

St Edmund's Community Foundation School

Kilhams Way, King's Lynn, PE30 2HU

Inspection dates

9–10 July 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

- Achievement requires improvement. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in English or mathematics. Boys do not do as well as girls, especially in English.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Pupils are given too little time in lessons to work on tasks that match their abilities because, often, too long is spent on starter sessions listening to the teacher.
- Tasks for the more able do not bring out their best because they are not demanding. As a result, too small a proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests.
- Not enough is done to develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, slowing the progress that they make.
- Leaders and managers have not had a sufficient impact on the quality of teaching since the previous inspection to enable pupils to achieve well.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvements initiated by the headteacher and supported by governors have led to better teaching recently, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2.
- There has been a significant improvement in the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Children are given a good start and make rapid progress.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- A new marking policy adopted by all staff means that all pupils now get excellent feedback on what they need to do next to improve their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by nine teachers. Eight of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, looked at samples of their work, and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff and with a member of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held in meetings with groups of pupils, and inspectors talked informally with pupils in lessons and around school, and with parents before and after school.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered as part of the inspection but the school's own parent survey, recently completed, was examined.
- A variety of documentation was examined, particularly that related to the safeguarding of pupils, the safer recruitment of staff, governing body minutes, the tracking and progress of pupils, the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and relevant school policies.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Edmunds is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes throughout the school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with an above-average proportion coming from mainly other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The school receives pupil premium funding for these pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is well above the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Many pupils start in the nursery class but a significant proportion do not attend nursery and start in the Reception class.
- There is a breakfast club for children each morning, run by the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- St. Edmunds is a Local Authority lead school for the 'Restorative Practice' approach to discipline, which focuses on building understanding to repair harm.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - reducing the proportion of time pupils spend passively listening to the teacher, and increasing the proportion they spend on activities that match their abilities.
 - improving planning so that tasks are demanding enough for the most able
 - using ICT more effectively to support learning in a wider range of subjects
 - managing behaviour better so that pupils remain focused in lessons.
- Improve the proportion of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, by:
 - raising expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve in every class.
 - improving the early identification of more-able pupils so that they are always given sufficient challenge.
 - providing more opportunities for problem solving and independent learning across the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, and governors, by
 - ensuring that the new teaching and learning policy is fully implemented by all staff
 - improving the existing resources for ICT to support learning and extending the resources when the budget allows
 - working more effectively with families and external agencies to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly
 - improving pupils' behaviour and reducing exclusions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement has been variable since the previous inspection. In 2012, standards were below average. Boys underachieved and were about two years behind the girls in English, and a year behind in mathematics. No boys achieved the higher Level 5 in English or mathematics.
- Boys are making much better progress now in all year groups. School data show that the gap is closing rapidly.
- In Key Stage 1, progress has been slow over recent years so that pupils still work at levels well below their age. In 2013, however, a significant improvement in attainment for reading, writing and mathematics shows that progress has accelerated this year.
- Pupils' performance in the 2013 Year 1 screening check for phonics (letters and sounds) shows a significant improvement compared with the 2012 scores because decisive and successful action was taken that improved the quality of phonics teaching.
- In Key Stage 2, progress is good for the large majority of pupils, although attainment, particularly at the higher levels, remains below average because work is not always challenging enough for the most able.
- In 2012, pupils for whom the school receives additional funding were a term behind their classmates in English and a year behind in mathematics. These pupils are making accelerated progress now as a result of targeted one-to-one support that has been introduced recently. Teaching assistants have been effectively deployed to provide additional support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified quickly and good support is given by well-trained staff.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain higher standards than others in the school because they benefit from early extra support and good use of translation services.
- Children start school with skills and experiences that are well below the levels typical for their age. Many do not understand or speak English when they join the school. Early assessments show that they are particularly low in early reading and mathematical skills and often have problems managing their feelings and behaviour. The improved environment they enjoy in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the effective teaching helps them to make good progress so that they have begun to close the gap on the level expected for their age by the time they join Year 1.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school and this means that the progress of pupils is mixed.
- Planning is not consistently good. While planning for the mixed-age classes takes account of most abilities, sometimes expectations are not high enough, particularly of what can be achieved by the more-able pupils. There are too few opportunities for all pupils to develop problem-solving skills and good independent learning.

