

# Acle St Edmund Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fletcher Way, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3RQ

**Inspection dates** 22–23 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Rates of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 declined significantly between 2011 and 2012 and standards fell from well above average to average levels.
- Checks by the headteacher and other leaders on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are not systematic enough.
- Governors have not ensured that school leaders have monitored teaching and learning across the school with sufficient rigour.
- The school policy for teaching and learning does not provide a clear basis for further improving teaching and sharing best practice.
- The teaching of the sounds made by letters, until recently, was too weak.
- Work does not always give a good level of challenge for many more-able and some middle ability pupils.
- Lack of consistency in the teaching of calculation procedures contributed to the slowing of progress in mathematics in 2011.
- Pupils' progress in different subjects and different year groups is inconsistent, because the quality of teaching and the deployment of teaching assistants are not always good.
- Teachers' marking and their use of pupil targets do not sufficiently inform pupils how to improve their work or take the next steps in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school's warm, nurturing atmosphere is valued by pupils, parents and staff.
- Well-prioritised action has been taken to address specific weaknesses which led to the slowing of progress, including eradicating inadequate teaching.
- Governors monitor pupils' attendance and safeguarding arrangements well.
- Standards and rates of progress in both English and mathematics are improving this year.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils' understanding of safety is good.
- A wide range of good opportunities help pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The school provides very good support for pupils with a range of particular needs.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed ten lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons in each class.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, information regarding pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring information on school performance, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspector met parents informally at the start of the school day. They took into account the responses to a recent school survey and the 81 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Melanie Clapton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and from service families) is slightly below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average; the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has seven classes, four of which are for pupils of mixed ages.
- In the last two years the school has experienced staff absence and staff change, which has included changes in subject leadership.
- The governing body manages an on-site before-school club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2013, improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
  - ensuring that work is always set at the right level for more-able pupils and middle ability pupils
  - making sure that all teachers enable pupils to use their targets to help them make the next steps in their learning
  - ensuring that teachers' marking comments show pupils how to improve their work, where appropriate in relation to their targets, and that teachers always make sure that pupils follow the advice they are given in their marking
  - making sure that pupils have time to make any suggested improvements
  - ensuring that the deployment of support staff always supports and accelerates pupils' learning
  - providing opportunities for teachers to share the best practice in the school.
- By November 2013, improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupil progress by:
  - increasing the level of accountability of teachers for their pupils' progress by holding half-termly meetings to check the progress made by pupils, based on teachers' analysis of progress information
  - revising the teaching and learning policy as a basis for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching
  - drawing up a regular and rigorous programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and checking that teachers follow the advice given to improve their teaching
  - ensuring that governors check that school leaders are monitoring teaching and learning systematically and bringing about consistently good or better teaching
  - 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

- Children's attainment when they enter the school has fallen over the last three years and is now below average. This year, children have made good progress in the Reception Class and will move into Year 1 with average standards.
- For the last four years, pupils in Key Stage 1 have made expected progress and have reached average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress is now accelerating and many pupils are making good progress.
- Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, having been significantly above average up to 2010, fell in 2011 in English and mathematics to just below national averages. Standards improved in 2012 but were still only average.
- The progress made by pupils by the end of Year 6 slowed, and was significantly slower than expected nationally in mathematics in 2011 and both English and mathematics in 2012.
- Action taken by the school, particularly this academic year, has reversed the decline in rates of progress and many pupils are now making better than expected progress through the school. This progress, as reflected by school data, in lessons and in pupils' work is variable, with pupils in some classes making better progress than others in some subjects.
- Last year, pupils in Year 1 did not reach the expected levels in the Year 1 check on the sounds made by letters (phonics), but are now working at or beyond expected levels.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make similar, variable progress to other pupils. A number are making rapid progress because they are well-supported by the school, where necessary with the help of outside agencies.
- The school has ensured that this year those pupils in Year 6 entitled to the pupil premium have made better than expected progress and the gap between them and all other pupils has been closed. Pupils in Year 6 entitled to pupil premium have achieved higher standards than all other pupils in English and mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved over the last year. There are aspects of good teaching in almost all lessons. A few lessons are outstanding.
- There is, however, not enough focus on the pace of learning for all groups of pupils. Although pupils know what they need to do to succeed, there can be too little challenge or expectation to extend the learning of more-able and a number of middle ability pupils.
- Practice in marking is inconsistent. Some teachers make good points for improvement but these are not always followed up and so that pupils are able to improve their work. Some work is not marked and so pupils do not always know how well they are doing.
- In most classes, pupils have targets in either or both English and mathematics. Pupils do not all know or use their targets and few teachers refer to the targets in their marking. This means that

targets are not effectively helping pupils make the next steps in their learning.

