

Catfield Voluntary Controlled CofE Primary School

School Lane, Catfield, Great Yarmouth, NR29 5DA

Inspection dates 9–10 October 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		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

- Attainment by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is slowly improving, but has been below average for a number of years.
- Pupils are not yet making fast enough progress in writing, which lags behind reading and mathematics.
- Despite general improvements to the outdoor space, the outdoor area for Reception children remains underdeveloped and is not used well to promote their skills and understanding.
- The teaching of children in Reception is not sufficiently well focused on their current understanding and individual learning needs.
- The quality of teaching is often good but remains too inconsistent to ensure all pupils make good progress. The existing good practice is not yet shared widely enough.
- Teachers' marking and feedback in lessons do not always help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's strong, determined leadership has helped to raise the quality of teaching and learning. She has led the school well through the partnership with two other schools and the creation of a federation.
- Good leadership has led to much better teaching of reading and a swift rise in pupils' achievement and enjoyment of books.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They talk openly about how much they enjoy school and how teachers help them to learn new things. They behave well and feel safe.
- The governing body provides strong and effective challenge and support to the school's leaders.
- Vulnerable pupils such as those who are disabled or have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons and parts of lessons in the school, and two parts of sessions in the pre-school. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, pupils, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- There were too few responses from parents and carers to the online survey, Parent View, for it to be helpful, but the inspector analysed and took account of the school's most recent parental questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at key documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and the plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Catfield Voluntary Controlled CofE Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools.
- It has recently been in a partnership with two other local small schools, led by the current headteacher. Since September this has become a full federation with a single governing body.
- Since the last inspection the school has experienced a significant level of staff absence.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is very high in some year groups but broadly average overall.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club and a small pre-school that share the school's site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching consistently good or better by:
 - spreading existing good practice, and making more effective use of expertise across the federation
 - giving pupils feedback that consistently helps them know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work
 - giving pupils more time to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own and each other's efforts, and to reflect on what they have learned.
- Accelerate progress and improve standards in writing by:
 - adapting and extending the methods that have proved so successful in teaching reading to support pupils' writing
 - improving the consistency of pupils' handwriting
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to practise their skills by writing longer pieces of work.
- Improve the achievement of Reception children by ensuring that the planning of activities is based on clear assessments of their individual needs, and developing the outdoor area as a learning resource.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Despite improvements, the quality of teaching has not been consistently high enough to sustain good achievement, particularly in writing. Current standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average, although this represents steady improvement over the last five years, from a time when pupils left the school more than a year behind pupils nationally.
- When children enter the Reception class they have skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Good progress has been evident in past years, but it has been affected by staffing changes and achievement now requires improvement in most areas of learning. However, the current children are already demonstrating a good level of personal, social and emotional development, evident in the way they have settled rapidly into school life. Parents and carers say this is one of the school's major strengths.
- The school has recognised that pupils' better progress in developing their writing skills has not yet had sufficient impact on standards. Although pupils are capable of producing some very effective writing, such as some work seen following a visit to London, they do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. Staff do not spend as much time teaching individuals or small groups of similar ability as they do so successfully in reading.
- Standards in reading are rising rapidly and currently pupils are making progress that is better than that expected. The literacy leader has shown very effective leadership in developing the successful new system for teaching reading. This is leading to higher reading standards and an improved love of books throughout the school.
- Standards in mathematics have been a recent focus for improvement through training for staff and changes to teaching methods. Pupils' progress is improving rapidly and is much closer to the rate expected nationally.
- The results of the phonics check in Year 1 have shown that for two years standards have been above those expected. Well-chosen staff training has resulted in good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and current pupils in Year 1 are developing an enjoyment of books and stories.
- Although the small year groups make specific year-on-year comparisons unreliable, it is clear that at the end of Years 2 and 6 there is a picture of rising standards over time.
- The school's data show that there are no significant differences in the achievement of particular groups. The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is too small to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals. However, they make progress at least in line with, and often better than, that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often make good progress. The strengths in this area, particularly in supporting pupils' emotional and behavioural development, help these pupils to succeed, even when they have severe needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is some good teaching, not enough is consistently good in all classes. The high level of staff absence has made it difficult for leaders to ensure enough teaching is of high

quality to help all pupils do as well as they can, but they have not done enough to spread existing good practice within either the school or the federation.

- Despite improvements to the way teachers mark pupils' work, it is not yet fully effective in helping pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to reach the next level. There is some good practice, especially in the marking of written work, but it is not consistent in all classes. Even so, the introduction of a good system for pupils to keep a record of their achievements, and to share this with parents and carers, is proving very successful.
- The teaching of writing is not fully developed. It is rarely matched well to pupils' needs, and some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of styles and for different purposes. Where they are given the chance they show they can produce some high-quality work, such as leaflets about the local village.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often provide very effective support, particularly for the less-able pupils, in classes and in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This helps those pupils make good progress. However, the way Reception children are catered for, in a class with a wide range of ages and abilities, is not currently appropriate to support their individual learning needs. This is because activities are not planned well enough or based on a clear assessment of the children's prior learning.
- The best teaching is well planned and creative. This was observed during the school's art and design afternoon, when a range of staff and volunteers regularly use their interests and expertise to help pupils make good gains in their creative development. An excellent quality of work often results.
- The teaching of reading has improved dramatically recently and this is having a clear impact on pupils' learning. Teachers work with small groups of similar ability and this enables some very deep and meaningful discussions about the texts to emerge. Pupils talk about how much they enjoy this work, and their knowledge of the characters and events in the stories is extensive.
- Where teaching is good, lessons are lively and interactive. This happened in a literacy lesson when pupils were able to use computers to write an autobiographical account in a specified number of words. This generated great motivation in pupils and created positive attitudes to learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers establish strong and positive relationships with children when they start in Reception, and good relationships with the pre-school staff. This supports children's attitudes to school and learning. The current group has settled quickly and happily into the expected routines.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in lessons throughout the school. All those spoken to said they 'love' coming to school. One who joined the school from elsewhere talked about how much she was now learning. A major strength is the way the pupils care for each other. They have a very mature attitude towards pupils who find conforming difficult, for example.
- The before- and after-school clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to socialise and follow and develop their own interests. There is a calm start to the school day. The behaviour in the pre-school is good and social aspects are developed well through the staff's good relationships with the children.

