

Bentley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Bentley, Ipswich, IP9 2BT

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 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

- Teaching for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) and Years 1 and 2 is not consistently good. Lesson planning lacks detail to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities build on what they already know and make good progress.
- There is a lack of expertise in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) to help children learn early reading and spelling skills. Consequently, children make adequate rather than good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching for the older pupils in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress. A few pupils make outstanding progress.
- There has been considerable improvement in the older pupils' progress and attainment since the last inspection.
- All parents and carers who voiced their views agreed that their child is happy and safe in the school. All would recommend the school to another parent.
- The behaviour of the younger pupils is good and, in Years 5 and 6, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. These pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is exceptionally well developed for their age.
- The executive headteacher and governing body drive school improvement relentlessly. Very effective working arrangements with the partner school have had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching for the older pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, as well as groups of pupils or individuals working with learning support assistants. All the observations were undertaken jointly with the executive headteacher. The inspector looked in on pupils during lunchtime and visited break times.
- The inspector looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups and heard some pupils from Years 1 and 6 read.
- The inspector held meetings with staff, the Chair and members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils from Years 2 and 6 and the school council. She spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and at break times.
- The inspector looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and development plans.
- The views of 21 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration, as were the views of parents and carers who had completed the school's own recent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably; in some there are two and, in others, 10 pupils. For the past four years, there have been more boys than girls on roll; in two year groups there are no girls.
- The school has two classes. The Key Stage 1 class has children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) plus pupils in Years 1 and 2. The Key Stage 2 class has pupils from Year 3 to Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This extra funding is for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection in 2010, there has been a change of two teachers and support staff in the Key Stage 1 class, including a newly qualified teacher.
- The executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of nearby Copdock Primary School. The headteacher spends time in each school, with a part-time deputy headteacher in charge of the school in her absence. The staff and governors of the two schools work together. The schools have separate budgets and governing bodies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching for the Key Stage 1 class to a consistently good level in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that lesson plans are carefully matched to what it is pupils need to learn next
 - making it very clear in lesson planning what it is each age and ability group of pupils is expected to have learned by the end of the lesson
 - teachers checking on how well pupils are learning in the lesson and, if needed, adjusting their teaching to ensure that pupils do as well as possible
 - providing more training for all staff in how to teach phonics
 - making sure that teaching assistants are told exactly what to do when working with groups of children
 - providing a good range of appropriate activities for the Reception children to choose from
 - senior teachers checking rigorously to see that the above areas identified for improvement are brought about rapidly and have a good impact on increasing pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When children start at Bentley, the attainment of different groups of pupils can vary considerably from year to year.
- Pupils' learning in Reception and Years 1 and 2 requires improvement because not enough pupils are making good progress, especially the more-able pupils. There are three main reasons that this is the case.
 - The first reason is that the teaching of phonics is not good enough to help pupils make rapid progress in developing their early literacy skills. Second, the planning of lessons is not carefully based on what pupils have already learned and need to learn next. Third, teaching assistants are not told precisely what and how to teach their small groups.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's accurate assessment data indicate that the rate of progress in Years 3 to 6 is good, with several pupils in Year 6 making outstanding progress, especially in English. In mathematics, a small number of pupils are working at Level 6, the level expected of secondary age pupils.
- Results of national tests and teacher assessments indicate that, at the end of Year 2, attainment is usually similar to that found nationally. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment has risen and been above average for the past two years. For example, in 2012, in English, pupils were just over a year ahead of pupils of a similar age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. The special educational needs coordinator takes careful note of all guidance from outside professionals and makes sure that any advice provided is followed. As a result, pupils are helped to learn in the way that suits them best, they have good self-esteem and make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their classmates. Within the school, the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is small. In some year groups, there are none and in others one. These small numbers make it hard to compare their performance with others. In some years, these pupils attain better and make better progress than pupils in this group nationally and their classmates, and in others they do not. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals did significantly better than similar pupils nationally, and their attainment was well above that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are differences in the quality of teaching across the school. In the Key Stage 1 class, teaching is not consistently good and requires improvement.
- In the Key Stage 1 class, work is not always precisely matched to what pupils need to learn next. Teachers and teaching assistants do not always notice how well pupils are learning and make changes in the lesson. Consequently, more-able pupils are not always challenged to work to their capabilities and pupils who find learning difficult sometimes struggle.

