

Great Witchingham Church of England Primary School

The Street, Lenwade, Norwich, NR9 5SD

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Progress in reading and writing is good because both are taught methodically and teachers all use similar methods.
- Pupils say they particularly enjoy learning outdoors and are proud of their follow-up work, such as their diaries.
- Physical and spiritual well-being is promoted by the wide range of physical education activities pupils enjoy, which also help them to work together well.
- Pupils and staff make sure that the very high proportion who join other than in Reception are made welcome so they settle quickly and get on well with their classmates.
- Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding because it fully permeates school life.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know that their welfare is at the heart of everything staff do.
- Behaviour is good because clear systems are applied equally by all staff, and behaviour benefits from the positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- School leaders move throughout the federation, each bringing their expertise to benefit the school and its pupils.
- School leaders and governors have improved teaching since the last inspection through high quality training. In turn, this has raised standards, particularly so in writing.
- Governors are highly organised, manage the school very well and play a full part in driving school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching, particularly of mathematics, is inconsistent because the best teaching is not used as a model by all.
- Not all marking makes clear to pupils what they need to do next, nor do teachers check pupils understand and follow their guidance.
- Pupils do not learn quickly enough in some mathematical activities because the tasks they are given are not hard enough.
- Pupils are sometimes confused because not all teachers have the same understanding of how to teach calculation.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use numeracy skills to solve interesting problems.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons. All were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and carers, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to enable consideration of them. The inspector therefore met with some parents and carers. The responses to seven staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's self-evaluation; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bob Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time of entry is very high. In 2012–13, for example, 25 pupils left or joined during the year; equivalent to about a third of the school population.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is extra government funding for children looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and some other groups.
- 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. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- In 2013, there were insufficient pupils in Year 6 for a judgment to be made about whether the school meets the current government floor standards, the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since July 2011, the school has been part of the Trinity Federation of Church Schools with Hockering and St. Peters, Easton. The schools have the same leadership team and governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, building works meant that the eldest class had been re-housed in the hall and the independent mothers and toddlers group were off-site for a short period of time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - sharing the good practice in the school more widely, particularly in the teaching of mathematics
 - ensuring that marking clearly shows each pupil's 'next steps' in learning, and that teachers check pupils have read, understood and responded to it.
- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the level of challenge is sufficient for all pupils to make accelerated progress
 - checking that all teachers fully understand and follow the school's approach to teaching calculation
 - providing more relevant, interesting and open-ended tasks which offer pupils opportunities to choose how to apply their numeracy skills to solve them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The very high proportion of pupils leaving or joining other than at the usual time of entry makes it difficult to apply the usual progress measures for schools. In 2012, for example, only one pupil of the 11 taking the test started in Reception. In 2013, this was one of seven. This year only two pupils due to take the tests in 2014 started in Reception. For this reason, progress is best measured within each academic year, rather than from one year or one key stage to the next.
- Children who join the school in Reception start school with a range of skills and experiences that are generally well below average. They make good progress because they are given a good range of interesting tasks to do, and because they watch and learn from those in the class older than themselves.
- Throughout the school, progress is good overall. In Years 3 to 6, in 2013, pupils made a little more than four terms' progress in three terms in reading and writing, and three and a half term's progress in mathematics. In Years 1 and 2, they made similarly good progress in reading and writing but progress in mathematics was at the expected rate. 2012 presented a similar picture.
- Because year groups are so small, information about attainment levels varies greatly from year to year. In 2013, the proportion reaching the expected level by the end of Year 6 was about average in English and below average in mathematics. However, the proportion reaching higher levels was below average. As a result, despite having made good progress, pupils left below average in both subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than in reading or writing for several reasons. Firstly, teachers do not all have the same understanding of the way the school teaches calculation. This can leave pupils confused. Secondly, pupils sometimes spend time on tasks that are too easy or too hard, so they do not learn enough. Finally, although most tasks initially interest pupils, there is often too little challenge and they are not asked to think deeply or apply what they already know.
- Phonics (the way letters link to the sounds they make) is taught throughout the school in an intensive daily period. All pupils work with those of similar ability and they make good progress. National screening results in 2013 were a little above average.
- There are not enough pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Last year, throughout the school, most of these pupils made better progress than their peers in English and mathematics and reached higher levels.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are carefully analysed and they are given the right support. Many make very good progress but, because of their needs, their attainment is low.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons start with an explanation of what pupils are to learn and how they will know they have achieved it. As a result, pupils know where to focus their efforts.
- No time is wasted and lessons flow smoothly because of the very positive relationships pupils

and staff share.

- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and experienced so they make a strong contribution to learning. Many have built their skills through the federation and contribute also to teaching in the partner schools.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to clarify teaching and provide visual stimulation to get pupils interested, particularly at the start of lessons.
- Pupils respond very positively to the increased opportunities to find out for themselves. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, they say they like the homework system in the eldest class. Parents, too, say there is a noticeable difference in their children's enthusiasm now they can use their imagination to respond in their own particular way.
- Lessons are generally well planned to engage pupils because tasks are relevant and link one subject to another, so they are made more interesting and relevant. As a result, writing has improved since the last inspection because basic skills are taught well and then practised in meaningful activities in other subjects. All, particularly boys, gain from writing about their first-hand outdoor experiences. The same is not true in mathematics.
- The quality of mathematics teaching varies because teachers have too few opportunities to learn from each other.
- Although the school has a clear marking policy, it is not applied consistently. In particular, pupils are not given a clear understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do next to progress. When teachers do give them advice, subsequent work shows that they have not checked that pupils have read, understood and followed their guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very welcoming of those new to the school and so they quickly settle in and make good progress. The empathy of many is based on their own experiences of joining the school other than at the usual time.
- The school recognises the particular needs of such a mobile school population and has good systems in place. For example, each day each class celebrates one individual pupil, affirming his or her special qualities and uniqueness. This helps build the individual's self-esteem and the class as a community.
- All staff know their pupils well. Teaching assistants particularly get to know new pupils and use their knowledge of all pupils to encourage and motivate them into trying their very best.
- Much is done to support and encourage positive attitudes to learning, and pupils respond well. One group, for example, thinks particularly about a different trait each week, such as 'listening'.
- Pupils feel safe and have a good awareness of safety, including when using the internet. Around the school and in the playground, older pupils look after those younger than themselves.
- While pupils cannot recall any incidents of bullying, they are confident that staff would quickly resolve any that occurred.

- Spiritual development is outstanding because pupils are given many opportunities to think about broad issues and form a view of where they fit in, so they get a clearer sense of their own identity. Outdoor learning also gives them a sense of the spiritual as they work in, and with, nature.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is good because the school follows clear procedures and does not allow bad habits to develop.
- Pupils behave well because they want to. Those new to the school, and the very small number who sometimes struggle to manage their own behaviour, are supported very well by the clear procedures and calm but firm staff approach. Time is given to find the reasons behind any misbehaviour, and eradicate them. The very few exclusions are for appropriate reasons.

The leadership and management are good

- Plans for the future are clear, as are the steps to achieve them. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that the school is improving year on year.
- Governors and school leaders monitor well and react to underperformance quickly. For example, in 2012, they recognised that pupil premium funding was having limited impact. They gave staff extra training and introduced new ways of teaching. As a result, these pupils now make good progress. Equally, leaders have reacted to concerns about the teaching of mathematics by employing a teacher with particular expertise in that subject.
- Information about pupils' progress is analysed and used to allocate extra support, which is then checked to see it is making a difference, and changed if it is not.
- There are clear arrangements for managing and improving teaching. Recent good-quality training has been very beneficial, but some inconsistencies remain and the best teaching, particularly in mathematics, is not shared sufficiently to improve standards.
- The school benefits greatly from the federation. Pupils enjoy working together. Staff say they gain greatly from increased collaboration and sharing of ideas. They have more opportunities to develop and use their expertise.
- The cluster of schools gives practical support; for example, a joint attendance policy so that parents receive an identical message.
- Physical education is given high priority because it is seen as another way to build teamwork. For such a small school, many opportunities are given to pupils so that all, including those with few ball skills, can find an energetic activity they enjoy. The primary school sport funding has been allocated to further widen the opportunities for pupils and to increase staff expertise. Plans set out how the impact will be assessed.
- The focus of all leaders and staff is centred on the pupils and on ensuring that they have a wide range of rich opportunities. Although there has been none, clear procedures are in place should any discrimination occur.
- The local authority gives the school good support, including over the reorganisation of the youngest classroom to better meet the needs of pupils.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are well organised and manage the school well. Committees draw on individual strengths and expertise. Governors have created an affordable management structure that gives the school access to skills from elsewhere in the federation; for example, to manage special educational needs. Careful financial planning and close partnership with parents and diocese has funded new building to further enhance the education provided. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and what is happening about the latter. They regularly check, using a range of methods, how the school is performing. For example, discussions with pupils first alerted them that teachers' marking was having less impact than previously. Pay is linked to performance. They know what is being done to improve the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that all national requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

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	121148
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425320

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Blathwayte
Headteacher	Christine Livings
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2011
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