- Relationships are good in all lessons and there is a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere in school.
- Teachers' questioning is usually good. Most teachers listen to pupils and use questions well to probe and extend pupils learning or to clarify misunderstanding.
- Teachers plan activities that are interesting and stimulating. They make sure that all pupils actively take part in lessons, for example, through paired or group discussions or through drama. The key skills of reading and writing are developed well through other subjects.
- The teaching of literacy skills varies. Teaching in two Year 6 lessons seen resulted in pupils having an amazing understanding of language that gave life and personality to their poems about buildings and mountains. Their use of language in one of the lessons was spine-tingling and truly spiritual. In other lessons, including in some reading sessions, the pace of learning was not good because of a lack of challenge for all pupils and too much time being spent on practising rather than extending skills.
- Similarly, mathematical skills are developed well in some lessons, with an emphasis on the use of agreed strategies, good attention to the use of correct language and insistence on accuracy. However, a lack of challenge or less effective use of assessment means that not all pupils make good progress. In lessons observed, more-able pupils worked through the same problems as all others in their set before moving on to extension activities.
- Phonics are now taught well and pupils apply their knowledge of sounds well to their reading and writing.
- Teaching and provision in the Reception Year are good. Children enjoy the broad range of activities provided indoors and outside.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs, together with pupils with particular learning needs, are given mostly good support by teaching assistants when they work in small groups to enable them to engage in their learning and make progress.
- At times, teaching assistants give pupils too much help and so slow the development of pupils' own thinking and understanding. Teachers do not plan for the use of teaching assistants so effectively during whole-class sessions.
- Teachers provide a range of stimulating homework which is marked regularly and supports pupils' learning well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils show a very positive attitude to their learning. They work well together and support each other in lessons, and enjoy their relationships with each other at break times.
- Pupils show a mature level of responsibility for their behaviour. For example, the school council recognised that difficulties arose during football games at play time and requested a referee for their games.

- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel very safe in school. Pupils assured inspectors that any 'falling out' or bullying is dealt with swiftly.
- Behaviour is managed well by staff who are innovative and flexible in their support of individual pupils, including those who are vulnerable.
- Pupils' attendance is checked by leaders, with the support of governors, and non-attendance and lateness are followed up rigorously.
- The well-organised before-school club provides a neatly presented choice of breakfast in a calm and purposeful environment. The school is flexible in its arrangements as the leader accepts changes in numbers at short notice to fit in with parents' work arrangements.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Staff feel valued and supported at the school. One staff member stated that she 'has watched the school blossom into the safe, nurturing school that it is today'. This is the result of the dedication of the headteacher and all staff in working to help all pupils to feel valued and have confidence in their learning.
- The headteacher and senior leaders communicate their ambition and expectation to raise standards. Planning for improvement reflects this aspiration and focuses on a small number of key priorities. In addition, action has been taken to eradicate weak teaching.
- As a result of these actions standards have improved, but checks on the quality of teaching are not sufficiently regular, rigorous or tightly programmed to quickly identify areas of weakness and drive rapid improvement.
- The teaching and learning policy has not been reviewed in the light of recent initiatives; it does not set out agreed practice in teaching. Feedback to teachers about observations made of lessons does not sharply pinpoint areas for improvement. In addition, leaders do not check that these improvements have been made in a timely fashion.
- Pupils' progress is now being checked in greater depth and with improved accuracy. Meetings to discuss the progress of individual pupils in each class are not held often enough to quickly identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind, or to discuss how to further accelerate the progress of others.
- Due to inconsistencies in pupils' progress, the school does not provide full equality of opportunity. However, pupils who have particular learning or behaviour challenges are enabled to remain in school and in this respect the school has enabled equality. Discrimination of any kind is not accepted in school, and pupils as well as adults respect and value each other.
- The school provides a range of interesting and stimulating activities, including a range of opportunities for the development of musical skills. Involvement in the Comenius project has deepened pupils' appreciation of similarities as well as differences between the cultures of the countries involved. These activities widen pupils' knowledge and further their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has given good support both in evaluating the effectiveness of the school and through the help given by advisers in school, for example with Early Years education and the

with teaching of mathematics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is active in checking a number of aspects of the work of the school, including safeguarding, attendance and action taken in the school development plan. Governors review the school's pupil progress information and know the schools' strengths and areas for development, including the need to improve progress and raise standards. However, governance requires improvement as governors do not have a clear understanding that teaching requires improvement or ensure that the self-evaluation process is sufficiently regular and rigorous. The governing body manages the performance of the headteacher and staff. Systems are in place for the approval of pay awards so that these are always tied to how well staff help pupils to achieve. The governing body checks that the budget is spent appropriately to support pupils' achievement, including the additional funds provided through the pupil premium.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121024
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	412114

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Samantha Johns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Henery
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01493 750322
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