- Sometimes, teachers spend too much of the available time going over work already learned, or explaining tasks, and this limits the time available for pupils to carry out their own more challenging work which is better suited to their different abilities. The limited ICT resources have an adverse impact on teachers' use of ICT as an effective tool to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects.
- In some classes, pupils are allowed to call out and this often delays the progress of others. However, relationships between adults and pupils are warm and, in other classes, behaviour is managed well and pupils stay on task, especially when given exciting work that they can do independently.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers provide effective support and a good balance of activities which are well matched to the abilities and interests of the pupils. The children new in Reception settle quickly to the routines and soon integrate well with those who start in Nursery. However, in both year groups, not all opportunities are taken up for discussion with the children, for instance, to encourage them to play more mathematical games.
- The rate of progress is good in Years 5 and 6 because teaching provides increased challenge, especially to ensure pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics accelerates. High expectations for good behaviour ensure that pupils stay focused throughout the lesson.
- The new marking policy is already making a difference because it guides staff to ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to make further progress. It is being implemented thoroughly.
- The best teaching motivates and engages pupils so that they enjoy their activities and work hard. Pupils make the best progress where there is a significant practical element to provide them with high levels of challenge. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, pupils were totally absorbed in solving practical mathematical problems.
- Teaching assistants are directed effectively to support pupils' learning in class and to provide additional one-to-one support, particularly for older pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement.

- The behaviour of a few pupils is sometimes disruptive in class, when teaching is not good, so that not all pupils make as much progress as they could. Over the last year, there has been a higher level of temporary exclusions than the national average for primary schools.
- Discussions with parents showed that there are mixed views about the standard of behaviour in school. Inspectors judge it requires improvement. The school has made considerable progress in improving pupils' behaviour. While it is not good, incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly. New systems are in place to reduce the amount of missed school time through exclusion and all staff have been trained to implement the policy.
- The 'Restorative Practice' system, where pupils are encouraged to discuss their behaviour with those who are upset by it, and so build understanding and improvements, is beginning to show a positive impact. However, not all the younger pupils have a good enough understanding of how their poor behaviour can affect others.

- Nevertheless, pupils are adamant that they feel safe in school. There is a generally calm atmosphere and, in class, most pupils are eager to learn and behave well.
- Older pupils have a good understanding about bullying and are keen to look after the younger ones. They have a good understanding of internet bullying and take pride in being given school responsibilities. When bullying does occur, pupils say that it is dealt with well. They feel that the trained pupil mediators have played an important role in improving the school atmosphere.
- The school has spent considerable time and effort in improving attendance from a low point two years ago. School analysis shows attendance is now broadly average overall, but there remain a small number of pupils whose attendance is poor.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership at all levels is not yet good because neither achievement nor the quality of teaching is consistently good. Pupils, particularly the more able, are not yet achieving well.
- Work with families and external agencies to ensure that all pupils attend regularly, while making an impact, is not fully successful. While the work of leaders and managers has improved pupils' behaviour, there are still more temporary exclusions than average.
- The headteacher has improved a range of important areas in school life. The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and phonics teaching is more successful. Improvements are evident in the behaviour of most of those pupils who find good behaviour difficult. The proportion of good teaching has improved and inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen.
- Leadership has recently been strengthened by the appointment of a senior teacher, which has enabled an increase in the amount of time the headteacher spends working with teachers to improve the quality of teaching. The new teaching and learning policy, which is at an early stage of implementation, provides a good basis for this.
- Effective systems have been put in place to monitor the performance of staff. Pay rises are linked to the progress of pupils. Lesson observations have been used to help accurately identify the professional development needs of staff, who have responded positively to increased training.
- Pupils' progress is tracked through the school and the process works well in identifying pupils in need of extra support to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to learn. However, those who are more able are not identified early enough to make sure that they are always given work that is demanding enough in class. As a result, the attainment of these pupils suffers.
- An appropriate range of subjects and topics engage pupils in learning and help develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The strengthening of learning across different subjects has increased opportunities for writing. For example, in one topic observed, pupils wrote about the Tudor fabrics they were studying. The breakfast club provides a welcoming start for those pupils who participate.
- The school manages well the funding provided to support pupils entitled to the pupil premium.

The money has been spent to provide a range of academic and pastoral support such as one-to-one teaching and increased staffing to meet the behavioural and emotional needs of pupils.

- The local authority provides good support for the school. In particular, it has helped to strengthen the governing body.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has been through a period of change and has carried several vacancies until recently. The local authority has intervened to ensure a full complement of members. Governors are well trained and are beginning to hold the school to account more effectively. They regularly check on the progress being made on the priorities of the school improvement plan.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development within the school but they have not ensured that resources for ICT are sufficient to support pupils' learning and this holds back progress. However, they otherwise manage finances appropriately, ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent wisely and checking that staff salaries relate to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
 - The governing body ensures that all the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.
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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	120876
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401976

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Watkins
Headteacher	Lisa Cook
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2010
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