

Brockdish C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Grove Road, Brockdish, Diss, IP21 4JP

Inspection dates

17–18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in mathematics are not as high as in reading or writing at the end of Year 2 or Year 6.
- Progress is inconsistent across the school and is weaker for younger pupils than for those in Years 3 to 6.
- Planning and provision for Reception pupils, though improved, is not fully effective.
- Although improving, provision for teaching phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has been weak in the current year.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' handwriting or of the quality of their written work.
- Teachers do not give sufficient priority to the quality of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The headteacher has, until very recently, lacked adequate professional support.
- When checking school effectiveness, senior leaders do not focus sufficiently upon the progress pupils make.
- Governors have yet to resolve issues relating to the appointment of the headteacher.
- The challenge provided by governors to school leaders is not yet sufficiently rigorous.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are safe and mostly behave well.
- Standards are generally above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils supported by additional government funding make similar progress to the others.
- Actions taken by school leaders have brought about several recent improvements, particularly in safeguarding and security.
- This is a highly inclusive school. Pupils with a wide range of needs are all supported well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, four of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with the headteacher. Telephone discussions were held with a representative of the local authority and with the school intervention officer.
- The inspector took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. He also looked closely at pupils' written work from the current school year, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brockdish is a very small primary school.
- There are two classes. One includes pupils from Reception and Years 1 and 2. Older pupils, from Year 3 to Year 6, are in the second class.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- No disabled pupils or those with special educational needs are supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services) is slightly above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The current headteacher took over the headship in an acting capacity in April 2012.
- The inspector was aware during this inspection of an investigation by the appropriate authorities into allegations of wrong-doing that did not concern child protection or safeguarding arrangements. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered (where appropriate) alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is consistently good or outstanding, and raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, by:
 - ensuring that planning to meet the needs of younger pupils is sufficiently detailed, particularly in relation to meeting the needs of Early Years Foundation Stage children
 - making sure that staff set higher expectations of handwriting and demand consistently high-quality written work from pupils
 - giving sufficient priority to the quality of work in the full range of subjects taught.
- Strengthen achievement across the school, to ensure that:
 - children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have more choice, both inside and outdoors, and achieve well in all areas of learning
 - pupils across the school make rapid progress in mathematics, ensuring that older pupils have the opportunity to tackle challenging and extending work, and that all pupils produce a greater quantity of recorded work during their lessons, so that standards rise further by the end of Years 2 and Year 6
 - the programme for the teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) is fully and effectively implemented.
- Improve the leadership, management and governance of the school by:
 - resolving, as a matter of urgency, current uncertainty as to the status of the headteacher's appointment
 - working in conjunction with the local authority to make sure that the headteacher has suitable mentor support and that her professional development needs are fully met

- further developing the effectiveness of governance, to ensure that governors provide high levels of challenge to school leaders
- making sure that the checks of teaching clearly explain to teachers how they can improve and are closely related to the progress pupils make.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, although good for some year groups, is inconsistent and better in English than in mathematics. Current progress in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is not fast enough. Provision for Reception children, while adequate, has some shortcomings.
- The overall progress older pupils make has slowed. This partly reflects recent instability in staffing, which has affected learning. Currently, pupils make at least the expected progress in reading and writing in Years 3 to 6, but slower progress in mathematics.
- Numbers of pupils in each year group are low. Standards can vary widely from year to year. Over time, standards at the end of Year 6, from the national tests, are above average, but with a recent downward trend in mathematics. The school is working hard to address this.
- There is limited access to pre-school provision locally. Children start in Reception with skills slightly below those found nationally. They make steady progress. Standards are generally average when they join Year 1, although aspects of language and literacy are less strong. Some aspects of current provision are weaker. Opportunities for children to make choices are restricted, as is the access to the outdoor area. Tasks set do not always allow children to learn quickly enough.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics vary at the end of Year 2, but are mostly above average. However, standards in mathematics are not as high as in reading or writing, with fewer pupils reaching Level 3. This is because the school has not recently provided sufficient challenge and extension opportunities for older and more-able pupils. In addition, the volume of recorded work has been lower across Key Stage 2 than might be expected.
- With low numbers, it is not possible to evaluate the gap between the attainment of pupils supported by pupil premium funding and their peers at Year 6 without identifying individual pupils. Across the school, however, pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make progress mostly in line with the others.
- The teaching of phonics is typically effective, although the proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the screening check declined in 2013 as against 2012. There has been some disruption to phonics teaching due to staffing issues. The school is working to make up lost time. Progress in reading across the school is generally good.
- This is a welcoming school. Disabled pupils and those with diverse and sometimes complex special educational needs, though few, are supported well and make progress close to what is expected nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has experienced disruption recently, with the long-term absence of both trained teaching assistants and changes of teaching staff. This has affected learning, particularly for the younger pupils, with insufficient consistently good teaching to drive rapid progress.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Not enough attention is paid to the quality of pupils' written work, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, and there is

insufficient focus on developing, and using, joined-up handwriting.

