

Reffley Community School

Reffley Lane, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 3SF

Inspection dates

19–20 March 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Boys and some disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress because activities are not always matched closely enough to their abilities.
- Teachers' marking and other guidance are not always precise enough to help pupils improve their work.
- Introductions to lessons are too long and, as a result, pupils are not allowed enough time in which to complete their work and this slows progress.
- Teaching assistants working in classrooms are not given clear guidance about how to support pupils' learning.
- The teaching of mathematics and English is not consistently good in all classes.
- Despite some improvements since the last inspection, leaders, including governors, are not improving teaching and achievement as fast as they need to.
- When observing lessons, leaders do not sufficiently focus on the impact that teaching is having on raising achievement and pupils' work.
- Middle leaders do not yet have the skills to support improvements in teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a good start at the school because of the effective practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good relationships between adults and children make a strong contribution to the positive and cooperative learning environment.
- Effective pastoral care ensures that pupils and families are well supported.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed other learning activities that took place outside the classrooms.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including: the school’s improvement plan; data for tracking pupils’ progress; the school’s policies on safeguarding, special educational needs and behaviour; minutes of governing body meetings; displays of pupils’ work; and the resources used in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work in books and folders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior leaders, groups of staff and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also talked to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited the school’s breakfast club.
- Pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the parents’ on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and 48 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Adam Higgins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Viner

Additional Inspector

Lorraine Manford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It has 15 classes from Nursery to Year 6.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school is receiving additional income (the pupil premium) is below average. These pupils are all known to be eligible for free school meals; there are three pupils with parents in the armed forces and no children in the care of the local authority in this school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better across the school by ensuring that:
 - introductions to lessons are not overly long and that pupils have more time to work on their own and with other pupils in the class
 - teachers' marking is more frequent and is clearly focused on what pupils need to do next in order to improve, and provide time for pupils to act upon it
 - teachers have high expectations of all pupils and their behaviour, particularly in English and mathematics, and plan lessons which enable all pupils to work on challenging and engaging activities which match their abilities
 - all adults working in classrooms know what they need to do in order to support pupils and their learning, particularly boys, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that planning takes into account the full range of pupils' abilities so that pupils make more consistent progress across all years
 - accelerating pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially for boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their comprehension skills in reading.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - when checking the quality of teaching, leaders give more emphasis to how well teachers are improving pupils' achievement and the quality of work in pupils' books
 - the school's improvement plans have a sharper focus on raising achievement and identify precisely measurable targets to show whether the school is making the difference that it is seeking
 - middle leaders have a much clearer role with a greater focus on evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning

- governors make more systematic checks on how well actions taken to improve teaching and achievement are working and hold leaders to account more urgently for the improvements.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The rate at which pupils make progress varies from year to year. Pupils do not make consistent progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching is not sufficiently well planned to meet the different learning needs of pupils, particularly boys.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills that are below those that would be expected for their age. They make good progress and so leave Reception with broadly average skills. Progress is less consistent in Key Stage 1 and pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2.
- The results for pupils who took the phonics screening check (the sounds that letters make) at the end of Year 1 in 2012 were below average. This is because teachers do not always ensure that phonics activities are matched to pupils' prior knowledge, and pupils are often given tasks that are either too hard or too easy.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also broadly average. In 2012, pupils in Year 6 made good progress in English and mathematics from their previous starting points at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading are average because not enough opportunities are provided to develop skills of inference and deduction. Pupils are generally better at reading than they are at writing and mathematics. In Years 2, 3 and 4, boys struggle to write and spell accurately because the work that they are given does not match their individual needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inconsistent progress as they move through the school. This is because the work that they are given is not always matched to their abilities and they are not given interesting and stimulating work that encourages them to think and work on their own or with other pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is being well spent. It pays for smaller teaching groups, sporting opportunities and curriculum enrichment. As a result in 2012 the gaps between pupils for whom the school receives this funding and their classmates had closed. In English these pupils were one half of a term ahead of their peers and mathematics their performance was the same.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure rapid progress in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is stronger in some year groups than in others.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage team work effectively together to ensure that all children make good progress. However, there are missed opportunities for learning because the quality of the outdoor provision is not as good as that provided indoors.
- In some lessons, pupils do not make good progress because teachers spend too long talking, lesson introductions are overly long and activities are not well planned to meet the individual learning needs of individuals or groups of pupils.
- Relationships are good and pupils enjoy working with adults and each other. However, teaching assistants are not always clear about what they are expected to do and how to support the individual learning needs of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational

needs.

