

Ringsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road, Ringsfield, Beccles, NR34 8NZ

Inspection dates 4–5 July 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is not enough good or better teaching to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well in mathematics.
- Some pupils are not developing investigative skills in science as well as they should.
- Activities are not always planned to suit the abilities of all pupils and the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow.
- During lessons, teachers do not always check that pupils understand what they are doing.
- Teachers' marking, particularly in mathematics, does not always provide pupils with clear comments on how to improve their work. Pupils are not given enough time to respond to comments written by teachers.
- The subject leaders for mathematics and science have not had enough time to improve the quality of teaching to ensure good or better achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and governors have secured a strong partnership between Ringsfield and Brampton. They have created a cohesive team spirit across the two schools.
- The executive headteacher has driven through significant improvements which have led to improved teaching and good achievement in literacy. There are early signs of improvements in the progress pupils make in mathematics.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and are attending school more regularly than previously.
- The programme of activities, including those shared with Brampton, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, including one which was observed jointly with the executive headteacher.
- The inspection of Ringsfield Primary School was carried out at the same time as the inspection of its partner school, Brampton Primary School. Inspectors held joint meetings with the staff from both schools and with the governing body. The lead inspector for Ringsfield held meetings with the executive headteacher, the heads of both schools, and a group of pupils. She spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector took account of the 10 responses to the online Parent View survey, spoke informally to parents and reviewed eight questionnaires from staff.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits from the local authority, safeguarding and behaviour files, data on pupils' current progress, information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching. She also looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became part of a two-school federation with Brampton Primary School in July 2011. The two schools share the same executive headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Each school has a separate budget. Each school has a head of school to oversee the day-to-day running of the school. The executive headteacher was previously the deputy headteacher at Brampton. Brampton was inspected on the same two days as this school. It has a separate inspection report.
- Both schools have just completed the change from first schools to all-through primary schools. This is the first year that the schools have had Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those with a parent in the armed services or those in the care of the local authority) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The percentage of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage.
- A greater proportion of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education than is the case in most schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils to good or better, particularly in mathematics and science, by:
 - using the very best teaching across the federation to improve the quality of teaching
 - always planning tasks that build on what pupils already know and are able to do
 - adjusting teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils during each lesson and moving them on to more demanding tasks as soon as they are ready to tackle them
 - improving marking so that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve, and giving them the chance to respond to this in lessons and in their books.
- Strengthen the leadership of mathematics and science by:
 - making sure that enough time is given to monitor closely the quality of teaching and the impact this has on pupils' progress
 - providing tailored support and training for all staff in mathematics and science.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because most pupils do not do well enough in mathematics. Pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English because teachers do not plan precisely what different ability groups in their class need to learn. Pupils are assessed in mathematics; these assessments are not always used effectively to ensure work is set at the right level.
- Although pupils gain a good knowledge of a range of science topics, they are not provided with enough opportunities to use more complex investigative skills because teachers usually plan for all pupils to practise the same set of skills, irrespective of their ability. As a result some pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of in science because they are not encouraged to extend their investigative skills.
- The school's assessments show that most pupils currently in school are doing well from their different starting points in reading and writing. Most pupils make good or better progress across the school. As a result, attainment in these aspects of English at the end of Year 6 is well-above average.
- Phonics (linking sounds to letters) is now taught rigorously. As a result, pupils read confidently and fluently. Pupils sound out letters and blend them to read unfamiliar words accurately. One pupil in Year 2 explained that, although she does not have a favourite author, she likes the 'Gruffalo' stories because they are funny. The school successfully develops pupils' enjoyment of reading, and encourages parents to be fully involved through a variety of methods including the 'reading cafe' where staff model good reading habits and all adults share books with pupils.
- From broadly average starting points when they enter the Nursery class, children make good progress in some areas of their learning, particularly in their personal development. Most children enter Year 1 with skills that are at least in line with those expected nationally, and often above, especially in mathematics. Pupils' mathematical skills are not developed as well as their English skills in the rest of the school.
- Pupils develop good writing skills. Teachers identify many opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects. Displays of writing reflect high levels of attainment, for example, as they write instructions on how to make musical instruments or persuasive letters in order to encourage people to visit Southwold the 'land of sand'.
- Assessments are undertaken every term. This information identifies pupils who need extra help. The success of this help can be seen in the strong and sustained improvements in pupils' reading and writing achievement over time.
- There are no real differences in the progress made by groups of learners in different subjects. The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is the same as other groups in school. They make good and often outstanding progress in reading and writing, but their progress requires improvement in mathematics.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, the pupil premium money is used to fund an additional teacher every morning in order to teach pupils according to their ability in English, mathematics and science. This is securing good progress in English, particularly in helping pupils

