

# Bacton Community Middle School

Wyverstone Road, Bacton, Stowmarket, IP14 4LH

## Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

<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

- The proportion of pupils making good progress in English and mathematics is not consistently good. It has varied too much in recent years, in line with the variable quality of teaching.
- Sometimes teachers set work in lessons that pupils have already covered, and the tasks do not deepen pupils' knowledge or develop their research and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils do not build up a range of writing styles or sharpen their reading skills effectively in different subjects.
- Some teachers do not encourage pupils to take pride in their work by insisting on high standards of presentation in their books.
- The effectiveness of marking varies across subjects and some teachers are not setting clear targets, so pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve their work.
- The work in pupils' books does not show sufficiently good progress over time, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils become bored and their attitudes to learning require improvement.
- Some subject leaders are not monitoring the work of their department closely enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Some groups, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Pupils are well cared for in a safe learning environment.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to one another and adults, and their conduct around the school is good.
- The headteacher has succeeded in sharing high aspirations for the pupils with the leadership team and governors. Together they have improved some aspects of teaching and attendance since the last inspection.
- The governors know the school well and are fully involved in its work. They are well aware of its strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders effectively to account.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, across all subjects and year groups.
- Meetings were held with three different groups of pupils, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), results of the school's own survey of parental views, and letters from parents and pupils. The views of the 26 staff who responded to questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and at various documents. These included the school's analysis of its own work and improvement plans, information on pupils' academic progress, records of governing body meetings, and documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Documentation about how additional funds provided through the pupil premium and sports funding are allocated was also considered.

## Inspection team

Caroline Parady, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector
Michael Lavelle	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This middle-deemed-secondary school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- All pupils are educated only on the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been a change in headteacher and members of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. The current headteacher was acting headteacher from April 2013 until his appointment as permanent headteacher in January 2014.
- The arrangements for primary and secondary education in this part of Suffolk have recently been reviewed. This particular school will close to pupils at the end of the summer term 2015.

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

- Make teaching consistently good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
  - help pupils to extend their skills and understanding through activities to develop their problem-solving and research skills
  - provide demanding lesson activities that interest all groups of pupils and help them to succeed, especially the most-able pupils
  - build pupils' key skills progressively, and ensure they do not repeat work.
- Raise achievement in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
  - make clear to pupils, when marking their work, the next steps they need to take to achieve their targets
  - consistently apply the school's strategy to develop pupils' reading and writing skills across different subjects
  - insist that pupils take care over the presentation of their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that subject leaders:
  - rigorously monitor the work of their teams
  - use the results to inform plans for improving teaching and learning, and to check that school policies are being applied consistently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils join in Year 5 with standards that are just below average, and the majority make expected progress in all year groups. However, the proportion who exceed expected progress is too variable between year groups and subjects for achievement to be judged consistently good.
- In 2013, attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average in writing, reading and, particularly, mathematics. However, nationally published data are potentially misleading in terms of progress, as pupils only spend the last two years of Key Stage 2 in this school.
- The achievement of middle-ability pupils is below that of other pupils, and in mathematics too few higher-ability pupils make rapid progress. Inspectors noted that, in some lessons, the most-able pupils were not given harder work than other pupils.
- The school has introduced strategies to improve writing but these have not been applied consistently enough across all subjects to have had the required impact. Inspectors saw few examples of pupils developing their writing skills in the lessons they observed or in pupils' books.
- School data show that pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making better progress than in Key Stage 2, where there have been more changes in teaching staff. The proportion of pupils making good progress has improved in reading and is improving in mathematics, but not in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. The leader in charge has introduced better systems for monitoring pupils' progress, to identify where any gaps lie so they can be tackled. This is having a positive impact on these pupils' achievement, and many more of them are making good progress.
- The headteacher has improved the system of target setting, which is now more challenging. Pupils are now aware of their targets, but are not always sure what they need to do to meet them. Parents are informed on a termly basis of their child's progress.
- The school uses the pupil premium effectively to support the achievement of eligible pupils. As a result, they make good progress and the gap in attainment between these pupils and other groups narrows significantly by the time they leave the school. In Year 8, eligible pupils are currently six months behind their classmates in reading. In mathematics, there is no difference, and, in writing they are six months ahead.
- Pupils supported by the Year 7 'catch-up' funding are making good progress in reading. They benefit from the one-to-one support they receive. However, they do not sharpen these improved skills by reading regularly.
- The school is making good use of the new sports funding. Pupils are taught by specialists in physical education, participation in sports lessons is high and pupils are enthusiastic about them. There is a wide range of sporting activities during lunchtime and after school, along with the opportunity to take part in competitions against other schools. This is having a positive impact on the skill levels of pupils and healthy lifestyles.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is too variable and not enough is good or better, so it does not enable pupils to achieve consistently well.
- Pupils have few opportunities to develop their writing skills in some subjects. In many lessons, the learning activities do not extend beyond completing undemanding worksheets. Inspectors looked at a wide range of books that contained worksheets where all pupils had to answer the same questions, regardless of their ability. These activities are not helping pupils to develop the range of writing styles needed for their next stage in learning.
- In some subjects where teachers share classes, they do not plan together, and the result of this is that pupils repeat work. This was seen in both humanities and mathematics lessons during the inspection. In such cases, pupils do not develop their learning and sometimes lose interest.
- Marking is not always used effectively to help pupils to improve their work. Often marking is just a matter of ticking pupils' answers and making a comment such as 'good work' or 'well done'. Where targets are set, they vary in quality. Although inspectors saw some helpful examples, too many did not give pupils clear guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. For example, 'To work above Level 4, continue to work hard and listen' was too vague. Not all teachers are consistently following the school's spelling marking policy.
- In many lessons, the focus is just on completing the activity without developing understanding and applying learning to new situations – important skills in preparing pupils for their next stage in learning.
- Where teaching was good or better, teachers asked questions skilfully to judge pupils' learning and either move them on to the next stage of learning or provide the help required to make sure they understood. Inspectors saw some lessons where pupils were developing their learning skills because they were given the opportunity to plan their own work, and use a variety of methods and their subject knowledge to solve problems and evaluate their work. In these lessons, pupils were excited about their learning and proud of the work they achieved.
- Other effective features observed included teachers using their good subject knowledge to develop learning activities that motivated the pupils and were at the right level for their stage of learning. They also kept pupils on their toes, so no learning time was wasted and pupils' interest was maintained.
- Homework is set regularly, and it is relevant to the learning in the lesson. Pupils say that staff make sure it is completed and handed in.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because their attitudes to learning are not good enough in some lessons.
- Pupils generally have a positive attitude to learning but, in some lessons, they make less effort as they know there is no hurry to complete work. Inspectors noticed that some books were not well kept and some book covers and folders had been scribbled on. These were often the books where teachers had not marked pupils' work for some time, or did not always insist that pupils presented their work neatly.