- In some literacy and numeracy lessons, the tasks given to pupils lack clarity and teachers do not present information in a way that builds securely on pupils' previous learning or which allows them to work independently. Opportunities for pupils to work together and to assess each other's work are frequently missed.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. It is not frequent enough and does not give pupils clear guidance about what they need to do in order to improve, especially in their writing and mathematics. Pupils are not routinely given opportunities to respond to the teachers' marking.
- Where the best teaching was seen, activities and tasks closely matched pupils' learning needs. In a good mathematics lesson, activities were planned which built on the knowledge pupils had gained in previous lessons. This enabled pupils to make rapid progress. Additional adults understood the needs of the children and had been well briefed about what they were to do. They used carefully chosen vocabulary and open-ended questions to encourage children to think carefully and grow in independence.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to read and the school makes available a variety of interesting reading materials. There is an attractive and well-stocked library and some stimulating book areas in classrooms. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. However, teachers' do not probe their understanding sufficiently to help them develop deeper understanding of what they read.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The management of pupils' behaviour in lessons is inconsistent between classes and year groups because teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are sometimes too low. Behaviour deteriorates when lessons are not very interesting and when the work does not meet their learning needs. This stops pupils from making progress.
- In and around the school, pupils behave well. They are kind and polite to one another and to adults and visitors to the school. They show good attitudes towards learning and want to do their best.
- Assemblies are reflective and celebratory. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the community and enjoy taking part in charitable activities to raise money for those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- Parents are satisfied that pupils are safe while at school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe including when using computers and other types of technology. The school provides good support and advice for pupils about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and about using secure passwords.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. They say that there is very little bullying at school and that if they have any concerns, the Pastoral Assistant would deal with it quickly and effectively.
- The school uses a wide range of strategies to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. However, despite having some success there are a small number of pupils who are frequently absent from school. Leaders are taking firm action and have for example, recently stopped

authorising holidays in school time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders do not have a clear enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence improvement plans do not focus enough on improving pupils' achievement over time. There are no clear timescales and targets to provide leaders with measurable evidence to assess the success of their actions.
 - Middle leaders with particular responsibilities do not have enough impact on evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Since the previous inspection, school leaders have improved the ways in which they evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement. There are now regular meetings at which teachers discuss, and are held to account for, the progress made by individual pupils.
 - However, they have not brought enough consistency in the quality of teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2 to ensure that all pupils make good progress. They observe teaching regularly but do not link their judgements well enough to the impact that teaching has on pupils' achievement.
 - The curriculum offers a range of good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom, for example, in the extensive and well-organised school grounds, on trips linked to topics and on a residential visit for older pupils. Pupils take part in a range of after-school activities including guitar lessons and dance clubs. Parents and carers join in with family-learning sessions where they work on activities with their children. These are greatly appreciated; for example, one parent said, 'It is good bonding with our children and means we can spend time together learning and working.'
 - The school makes careful plans for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders ensure that, subjects are carefully planned and that there are many opportunities for pupils to consider issues beyond the local community which affect children in other countries and to ask thought-provoking and stimulating questions such as, 'What if there were not a number zero?'
 - Parents and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Questionnaires from staff, parents and carers are largely positive.
 - The local authority knows the strengths of the school and has provided some support and challenge for leaders in the past, including for governance. More recently, the school has been only given a light level of support. This has not had the impact of helping leaders to clearly identify the next steps to be taken to raise achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has made significant changes since the last inspection. Governors have received training from the local authority so that they know what questions to ask in order to hold the school to account. They understand the school's data but are not as yet fully using this to hold the school to account for the progress of groups of pupils. They have supported the actions that leaders have taken to address underperformance but have not been sufficiently rigorous in checking the impact of these actions or checked how well the school is improving teaching and achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium is being spent but have not begun to investigate its impact. They have applied the school's appraisal arrangements effectively and have the final decision on whether the performance of individual

teachers against their targets justifies a salary increase. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities and safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	120925
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401982

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Beck
Headteacher	Pamela Foskett
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
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