

# Bure Valley School

Hungate Street, Aylsham, Norwich, NR11 6JZ

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could do in reading and mathematics. They do not always fully understand what they read or have varied enough reading opportunities in the different subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with a wide range of interesting tasks in mathematics.
- Pupils are not always given enough time to practise and to develop their skills in lessons.
- Additional adults who support learning are not always well used and at times pupils' work is not pitched at the right level.
- Methods to promote good behaviour are not consistently applied by all staff or understood fully by parents
- Leaders checks on teaching are not focused sharply enough on the quality of pupils' learning and progress they are making.
- Leaders do not check closely enough on the work of teaching assistants or provide them with sufficient guidance on how to improve their skills.
- Some subject leaders have not yet fully developed the expertise to enable them to carry out rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Governors have not checked up on the school's performance systematically enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attainment across the school is rising.
- Good use has been made of training opportunities to improve pupils' achievement in writing. Pupils are making more rapid progress in this skill than previously.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they really like their new school building and grounds.
- Pastoral care is good. Staff take care to promote pupils' well-being and personal development.
- Leaders use well-organised tracking systems to check how well pupils are doing and to identify those who need extra help. As a result, gaps in attainment are closing.
- The school makes good use of its partnerships with other schools and the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with senior leaders, and two assemblies. Fourteen members of staff were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school leaders and staff. A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to them reading.
- Inspectors took account of written responses from parents and 75 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed responses from 27 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at achievement data and attendance information, improvement plans, systems for checking the quality of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Buckingham

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are daily breakfast and tea clubs during term time, which are managed by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a significant change of staff and governors and considerable upheaval due to building works.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - lesson introductions are not too long so that pupils remain motivated and have the maximum time to practise and to develop their skills
  - the best use is made of all adults throughout lessons to move learning forward more quickly
  - the correct level of work is provided for pupils right from the start of lessons so that all pupils make the best possible progress.
- Raise achievement in reading and mathematics by:
  - adopting a consistent approach to the teaching of reading with a focus on helping pupils to understand fully what they read
  - ensuring pupils have a wider range of reading activities that build more effectively upon their zest for reading
  - providing pupils with a wide range of interesting tasks in mathematics which motivate them to try hard to apply their mathematical skills and which extend the thinking of more-able pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders focus more sharply on the quality of pupils' learning and progress when they carry out their checks on teaching
  - leaders check more closely the work of teaching assistants and provide them with helpful guidance to enable them to improve their skills
  - the roles of all subject leaders are fully developed so that they can contribute more effectively to improving teaching and learning in their subjects
  - governors continue to develop more systematic ways to hold senior leaders fully to account for the school's performance
  - strategies for managing pupils' behaviour are applied consistently by all staff and are fully understood by parents.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average. The school's information for 2013 shows that there is an upward trend in attainment across the school and pupils made broadly expected progress. The recent downward trend in mathematics has been halted.
- The teaching of reading is not consistently good enough to speed up pupils' progress. There is insufficient emphasis on making sure that pupils really understand what they read. Pupils say that they like reading and that they are inspired by a range of authors. They choose books keenly from the new library. The school has not built fully upon this zest for reading by providing pupils with regular and varied reading activities.
- In mathematics, opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in interesting tasks are not provided consistently across the school, although there are some good examples. During the inspection, good teaching linked identifying angles in mathematics to real life, encouraging pupils to find a variety of angles for themselves. Pupils said that this learning was 'fun' and they made good progress.
- The school recognises the need to improve the progress of more-able pupils in mathematics. Pupils do not always receive work that is well matched to their ability. They say that, sometimes, the work is 'way too easy' and that they prefer work that makes them think harder. By the end of Year 6, however, more-able pupils make marked improvement in writing.
- Leaders use outside expertise well to develop consistency in the teaching of writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes, often linked to history, geography and real-life events. By the end of Year 6, they write with maturity and increasing complexity of expression.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make equal progress to their classmates. Some make good gains towards their personal goals because they take small steps in their learning and respond well to the extra help they receive which builds their confidence in their own abilities.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium was lower than that of their classmates. By the end of Year 6, they were about a year behind in reading and writing and nearly two years behind in mathematics. The school's most recent information shows that gaps in attainment are closing across the school and the attainment of eligible pupils is rising, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils participate keenly in physical education lessons and sports activities. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils demonstrated good teamwork and hockey skills. Since the previous inspection, the school has raised the importance of healthy eating and encourages pupils to keep 'Fitness Logs'. Pupils are proud of their success in inter-school team sports.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good enough to ensure pupils achieve well. There is some variation between classes in how well teachers succeed in motivating pupils to learn and maintain their interest.