to develop effective reading skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because too few pupils make good or better progress in mathematics. Pupils are not always encouraged to use more complex enquiry skills in science.
- Teachers do not make explicit use of assessments to plan work that is suitably matched to the wide range of abilities in their class in mathematics and science. As a result, pupils do not always work at the right level to secure faster rates of progress. Too often, pupils of different abilities complete the same task, despite there being a wide range of abilities in each group.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that teachers do not routinely assess pupils' level of understanding in lessons. As a consequence, pupils are not moved on in their learning quickly enough to complete more demanding tasks. Furthermore, teachers do not mark pupils' work well enough to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how to improve. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to respond to the marking.
- The teaching in some lessons is good and occasionally it is outstanding. In these lessons, teachers sequence learning so that pupils build on what they can do already in order to make rapid progress. They use assessments well to pitch the work at the right level.
- Much has been achieved in strengthening the teaching of English. Leaders have planned rigorously to ensure that literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum. They have provided good support and training for all staff, including a rigorous phonics programme.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are welcoming, polite and friendly. They all get on well together. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils say that behaviour is good. They enjoy school and have good relationships with staff.
- The school is highly successful in making sure that those pupils who have previously found managing their own behaviour difficult prior to coming to this school make rapid gains in their self-control and in their personal development.
- Parents are confident that pupils behave well in school, a view supported by the school's behaviour log, which records no incidents of serious misconduct or bullying.
- In all lessons, there are good relationships between pupils and adults. For example, children listened carefully to instructions when they played contrasting loud and soft sounds, reflecting the ebb and flow of the sea. They were keen to achieve the teaching assistant's high expectations. All were highly motivated, creative and cooperative as they played their instruments. All reflected on their own and each other's performance. This contributed strongly to their spiritual and social development.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and none could recall any incidents recently, apart from some name-calling which they say is dealt with quickly. Pupils have confidence in the school to keep them safe. They say adults listen to their concerns and deal with any incidents if and when they occasionally occur.

- Pupils have many opportunities to take on extra responsibilities such as acting as play leaders or helping with planning a new playground. They take these roles very seriously and display mature and confident attitudes.
- Attendance levels have been below average. More recently, attendance has improved and current attendance is average. Staff now act decisively and quickly where the absence of any pupil gives cause for concern. The school takes a firm stance and does not authorise holidays during term time.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and governors have driven improvement and ensured that the recent federation with Brampton is using the talents across both schools to secure the very best for the pupils. This is already having a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement in English and the quality of teaching.
- Staff morale is high and all are striving towards the executive headteacher's ambitious targets for further improvement. All teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make in their class through regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress where teachers are asked demanding questions about how they are going to secure good or better achievement.
- Teachers' targets for improvement are clearly linked to the school development plan to ensure a collective drive towards improvement. The executive headteacher has an excellent understanding of what effective teaching looks like. She provides clear guidance to teachers on how to improve their practice.
- Partnership work is used well to support training for staff. Teams of staff plan together from both schools; they assess and check the accuracy of assessments. Leaders have made some use of the strongest teaching, in particular, effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to model strong practice for others. However, sharing good practice has yet to be rolled out fully to support the teaching of mathematics and science. Equally, there has yet to be focused training and support for all staff in these two subjects.
- Work is continuing to support and challenge the very few teachers whose performance is not consistently good or better. Teachers are expected to teach well, and pay increases are only given when their performance justifies it.
- Leaders' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The head of school oversees the day-to-day running of the school. His role is developing well. Together with the head of school at Brampton, he supports the executive headteacher well in ensuring that the two schools continue to improve.
- Leaders and teachers responsible for different subjects other than the executive headteacher are beginning to make checks on teaching through observations, sampling pupils' books and measuring the progress pupils make. Supported by the executive headteacher, the head of school has made sure that improvement work has had a significant impact on the teaching of English.
- All staff at both schools have reviewed how subjects are taught. There are well-thought-out activities which promote pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding well. Literacy is taught particularly effectively in other subjects. Every opportunity is used to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through 'European day of languages', a link

with a Grenadian school and topics such as 'homes around the world'.

- The local authority has given this school a light touch in the past. More recently it has guided the governors successfully through the process of setting up the federation and provides specific support for the executive headteacher.
- Other partnerships are strong. There are close links with other local schools and the community, including the local church. Both Ringsfield and Brampton undertake joint activities such as residential visits and regularly participate in events organised in the nearby town of Beccles, including art projects.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe meet requirements well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an excellent vision for the development of the federation, based on a clear understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and the needs of the community of both schools. They have been highly effective in managing the recent federation of the two schools.
 - They are well informed through the executive headteacher's reports and through their own regular monitoring. They use this information to provide the right level of support and challenge through probing questions about the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
 - They fully understand the procedures for performance management and the structures for improving the quality of teaching. They are now ensuring that teachers' pay is matched carefully to their performance.
 - They have ensured a sustainable financial future, including how well the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact this is having.

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	124741
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	412903

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Kay
Headteacher	Victoria Allen (Executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
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