- Teaching for the Reception group of children within the Key Stage 1 class also requires improvement. These children do not always have enough opportunities to make choices from a range of suitable activities in order to promote their independence and interest in learning.
- The teaching of phonics requires improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants do not have a good understanding of the methodology for teaching these skills. For example, the enunciation of letter sounds such as 'ai', and the pace of the sessions is too slow on occasions. Consequently, progress is slowed for all pupils, including the Reception group.
- In the Key Stage 2 class, teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Lesson planning is detailed and identifies precisely what each group of pupils is to learn. Teaching assistants have a good impact on pupils' learning because they are told what they have to do and what it is pupils are expected to learn. Teachers mark pupils' work and provide very helpful comments for pupils to improve further. The excellent relationships within the class mean that pupils are keen to take note of the comments and work hard for their teachers.
- The teaching of mathematics for the older pupils is good. Pupils are taught to consider the most efficient method to use for calculations and do this very well in problem solving activities.
- Teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is outstanding. As a result, Years 5 and 6 have very well-developed ICT skills for their age and use these very effectively for research and programming interactive stories related to their topic theme of Romans.
- The pupils identified as disabled pupils or who have special educational needs are all currently in Years 2 to 6. The teaching for these pupils is good because it is carefully planned to take account of pupils' precise needs and the way they learn best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about learning because their teachers make good links between subjects to make lessons meaningful and fun.
- The school is a very harmonious community. Pupils are polite and friendly to those they know and welcoming to visitors. Dinner times are very social occasions where older pupils help the younger ones and model good behaviour.
- Pupils develop strong values and a high level of respect for others. For example, they could discuss, very respectfully, how a person's beliefs influence the way they choose to live their lives. They know how to voice their opinions and provide reasoned arguments.
- Pupils are very proud of, and highly committed to, their school community. Many older pupils have a leadership role in the school, such as school councillors, sports leaders and eco leaders. They take these responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are well aware of safety when using the internet.
- Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, such as what is meant by cyber or racist bullying. They are confident incidences of bullying are non-existent in their school and that, should they have concerns, any member of staff will help them.

- Attendance is above average.
- Older pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, which they value highly. They listen carefully to their teachers. As a result, they answer questions confidently and offer sensible opinions. They work hard in lessons and act on their teachers' comments on how to improve their work.
- Behaviour of the younger pupils in the school is good. Their natural exuberance and enthusiasm is not always moderated by staff which, on occasions, leads to time wasting and pupils not giving their full attention to the task in hand.

The leadership and management are good

- Effective leadership by the executive headteacher, governing body and the part-time deputy headteacher have brought about considerable improvements in pupils' progress and attainment since the last inspection. They share a strong commitment to making sure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and there is no discrimination.
- There are good systems for checking on the work of the school. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' progress further. School improvement planning is concise, with ambitious and easily measurable targets for improvement.
- Through their precise self-evaluation, school leaders identified the need to improve the teaching of mathematics. Good improvement has been secured through professional development courses for senior leaders, which, in turn, has been used to help teachers improve their performance. Older pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics have improved considerably as a result.
- Since the last inspection, very good improvements have been brought about as a result of good management and the strong links between the two schools. Teachers have had good opportunities for appropriate professional development and good support from colleagues in both schools.
- The reason that strategies for improving the teaching in the Key Stage 1 class have not yet had a similar impact is because the teacher is relatively new to the school and senior staff have had unavoidable long-term absence through ill-health. Training has been provided for teaching assistants but they have recently left the school.
- The special educational needs coordinator has a very effective impact on making sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well. The school makes sure that, if required, pupils have their difficulties assessed by outside professionals so the school can plan the right sort of work and help for them.
- The way subjects are planned and taught has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning as a result. For example, younger pupils clearly understood the purpose of making tally charts to find out how many biscuits and cakes to make for their pantomime audience.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school in providing training for staff in areas identified through the school's detailed monitoring.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are thorough in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff. Through their close links with the governing body of the partner school, they have a good overview of how well both schools are doing. They have made well-considered decisions on shared staffing; for example, sharing the employment of a higher level teaching assistant who works in both schools. They make good use of their individual professional expertise in supporting the school and asking searching questions. Governors visit frequently and consult with parents regularly. They have a good understanding of what performance information tells them about pupils' progress compared with schools nationally. They are well aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies used for helping teachers to make further improvement, such as linking pay closely to pupils' achievement, how the school rewards good teaching and deals with any underperformance. They check on spending decisions carefully, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 124754 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 406266 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 45 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | |
| Number of boarders on roll | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Don Mehen |
| Headteacher | Joanne Austin (Executive Headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 September 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01473 310253 |
| Fax number | 01473 313152 |
| Email address | ad.bentley.p@talk21.com |

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