

Fakenham Infants' School

Norwich Road, Fakenham, NR21 8HN

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards in reading and writing are lower than those in mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals reach lower standards than other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and some teaching is inadequate. Teachers do not always set work at the right levels to challenge all pupils.
- Marking does not tell pupils in enough detail what they need to do to improve or how to do this.
- Teachers do not yet have opportunities to learn from the good teachers in their own school and outstanding teachers in other schools.
- The information that leaders collect is not used well enough used to gain a good understanding of how well pupils in Key Stage 1 are progressing.
- Leaders do not use their accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching robustly enough to drive improvements in the classroom.
- Subject leaders do not have all the skills they need to drive and monitor improvement.
- The governing body has an over-generous view of the school's effectiveness and their role of challenge is underdeveloped.

The school has the following strengths

- Nursery and Reception age children make good progress. Teaching here is consistently good and the provision is well managed.
- The school has good links with a range of appropriate agencies and this supports vulnerable pupils well.
- Attendance has improved.
- Relationships across the school are warm and harmonious. Pupils are well behaved both in lessons and around the school.
- The school's leaders have correctly identified what the schools should do to improve but there has been insufficient impact of measures taken to date.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons and one assembly. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and three members of the Governing Body. In addition the lead inspector talked with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break and lunch times.
- A range of school documents were reviewed. These included safeguarding policies, improvement plans, governing body meeting notes, monitoring files and records of pupils' behaviour and their progress.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter received from parents. They also considered replies from 24 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jarvis

Additional Inspector

St. John Burkett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fakenham Infant School is an average-sized infant school, with increasing numbers.
- Most pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well-below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional government funding based on the number of children looked after by the local authority, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals. In this school there are only pupils from the last category.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is below average. The proportion that is supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A children's centre operates on the school site and is governed by the school. It was not inspected as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress accurately and use this information to set work that is at the right level to challenge all pupils
 - making sure that marking and feedback are linked carefully to improving pupils' skills and helping them to know how to improve their work
 - providing training for staff regarding what is good or better teaching, including opportunities to learn from good teachers within the school and outstanding teachers in other schools.
- Raise standards and improve the rates of progress of all pupils by ensuring that:
 - gaps between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils are narrowed
 - recent initiatives to raise standards in reading and writing are embedded.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - taking action to deal with inadequate teaching and that which requires improvement
 - ensure that data are used effectively to identify the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - developing the leadership roles of staff, especially those new to subject leadership so they can effectively check and improve the school's work and pupils' progress
 - ensure governors develop a good understanding of pupils' progress and are able to hold the school to account for pupils' performance.

An external review of the governing body should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because good progress is not sustained consistently throughout the school. Attainment in reading and writing over time is uneven. The attainment of pupils in the national screening check for reading at the end of Year 1 was below the national average in 2012.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding reach lower levels than other pupils. In 2012 their attainment was approximately 6 months behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, a much wider gap than that seen nationally. School data show that this gap has narrowed in 2013 although these pupils are still behind their peers.
- The majority of pupils make expected progress over Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 they reach standards which are broadly average in mathematics and slightly below the national average in reading and writing. The gaps between pupils' attainment in reading and writing with the national average have not narrowed overall in the last 5 years.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally below expected levels. Consistently good teaching in a stimulating and well-organised environment helps children to make good progress and as a result most reach expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.
- The school has taken action to strengthen the teaching of reading and writing. This is having a positive effect on reading but is not yet impacting fully on writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported sensitively in class by additional adults, who are well-briefed to address their specific needs. Some also benefit from spending time in a nurture group and receiving additional support in small groups. As a result most make as much progress as other pupils in their class.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 is not consistently good. Some lessons are good but too much teaching requires improvement and some teaching is inadequate. No outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to make sure activities are always set at the right level for pupils and their expectations of what pupils can do are sometimes too low.
- When pupils are working on their own, adults do not always check on how well they are doing during the lesson or mark the work they complete. Consequently their progress is not as rapid as that of pupils who are working directly with the teacher or other adults.
- Lesson objectives tend to focus on what pupils will do rather than on what they will learn and limited use is made of targets to support pupils learning. Marking does not give clear advice to pupils on exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- In good lessons, teachers model very well what pupils need to do to succeed, they have high expectations and plan interesting activities. This, together with effective behaviour management,

keeps pupils engaged and ensures that good pace is maintained. This good practice was observed particularly in a Year 2 art lesson and a mixed Year 1 and 2 mathematics lesson.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The well-organised environment encourages children's independence. There is a good range of learning activities based around meaningful themes, which capture children's imaginations, and appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those that children select themselves. The strong emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills meets their needs well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are appropriately targeted for extra help, usually from teaching assistants. The school has used pupil premium funding to provide support for speech and language and additional teaching assistants. As a result eligible pupils are this year narrowing the gap between their attainment and that of their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a calm, friendly and orderly place. Behaviour in lessons is mainly good. Behaviour in the playground is also good partly because the school provides a range of play equipment which pupils enjoy using. Pupils themselves and parents and carers, agree that behaviour is good.
- Arrangements for making sure that the school is safe are effective and the views of pupils and their parents support that this is the case. Pupils feel safe at school and learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as on roads and when using the internet.
- Discussions with staff who support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs show that the school has extensive links with external agencies and is active in supporting children and families who need additional help.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of different forms of bullying and say that there is little bullying in school. Scrutiny of school records pertaining to bullying incidents shows they are right.
- The school works hard to promote regular attendance by stressing the impact of being absent from school. Attendance shows a year-on-year improvement and is now above the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching have not always been focused sharply enough on the quality of learning or progress made by all pupils in lessons. They do not align information collected about the quality of teaching, work seen in books and data collected about progress. As a result their judgements on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make are not consistently accurate.
- Some leaders do not yet have the skills needed to check, challenge or support their colleagues to bring about improvements to teaching in their subjects or year groups.
- The school has recently introduced a new system for checking and tracking the progress made by different groups. However this information is not yet used effectively to identify when progress is not fast enough.

- Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve the teaching of and progress in reading and writing through the introduction of a comprehensive new scheme. This is starting to improve standards and progress in reading but is not yet embedded enough to have the same impact in writing. This does, however, demonstrate that there is the capacity for improvement within the school.
- Leaders use their knowledge of the quality of teaching to inform the management of teachers' performance. However, the targets they set teachers for pupils' progress are not rigorous enough to bring about consistently good progress.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for the school through an annual visit and report. This has not ensured that attainment overall improves at a fast enough rate or that gaps in attainment are narrowed.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good teaching and a particularly well-planned curriculum ensure that children make good progress.
- The curriculum encourages pupils' enjoyment of school and learning. The planning for reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 is adapted effectively in some lessons, promoting good learning and progress, but this is not consistent in all lessons. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring equal opportunities throughout the school and there is no discrimination. However, because of the variation in teaching quality, pupils do not yet all have the same opportunity to make good progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive and members are closely involved with the school and committed to its success. Governors carry out their duties diligently and give close attention to reports that they receive from the school and the local authority. However the governing body has gone through many changes since the last inspection, including 4 different chairs, and governors are aware that they do not have all the skills they need to fully hold the school to account. They do not know how the school is tackling any underperformance or how well different groups of pupils are progressing. The use of pupil premium funding is reported in detail to the governing body, however they are unclear as to the progress made by the pupils benefitting from this extra funding and the gaps that exist between the attainment of these and other pupils. Governors ensure that all legal requirements are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils. They access relevant training provided by the local authority.

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	121005
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412648

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane West
Headteacher	Yvonne Parker-Beeson
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
Telephone number	01328 864511
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