

St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3BJ

Inspection dates 7–8 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and standards are above average by the end of Year 2. This is because teaching is consistently good and some of it is outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 so that their attainment is better than expected by the time they move to middle school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are given support that is tailored well to their needs.
- Pupils behave well and are eager to learn. They take a pride in their work, which is neatly presented.
- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher places great importance on pupils succeeding. Gains in achievement from the last inspection have been sustained and teaching continues to improve.
- The governing body knows the school well and asks searching questions about its work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing through marking or in lessons.
- The role of phase leaders is not fully developed, particularly in discussing the school's work with senior leaders and playing a leading part in meetings about pupils' progress.
- Children's learning journeys in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not contain any photographs alongside written accounts of their achievements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, several of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, attended two assemblies, and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, phase leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), so inspectors spoke with several parents in the playground on both days instead.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There is a privately run pre-school sharing the school building, which did not form part of this inspection.
- There is some discussion about future reorganisation of schools in Bury St Edmunds, which may affect the school at some point in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing by:
 - agreeing common approaches to setting out for them the next steps they need to take to move their learning on, especially in numeracy
 - supporting pupils in developing ways of checking their learning has been successful in lessons.
- Develop the role of phase leaders so that:
 - they are more actively involved in discussion with senior leaders about what the school does well and what it needs to improve next
 - they take responsibility for the running of meetings about pupils' progress in their phases so that they know how well the pupils are doing and hold teachers to account.
- Improve record keeping in the Early Years Foundation Stage by combining photographs of children's achievements with the written evidence in their learning journeys.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The younger children receive a good grounding in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and this good work continues into Key Stage 1. Year 1 pupils performed above the national average in their phonics screening check last year.
- Regular reading workshops for each class are supported well by parents and help to give reading a high profile across the school. Pupils achieve well in reading as they read widely and use a good range of methods to tackle unfamiliar words.
- In the autumn term, pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A focus on the teaching of writing is giving pupils more opportunities to develop good writing techniques. Teachers show pupils what is expected of them and handwriting is taught well, resulting in a fluent, joined script. This helps pupils to produce more writing.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average. Pupils make good progress from average starting points in the Reception class. They continue to achieve well in Years 3 and 4.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the impact of the support they receive is carefully assessed and their individual education plans are astute and shared well with parents. If there is nothing suitable to buy in, the school devises its own materials to make sure that the support is well tailored to pupils' specific needs.
- The pupil premium is spent on one-to-one support and additional phonics teaching for the few eligible pupils. They also benefit from additional activities to enrich their experiences. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. There were no looked-after children or pupils from service families in this cohort of pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers pay good attention to setting learning steps that are at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils. This means that pupils have demanding enough work to do which speeds up their progress.
- Pupils are motivated by tasks that have a real purpose. For example, in an outstanding lesson, Year 2 pupils wrote letters to their French pen pals, focusing on writing in paragraphs and using a good range of accurate punctuation.
- Teachers' enthusiasm inspires pupils and makes them want to do their best. Questioning is often targeted at individuals and helps to extend pupils' learning. There is a good focus on the teaching of basic reading and calculation skills, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply these in different subjects.
- Teachers use information and communication technology well to engage and interest pupils. Pupils make good use of computers in their learning, and Reception children have access to technology when they choose their own activities.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they are trained

well and used effectively in helping groups and individuals, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.

- Pupils' books show that they produce a good quantity of quality work and take a genuine pride in presenting it neatly. A system of different 'pen licences', culminating in the ultimate award of a fountain pen, motivates pupils to keep up their excellent handwriting.
- The school is refining its use of marking and the ways pupils assess their own and others' work. Different classes are trying out different approaches as part of this carefully planned project. The school has correctly identified that, sometimes, pupils are not clear about the next steps in their learning, especially in numeracy, and, at times, pupils are not as involved in assessing for themselves how well they have done in lessons.
- Children are helped to make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage as staff work well together to see that children are settled and safe. They give the children purposeful, stimulating activities that excite their curiosity and fire their imaginations. For example, children enjoyed taking part in a jungle adventure in the role-play area.
- While assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is perceptive, learning journeys, which are folders that record what each child has done and learnt, only contain written comments and do not illustrate children's achievements with photographs of different areas of their learning. Photographs are kept entirely separately on computer files, but are not labelled or linked to the written comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils cooperate well in pairs and in groups, and there are good relationships between them and with staff. The new behaviour policy is proving successful and is consistently applied. Pupils like the rewards it generates. They take pride in depositing their brightly coloured tokens into the school's unique 'team-point accumulator' (TPA).
- The school can point to marked improvements in the behaviour of individuals who joined finding it difficult to behave well but who have benefited from consistent and caring support.
- Pupils say there is no bullying, just the odd dispute over football. They understand about different types of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying, and are confident that adults deal with any concerns they may have.
- Pupils have a good understanding about keeping safe and say that they feel safe in school; a view with which parents agree. They know about e-safety, fire safety and keeping safe when riding a bike.
- Just occasionally, pupils can be restless if they are sitting for too long.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and feel that they make a difference. The school council discusses its ideas with governors, for example about school uniform, and pupils act as buddies to other children and undertake jobs around the school.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- There is a passionate drive for improvement from the headteacher and deputy headteacher that permeates all aspects of the school's work and has built on the strengths identified at the last inspection. Teaching is now consistently good and more of it is outstanding. Standards are continuing to rise and most pupils make good progress.
- The school has an accurate view of its work, drawn from rigorous and systematic checking of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers are given clear feedback on how they can improve their work and robust targets are set for them.
- Regular meetings are held to review the progress of pupils and to hold teachers to account for their performance. At present, these meetings are run by senior leaders rather than phase leaders, who are being trained up to take them over. This is so that they take more responsibility for standards and pupils' progress in their phases (key stages within the school).
- The school is developing the role of teachers who hold responsibility for key subjects and aspects of the school's work. For example, senior leaders are considering ways of involving phase leaders more in their discussions about what is working well and what the school needs to do next. This is in order to involve more leaders in making decisions and having an overview of how well the school is doing so that they are better equipped to drive school improvement.
- Subjects and topics are well chosen and interesting and create memorable experiences for pupils, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through its shared Christian values, and, for example, links with schools in other countries including Rwanda and France. Participation in a national pilot is encouraging the school to consider how it can make more use of its locality and grounds to inspire pupils.
- There are good links with parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and find staff accessible and always ready to hear any suggestions they may have.
- The local authority and the diocese provide light-touch support for this good school. They make use of the school's expertise in supporting other schools in difficulty, particularly in improving teaching and strengthening leadership.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, and of how this compares with other schools nationally. They follow a programme of visits linked to the school's key priorities and are well organised in finding out for themselves how things are going. This puts them in a strong position to hold leaders to account and ask searching questions about the school's work. They know about the targets that are set for teachers to improve their performance and what the school does to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. They keep a tight rein on the finances and understand how the pupil premium is being spent and its impact on the progress of eligible pupils. Governors are eager to hone their skills and access high-quality training. They are actively involved with the local authority and diocese in planning for the school's future and the possibility of taking pupils through to Year 6.

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	124762
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	400128

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Dart
Headteacher	Joanne Lundy
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
Telephone number	01284 752967
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