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Parents and carers are largely positive about behaviour and most agree the school manages behaviour well. Pupils respond well to responsibility. The school council, which involves all of the pupils, has a major impact on this aspect of their development and it has done some extensive work to improve the school resources and facilities. In addition, pupils take their 'Eco' role very seriously. Charity work to raise money for a village in Malawi had a significant impact on the pupils when they heard about the impact of the money they had raised.
- Pupils say that bullying does not occur in the school. They are confident that if there was any it would be dealt with well by staff. They have a good awareness of how new technology can be used for bullying purposes, and how to avoid it.
- Attendance remains below average, although it rose in 2013. There are very few persistent absentees but the small size of the school means they can have a disproportionate impact on the statistics. The school works hard to encourage parents to understand the importance of full attendance.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because there remain a small number of incidents of poor behaviour that affect pupils' learning. This is reflected in the exclusions rate being above average, although these are carried out correctly and appropriately.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body have led the school well through its development into a partnership and then as part of a new federation. Because of this, it has improved significantly since the last inspection even through a period of significant staffing difficulties.
- Detailed development planning provides the school with a clear set of targets and aims for the future. Responsibilities are divided appropriately, given the size of the school. The work of subject leaders and others who have leadership responsibilities, such as for literacy or for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, shows that the school has a strong capacity to continue improving.
- The headteacher has introduced a clear and efficient system for tracking and recording pupils' progress. This makes it much easier for all staff to recognise the strengths in their teaching and any gaps in pupils' learning. These can then be more quickly addressed. Although good, this system is not yet able to record the progress made by children in Reception.
- The issues raised in the last inspection have been fully addressed. This has resulted in some notable improvement. For example, the introduction of records of achievement, partly kept and recorded by the pupils, makes their levels and targets much clearer to them and to their parents and carers. The consistent rise in standards, even though year groups are very small, also reflects good leadership.
- The leaders are not complacent, and are willing to look beyond the school's walls for support and advice. This is best reflected in the work done to improve teaching and raise standards in reading. The strong leadership of the literacy leader has clearly had a very positive impact on the pupils' skills, wider reading habits and enjoyment of books. She has achieved this through work on a reading skills research project and with advice from external expertise. More remains to be done to use expertise in the school and across the federation to spread high-quality teaching skills more widely.

- The headteacher monitors teaching and learning by observing lessons and checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. This provides staff with useful professional feedback. All in the school know the individual pupils and their needs well. The school is very effective in its work to ensure equality and a lack of discrimination, and this is supported by the positive views of pupils.
- Teachers' performance is checked carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses. The challenging targets set for teachers are based appropriately on improving pupils' progress, the priorities in the school improvement plan, and individual needs.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been affected by staff turbulence and requires improvement. The leadership of the pre-school is good and improving rapidly. The staff who teach the Reception children do not currently plan for children's individual needs well enough. The outdoor accommodation requires refurbishment and resourcing, and its use as a learning environment is not well planned.
- The local authority has provided effective support as the school moved into federation. In addition, the improvements in the teaching and progress made in mathematics have been led by staff from the local authority. Training and advice for the staff in the pre-school have also been effective in improving the way children are catered for.
- The funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life and benefit from, where appropriate, specific resources and adult time. The progress made by these pupils is monitored by the headteacher and governors. The school has good plans to use the new primary school sport funding to provide more sporting activities, and to assess the impact.
- The good curriculum includes a lot of creative activities that have a positive impact on standards in many subjects. A good range of enrichment activities includes extra activities for gifted and talented pupils at a local secondary school and the residential outdoor activities in which all pupils have the opportunity to take part. Excellent use of outside expertise, such as that by a visiting artist, enhances and enriches pupils' learning. The curriculum, together with the close links to the church, contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Strong governance is a major strength of the school's leadership. The single body of governors for the new federation have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A range of useful data gives them a good grip on how well the school is performing. Some visit the school regularly and report back on their findings. For example, a recent visit was focused on reading was followed up by a presentation by the literacy leader. Activities such as these keep the governors informed and actively involved in school life. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance management and appraisal systems, and how these have been used in the past. They are well aware of the quality of teaching and the need to improve its consistency. Decisions about teachers' pay are rare due to the size of the school, but when needed they are closely linked to performance and responsibilities. Governors track finances well and support the school in deciding how to spend the money to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium. They ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current national requirements.

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	121103
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425280

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	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angie Johnson
Headteacher	Mary Blackie
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2011
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