- In some cases, lesson introductions are too long. This means pupils do not have enough time to use and to develop their skills. As a result, they do not always finish their work and make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers do not make the most of the additional adult help available during lessons. Too often, additional adults are insufficiently involved in working with pupils and in aiding the pace of learning right from the start of lessons.
- The aims of lessons and the work set are sometimes too general and not matched precisely to the range of ability in the class. Pupils work for too long on the same task before they tackle work that is better matched to their abilities. As a result, they do not learn as much as they could.
- In the lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they will achieve by the end of the lesson. They encourage pupils to talk about their work and to explain their reasoning. Teachers ask probing questions to make sure that pupils understand and give pupils the opportunity to judge for themselves how well they are doing.
- Teachers' marking in books has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers point out the next step in learning and give pupils the opportunity to respond to their written comments. Teachers enthusiastically celebrate pupils' achievements and reward their efforts.
- Teamwork is at the core of the school's organisation. Staff are starting to work and to plan well together and value the opportunity to share expertise with each other. As a result, they are adopting a more creative approach to curriculum planning to link learning across a range of subjects. For example, a topic on chocolate included writing, history and science work.
- Teaching assistants and support staff help pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to understand their learning and to succeed. They provide them with strong pastoral support and encouragement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- A minority of parents, pupils and staff expressed concern over the school's promotion of good behaviour. Inspectors found that the behaviour of all pupils is not managed consistently well. New plans and systems are having a positive impact on managing pupils' behaviour. There is, however, some way to go to ensure that strategies are applied consistently by all staff and that parents understand the school's methods.
- Most pupils behave well and are interested in new experiences. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well show improvement over time. The best behaviour occurs when pupils are fully motivated and actively involved in lessons. In those instances when their interest is not captured by the teaching, they become inattentive and do not focus fully on their learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know who to speak to if they have a problem. They remark on how the new school premises add to their sense of security. They value their roles as 'Friendly Faces' and school councillors to help others.
- Pupils talk sensibly about different forms of bullying and what it means. A minority of parents expressed concerns over the school's handling of bullying. The inspection found that the school

is doing much to raise the understanding of bullying amongst pupils. Pupils are proud to be 'Ambassadors' of anti-bullying, having received training at the local secondary school.

- The school does much to promote good attendance and rates of attendance are above average. Pupils say they are happy to come to school, a view supported by parents. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite subjects and activities. Most pupils are keen to earn 'Privilege Cards' as a reward for good behaviour and learning in lessons.
- Pupils say they feel well cared for by staff. Good arrangements exist for helping those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, leading to raised self-esteem and increased confidence.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The leadership and management requires improvement because, although pupils' achievement is improving, it is not yet good. Upheaval caused by building work and significant staff changes have slowed some plans for improvement but the school is now back on track to continue to move forward.
- Staff performance is checked regularly and targets are set to improve their work. However, systems used by leaders to check the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on the impact of teaching on learning and pupils' progress. Firm arrangements are not yet fully established to check the work of teaching assistants. As a result, they are not clear about how well they are carrying out their duties or how to improve their skills.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team have created a common sense of purpose amongst staff. The skills of newly appointed staff are recognised and are used well, especially in the bid to promote consistent behaviour management. Some staff who are new to leadership roles are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning. They are being well prepared to take a lead role in monitoring their subjects by working alongside more experienced members of staff.
- Effective local authority support has helped the school to improve pupils' achievement in writing and to develop useful anti-bullying strategies. Training given to staff matches the needs of the school well, especially in developing leadership roles and in adopting a consistent approach to the teaching of writing. Positive responses from staff questionnaires indicate that they feel well supported.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a suitably broad range of subjects, enhanced by activities that promote pupils' enjoyment and widen their experiences. Strong links with other schools and providers extend experiences for pupils with positive effect on developing their sporting, musical and academic skills. The breakfast and tea clubs provide pupils with a calm and nutritious start to the school day and a sociable time at the end of it.
- Although it is too early to assess the impact of the use of additional sports funding, the school has suitable plans to extend staff expertise in conducting sports and physical education lessons, and to monitor the impact of this work on pupils' physical well-being and health.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity. Well organised systems are used by leaders regularly to check the progress of all pupils and to identify those who need extra support. Pupil premium funding is spent on extra staffing and resources, taking care to meet the needs of individual pupils. The school's information shows that the attainment of eligible pupils is

improving and gaps are closing.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know how well the school is doing and recognise areas for improvement. Many governors are new to the governing body. They benefit from sharing expertise with others and attend a range of training courses. They are keen to develop more systematic ways to check the school's work in order to hold leaders more effectively to account. Governors are aware of the link between good teaching and good achievement and how it relates to teachers' pay. They check the performance of the headteacher carefully. Governors have supported leaders and staff effectively at a time of recent staff changes and upheaval caused by building work. They analyse data and know what impact the pupil premium funding has on pupils' achievement and well-being. The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively and ensures safeguarding procedures meet requirements through regular reviews of policies and site security arrangements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120911
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	425419

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Gentry
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Starling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 733393
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