- Provision for Reception children has been inconsistent, although provision has improved recently, so that they are making up ground after a slow start. Much has already been done to enhance outdoor learning. Even now, however, planning is not sufficiently precise as to what children will learn and there is limited expertise to accelerate progress.
- Teachers' planning is mostly thorough, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where the teacher routinely plans to meet the needs of individual pupils. Planning is less effective for the younger pupils.
- The checking of and resulting support for pupils' progress has improved. Marking has improved, with the identification for pupils of the 'next steps' they need to take to move their learning on and frequently renewed individual targets for pupils.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding are benefiting from improved support and more prompt tracking of their progress.
- When teaching is best, the pace of learning is brisk. In a successful numeracy session for older pupils, teaching was enthusiastic and support from the teaching assistant had a positive impact on learning. Pupils of all ages were provided for well. As a result, pupils were well motivated and made good progress. This was reflected in pupils' books, so confirming the school's view that mathematics teaching is currently improving.
- The teaching of reading in Years 3 to 6 is effective. Despite temporary disruption to the teaching of phonics, older pupils make mostly good progress in reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. When teaching is best, pupils are enthusiastic and engaged.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Any behavioural incidents are tackled effectively. The school's behaviour management system has been refined and improved, alongside improved recording and analysis of any incidents, so ensuring a more effective response to issues.
- There is little low-level disruption but pupils' love of learning is sometimes adversely affected when teaching is less inspiring. Pupils feel safe and know that adults will resolve any difficulties. While some parents and carers who gave their views indicated concerns about behaviour, this does not reflect the current situation.
- Bullying is rare. The school reacted promptly and effectively to one recent instance, taking all appropriate action. Pupils understand that bullying may take many forms. These are tackled rigorously by the school. All pupils undertake responsibilities which contribute to the community, each one undertaking a daily task, such as fetching the fruit or watering plants.
- Pupils understand the risks relating, for example, to road and internet safety. Year 6 pupils know how to keep themselves safe, and are well prepared for secondary school.
- Attendance is above average in most years, although there was a dip in 2013. Pupils arrive punctually.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Weaknesses in governance have contributed significantly to concerns about leadership and management. These have already been identified by the local authority. Investigations are continuing as to whether correct procedures were followed in relation to the appointment of the headteacher.
- The headteacher received minimal support in her first four terms to discharge her new role effectively. Arrangements made to ensure a successful handover in April 2012 were not effectively carried out. Additional support, following a review in October 2013, has provided a welcome boost and more rapid improvement. The headteacher has prudently drawn upon available expertise from local schools.
- While there have been weaknesses in relation to data and governors' knowledge of statutory guidance, this has not, however, delayed some important improvements, particularly to security and safeguarding. The management of behaviour and monitoring of attendance have improved. Leaders and managers do not make enough use of school data to set ambitious targets for pupils to improve their levels of attainment.
- Much responsibility falls upon the headteacher, but there is an appropriate plan for future shared responsibility across the staff. Further progress has been constrained because of staff absence.
- Arrangements for checking the work of the school and the management of staff performance are generally effective. Lesson judgements are accurate, although not enough focus is placed on pupils' progress, as against teaching. There is now a close link between teachers' performance and pay progression. School leaders have shown the capacity to improve.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. There is a clear view of what is needed to improve further. School leaders closely check the impact of pupil-premium funding. This funding is contributing effectively to better gains in learning for eligible pupils.
- The curriculum makes literacy and numeracy a priority. Not enough priority is given to the quality of other subjects, such as science or history. Clear policies and procedures help to create a consistent approach to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Good use is made of the rich local environment. Pupils experience a good range of visits, visitors and events. Well-supported daily extra-curricular clubs add enjoyment.
- Use of the primary sports funding is planned well. While it is too early to evaluate impact, the school has a sustainable plan to improve the quality of sports coaching and pupils' health through the development of staff skills in coaching physical education, and to increase participation in after-school sports activities.
- Support from the local authority was very limited prior to this term. This has improved following the recent review. A positive working relationship exists between the school and its assigned intervention officer.
- Pupils' good social and moral development permeates school life. Spiritual development is promoted well through strong links with the church. Active links have been established in The Gambia and Ethiopia. Community links and links with parents and carers are improving.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone recent changes in personnel. Leading governors have not

been fully effective in driving change, nor have governors provided sufficient challenge for school leaders. Much time has been expended discussing partnership arrangements with other small schools. The purposeful and skilled newly appointed Vice-Chair is keen, with others, to improve communications within the governing body and ensure that governance is fully effective. A programme of additional training has already been carried out in order to improve governors' skills. Governors have a realistic view of the school's current strengths. They understand data, and can compare the school's performance with national data. They can provide some evidence of challenge; for example, around progress in mathematics. Governors ensure equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote mostly good relationships. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. Governors know what the school is doing to tackle underperformance. They evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in achievement. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	121028
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	433739

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	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Thompson
Headteacher	Mandy Reeve
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
Telephone number	01379 668284
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