectively at the start and end of lessons. This remains the case. Too often extra adults sit behind pupils, or on the periphery of the class.
- Teachers are very enthusiastic, partly because they are actively encouraged to attend training, visit other schools and talk about ideas with each other. Within the school, there are examples of very effective techniques and approaches.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Nearly all parents agree that pupils' behaviour is good. Whether at lunch or in lessons, pupils look after one another. Older pupils are quick to help younger pupils in the playground.
- Pupils behave well because their needs are recognised and largely met. Reading standards are improving because time is put aside for reading for pleasure, for example in the social 'peer reading' groups.
- Pupils' contribution to the school community is outstanding. The Year 6 'ambassadors', for example make a positive difference to the school and how it runs. With teachers' support, they organise 'circle time' when pupils talk about issues relevant to them.
- None of this would be possible without the support of staff. The acting headteacher is a strong advocate of 'pupil voice' and giving pupils meaningful responsibility. For example, she listened to their views about the behaviour policy. They felt it dwelt on the negative, so it now has more structured rewards for making the right choices. They wanted their parents to know when they did right as well as wrong. This now happens.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school. They are confident that any instance of bullying would be dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and understand how to do so when using the internet.
- Pupils say they enjoy school. Attendance is above average, an improvement since the last inspection.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are still getting used to the changes in policy so sometimes do not do as they are asked straight away.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and governors provide clear direction for the school. Plans are based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The acting headteacher encourages staff and holds them to account. Staff know they will be listened to and that their views are valued. Their positive questionnaire responses reflect their high morale.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly to make sure all are doing as well as expected. Equal emphasis is given to those who struggle and need to catch up, and those who excel and could do more.
- Staff say they like the fact that their own professional development is largely based on observations of their teaching. They also like the way they are encouraged to share ideas and learn from one another.
- Different subjects are more effective than at the time of the last inspection. The many innovative features, such as 'forest schools', enthuse pupils. Pupils welcome the opportunity to say what they want to find out when starting a new topic. Homework activities are imaginative and give each pupil scope to plan and organise a response in their own unique way.
- Based on Christian values, pupils are regularly challenged to think about themselves and their place in the school, local and global communities. Aspects of cultural development are excellent. Given pupils attend a small school, activities such as 'Voice in a Million', when they sang as part of a very large group at Wembley Stadium, gives them unforgettable memories. They describe it as 'slightly scary' but 'awesome'. This contributes extremely well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much less is done to prepare them for life in multicultural Britain. For example, they have very few opportunities to interact with others from different backgrounds to gain insight into other religious and ethnic groups.
- Fundamental to the school is the commitment to see that every pupil has similar chances to enjoy everything the school has to offer. No one is discriminated against.
- The school has a close and growing partnership with parents. Parents of the youngest are encouraged to 'stay and play'. 'BERT' ('Boys Enjoy Reading Together') is an innovative way of working with the male community to raise boys' interest in reading.
- Support from the local authority is excellent. It has been carefully tailored to the school's needs to make sure the school is successful.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. Governors are active, plan ahead and anticipate what needs doing. They know how well pupils and staff are doing, and act on the information. They support and question the school effectively. Governors fully understand how good teaching is rewarded and underperformance tackled. They know about the targets that are set for teachers to improve and the impact they are having. Training is undertaken and individual expertise used effectively. Finances are efficiently managed and the pupil premium is spent appropriately. Governors meet all 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	121051
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401995

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	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Herschel-Shorland
Headteacher	Simone Goddard (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
Telephone number	01379 676313
Fax number	01379 676679
Email address	head@pulham.norfolk.sch.uk

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