- The majority of teachers set high standards of behaviour, but some allow pupils to take too long to settle at the start of the lesson. Pupils told inspectors that lessons are sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Where teaching is good, the pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, respond well to teachers and show a pride in their work.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is generally good. They play well together in the playground, keep it tidy and line up for lunch in an orderly manner. They accept that they cannot always be the first into lunch so they are happy to wait for their turn. Pupils respect their school environment, which is clean and litter free.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and the school helps them to keep themselves safe, as it teaches them about the dangers of using the internet, mobile phones, talking to strangers, road safety and taking the bus home. Parents agree that the school keeps their child safe.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism. They told inspectors that bullying sometimes occurs, but if it does they know who to go to and have confidence that the staff will deal with it effectively.
- Attendance is broadly average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced in the last year. The school has started to intervene earlier if concerned about a pupil's attendance, and this is having a positive impact on reducing absence.
- Pupils told the inspectors that they have opportunities to get involved in leadership activities, such as being sports leaders and members of the school council. They enjoy organising charity events, discos and running enterprise fairs, where they sell the products they have made in design and technology lessons.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The senior leadership team has high aspirations for the pupils which are shared by all staff. They have introduced more rigorous methods of monitoring pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, staff are not consistently implementing these strategies and this is holding back further improvement.
- Subject leaders now have a greater involvement in monitoring the work of their departments, as senior leaders have provided training and support. They maintain an overview of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects but they are not checking the quality of teaching or pupils' work in enough detail to make sure that weaknesses are quickly identified and then tackled to drive up standards.
- The notice to close the school has caused much anxiety and the loss of staff, and the headteacher has been instrumental in keeping morale high. He is working with the primary and high schools to make sure that the transition to the two-tier system is as smooth as possible for the pupils and schools concerned. The school is providing training for staff who are not used to teaching pupils of middle school age.
- The ambition of the headteacher, staff and governors is to make sure that the school continues to improve. As the headteacher commented, 'Our next step is to keep on improving so we achieve our best results before reorganisation.'

- Leaders know the school well and have correctly prioritised the areas that require improvement in order to improve teaching and learning. The school's evaluation of its performance is largely accurate. Joint observations with the inspectors confirmed the accuracy of leaders' judgements and insights.
- The school provides a broad curriculum enriched by activities that link with local universities, the local community, taking part in national challenges as well as trips and visits. The pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed the trips, especially the one to Hilltop adventure centre.
- The local authority is providing support to help raise standards in Key Stage 2. The school welcomes the support and challenge provided by the 'challenge partner' and recognises that it is having an impact on raising achievement, as shown in the school's data for pupils currently in Year 6.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with staff to discuss performance and set rigorous targets based on pupils' achievement and teaching. Staff are supported to meet their targets with suitable training. If staff do not meet these targets, they are not rewarded with a pay increase.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development particularly well. It has links with Thailand and Uganda, and pupils have pen friends in these countries. They take part in musical events and visits to the theatre. 'Languages day' provides the opportunity for pupils from minority ethnic groups to share their culture with their classmates.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is instrumental in guiding the school towards meeting its goals. A group of governors works with the senior team to develop the school improvement plan and takes an active role in monitoring its impact.
  - Governors regularly undertake training. A group have recently been trained to carry out 'learning walks' so they can understand what to look for when judging the quality of teaching. Together with training on the use of data, this means that they have a greater understanding of the daily work within the school.
  - Governors are assigned to subject areas and meet regularly with heads of subject to receive reports on pupils' progress. The Chair meets with the headteacher fortnightly to review the work of the school.
  - The governors are aware of how the pupil premium is spent and its impact on eligible pupils' achievement. They know how staff performance is managed and the link between pay and performance. They rigorously manage the performance of the headteacher.
  - Resources are allocated according to the learning needs of the pupils. The school is financially secure and the governors make sure that they carry out their statutory safeguarding duties in line with 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124816
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	440623

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	380
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wendy Lummis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Belham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 781389
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