

Little Snoring Primary School

Thursford Road, Little Snoring, Fakenham, NR21 0JN

Inspection dates 11–12 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

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It has not been consistently good enough to promote good progress.
- Pupils' achievement in English, and particularly in mathematics, requires improvement. Pupils currently in the school have not made enough overall progress to reach the standards they are capable of.
- In some lessons, teachers do not plan work well enough to develop fully the skills and ability of all pupils. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- The most able pupils are not given hard enough work to ensure they reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always make sure lessons move at a suitably demanding pace.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves, particularly in mathematics.
- Marking in mathematics is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to know what they need to do to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are now making better progress, particularly in reading and writing, and standards are rising steadily.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe in school and have great confidence in their teachers to deal with any problems that may arise.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning and progress, especially for pupils who need extra help.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education provided.
- The strong leadership from the headteacher is resulting in marked improvements in teaching and learning, achievement, and attendance.
- The school's clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses informs the effective school development plan.
- The effective governors and headteacher ensure that all staff make a strong contribution to school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons and a support group, taught by four different teachers. Two of these sessions were seen together with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke formally with one group of pupils and informally with others during work and play.
- The inspector visited an assembly, listened to pupils read and discussed the work they have been doing in class.
- The inspector reviewed pupils' work, with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed the school's work and considered a range of information it provided regarding: pupils' achievement; records of governing body meetings; records relating to attendance and behaviour; the school's own evaluation of its work; and information on the setting of targets for teachers.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and spoke informally with parents and carers.
- An evaluation was made of the views of staff expressed in 10 questionnaires.
- During the inspection the Year 6 pupils were on transition visits to their secondary school.

Inspection team

Terry Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from armed service families) is average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are well above average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2012.
- The school has three classes, all of which contain pupils of mixed ages.
- The headteacher has been in post for two and a half years. There have been considerable other changes of staff since the previous inspection, and a high level of staff absence in the last 10 months.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to at least good, and so improve pupils' progress, by:
 - planning demanding but achievable tasks and activities that challenge all pupils at the right level, particularly the more-able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' progress and understanding during lessons and adjust work to meet their needs, especially those of the more-able pupils.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - marking pupils' work in mathematics consistently well throughout the school, and including clear guidance to pupils about how to further improve their work
 - giving pupils more chance to explore and find out things for themselves
 - enabling pupils to practise and refine their mathematical skills in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is improving, particularly this year, but pupils have not yet made enough progress to close gaps in their learning and skills in English and mathematics left by previous underachievement.
- Children join the Reception class with very low levels of skills for their age, and make good progress. Children's speech and language skills are particularly weak on entry, and this has an impact on the development of their reading and writing skills across the school. Children are helped to settle quickly. They play together well and are well behaved. They enjoy finding out things for themselves, alongside adult-led activities, both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) systematically and effectively. In the national Year 1 phonics check last year, half the pupils reached the expected standards, slightly below the national average. This year the results are much higher and two thirds of the year group reached the expected level.
- The results in national assessments in 2012 at Key Stage 1 show that progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. The current school data for both Year 1 and 2 show rapid improvement. Better teaching is improving standards, and they are currently average. Many pupils write confidently, read well and are developing a secure understanding of the skills required to succeed in mathematics.
- In 2012, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was significantly below the national average overall and in mathematics, and below in English. However, fluctuations from year to year are due in no small part to the small size of each year group. For example, the current Year 6 contains only four pupils. This means that national data are not always meaningful.
- The 2012 Year 6 was also unusual because an exceptionally high proportion of the pupils had a statement of special educational needs. Nonetheless, in that year, fewer pupils than average had made nationally expected progress in Key Stage 2, and virtually no pupils exceeded expected progress in either English or mathematics. This is a result of past underachievement. That this trend has been reversed is clear from the school's own data, which show that most Year 6 pupils made expected progress or better from the end of Year 4, and progress is currently accelerating and attainment rising.
- The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 shows improvement from 2012, but is yet to reach last year's national average. Data show that the pupils in Year 6 are making at least nationally expected progress. Progress in the Years 3 to 5 is accelerating rapidly in all subjects, although it is not as fast in mathematics as in English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar progress to their classmates. The current school data show that the gap between their attainment and that of others is narrowing at a good rate.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, the use of pupil premium funding to create smaller teaching groups and increase one-to-one support has had a positive impact on the progress made by eligible pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There has not yet been enough consistently good teaching to support good progress over time. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was effective, but teachers are not yet adept at ensuring work is always well matched to the full range of pupils' abilities.
- Initiatives implemented by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching are increasing the rate of pupils' progress. Staffing difficulties have been overcome and this has been an important factor in helping the school to improve teaching quality. Although half the teaching seen during the inspection was good, it has been very variable in the past, leading to some underachievement in previous years.
- The weakness in teaching is seen when work is not demanding enough for pupils who should be working at the higher levels, the pace of the lesson falls and, consequently, pupils do not always learn as quickly as they could in classes of wide-ranging ages and abilities. Pupils are not challenged enough to find out for themselves as teachers give too much guidance and direction, and thus slow the impetus of learning. This applies more to mathematics than English. The help pupils get in advancing their mathematical skills, for example, is not always well adapted to their levels of learning.
- Marking of pupils' work usually tells them what they have done well and how to make further improvements. However, this is not consistent, especially in mathematics, where there is not enough emphasis on involving pupils in setting targets to help them, more directly, to improve their work.
- Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and teachers use them well. As a result, lessons generally proceed at a good pace.
- Teaching in Reception is good. A good level of consistency in the approach to learning benefits the children. Good partnerships with parents help children to settle into school quickly and make a good start.
- Reading is taught well in Year 1, and the quality of teaching is improving as a result of strong leadership which is determined to make sure that the basics of each subject are well taught.
- In the very best lessons, expectations are high, good use of praise encourages the pupils, lessons are well paced and tasks are pitched at exactly the right level. Success is within pupils' reach, but they have to work hard and think deeply to succeed.
- Tracking of pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics is now more rigorous. This has sharpened the focus on improving these skills. However, teachers miss opportunities for pupils of all abilities to apply their developing skills in other subjects.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in all classes are very good. These positive relationships help to engage pupils in their learning and lead to good behaviour and attitudes.
- Skilled teaching assistants work effectively in the classroom and also lead small groups. This means that pupils who need extra support, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium, receive sufficient help to make similar and sometimes better progress to that of other

pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good, even when the pace of the lesson falls. Pupils say that behaviour is good and all of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire or met the inspector agreed with this. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. They work well together and show enthusiasm for learning. Pupils say that they 'love coming to school to learn because no one judges you'.
- The behaviour policy is effective. Pupils say that bullying occasionally happens, but the school deals with it very quickly. There have been no exclusions for several years.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school; parents and carers agree. Pupils know that they can talk to a member of staff if they have a problem and that they will get help to resolve it. The school has visitors who talk with the pupils about how to keep themselves safe both inside and outside school.
- The school provides a breakfast club where pupils are able to prepare for the day. This contributes well to their social development and aids good behaviour. Adults around them are good role models and their good manners are readily adopted by pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their very positive relationships.
- Effective management of behaviour and good use of praise and encouragement contribute to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, older pupils support the younger pupils very well. The singing assembly was a wonderful example of how successfully the school has fostered pupils' confidence. It was entirely supported by pupils from the older class and was extremely well presented.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance. It champions regular attendance through a range of incentives and rewards, including half-termly certificates for 100% attendance and 'A Ted dance' bear for the best class attendance. As a result, attendance has risen steadily to be close to the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a well-defined picture of where the school needs to be and knows exactly how to get there. Supported by a dedicated team and skilled governing body, her swift action is improving the school quickly.
- Everyone understands the school's strengths and areas that need improving, and the priorities that will result in higher achievement. Decisive actions have created a strong and determined staff team that is quickly removing a legacy of low expectations for pupils.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. Very effective systems to track and monitor the progress of pupils give ambitious but tight targets for the performance of staff and pupils. The quality of teaching is improving rapidly and pupils' achievement is getting better. Teachers' performance is carefully linked to a training and support programme. Teachers are rigorously held to account for the progress of their pupils. Training is continually being used in order to build their professional skills.

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- Leaders successfully ensure that discrimination is tackled and all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. Pupil premium funding is well targeted and monitored carefully to ensure it is making a difference for eligible pupils. Half-termly meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress, to identify suitable strategies to advance pupils' learning, and to assess their impact. These are very successful in supporting all pupils, including those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances.
 - The school provides an interesting and well-balanced curriculum, with a good range of visits and visitors to promote good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Effective partnerships with local primary schools enhance training for staff. The staff say they have good opportunities to share information between schools and learn from each other.
 - Parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's leadership and would recommend the school to others. One parent said that 'staff are brilliant - supporting not only the child but the family as well'. The inspection evidence shows that this is a justified picture.
 - The local authority has provided effective support, including training for governors and regular monitoring. It offers an objective view of the school's performance through its visits and reports.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is very effective. The governing body is determined and ambitious in its drive for improvement. It has confidence that the current headteacher will take the school to 'good' and possibly beyond. It understands the strengths of the school and what is needed to improve it. It understands the data on pupils' achievement and raises appropriate questions relating to the progress of pupils. Governors make regular visits to the school to check on all aspects of school life. This strengthens their ability to challenge and support the school. They have a thorough understanding of how pupil premium funding has an impact on pupils' progress. The systems to check on the performance of staff, including the headteacher, are effective. Governors ensure that all national requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are met.

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	120828
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412882

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Riches
Headteacher	Lisa Dodge
Date of previous school inspection	20 Oct 2009
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