

Fressingfield CofE VC Primary School

School Lane, Fressingfield, Eye, IP21 5RU

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching over time has not been good enough to quickly raise standards.
- Pupils' progress, particularly that of boys, is too slow in writing and mathematics. This means that standards are below national averages at the end of Year 6.
- Few more-able pupils achieve the higher grades at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils do not understand the dangers posed by the internet and mobile phones.
- Teachers' marking does not show pupils what they have to do to improve their work.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching over time has been good enough to bring about the rapid improvements in achievement that are needed.
- Subject and other leaders do not analyse data sufficiently to identify where achievement needs to be improved and do not all have the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Governors' concerns over the budget have meant that they have only recently begun to hold school leaders to account for their performance. They have not identified soon enough that the school needs to improve both its teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe in school and their relationships with adults and each other are good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are motivated and keen to learn.
- Pupils take care in the way they present their work in their books.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good.
- Recent measures taken by leaders have improved teaching and this is leading to improved achievement, particularly for the younger pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons covering all classes. Of these, four were observed jointly with the headteacher. A number of other short visits to classrooms also took place.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, subject leaders, seven members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Formal and informal meetings were held with groups of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed work in pupils' book and on display. She listened to pupils read, and observed pupils moving around inside and outside of the school at different times of the day.
- The inspector analysed a range of documentation, including: safeguarding records and those relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; records of monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning; how the school spends their money from the pupil premium and sports funding, the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans; minutes for governing body; notes of visit from the local authority and procedures for dealing with complaints.
- The 52 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into consideration.
- The inspector talked to groups of parents before school informally in the playground.
- The 15 responses to staff questionnaires were taken into account.

Inspection team

Catherine Kiff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes with the exception of the morning Nursery, where children are taught in a single-aged class.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is low. This is extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meal and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below national.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupil attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works in partnership with a Local Leader of Education from the Federation of Gillingham and Palgrave.
- The current headteacher took up post in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing more challenging work for more-able pupils, especially in writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers' marking makes clear to pupils how they should improve their work and that pupils act on this advice to correct their mistakes and misunderstandings.
- Raise standards in writing and mathematics so that they are at least in line with national averages by:
 - arranging activities in both subjects that hold boys' interest and motivate them to do well
 - giving greater emphasis to the teaching of problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - improving pupils' mental mathematics skills so they are able to use this knowledge when doing calculations
 - improving pupils' spelling
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write at length and that they put their knowledge and skills into practice across a wider range of writing tasks.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - leaders check that actions taken to improve teaching and learning are having a clear and sustained impact on pupils' progress and standards
 - subject and other leaders understand how to analyse pupil performance data accurately and develop the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility effectively
 - teaching about the dangers of internet and mobile phone misuse is strengthened
 - governors check on the work of the school more rigorously and ensure that the arrangements for teachers' appraisal and their promotion up the pay scale are based on clearer evidence of their effectiveness.

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

- Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below those typically seen at this age. They quickly form positive relationships with adults and work well with each other. However, their skills in literacy and numeracy remain below average when they join Year 1.
- Pupils do not all make fast enough progress in writing and mathematics as they move through the school and they do not always reach average standards in these subject by the time they leave. The results in the 2013 check on phonics (the way letters link with sounds) in Year 1 were also below the national average.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 fluctuate year on year and have declined in the last two years at Key Stage 2. Pupils' results when they left Year 6 in 2013 were below average in writing, including in spelling and grammar, and in mathematics. Results in reading were average. Boys do consistently less well than girls across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence indicates that too few of the most-able pupils achieve the higher grades or make more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because pupils work is not always sufficiently challenging for these pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is uneven. Some of these pupils make good progress from their starting points but others make less than expected progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- There were too few pupils to judge the achievement of pupils who were known to be eligible for pupil premium funding in 2013 and none the previous year. The school has used this funding to provide more one-to-one support and work in small groups, as well as to purchase additional resources for learning that better address the needs of these pupils. Other eligible pupils lower down the school generally progress at a slightly faster rate to their peers and the gaps between their attainment and that of their classmates in English and mathematics are beginning to close.
- Data held by the school and confirmed by the inspector's own observations indicate that the achievement of pupils lower down the school is improving rapidly. Most pupils across Key Stage 2 are on track to achieve higher standards by the time they leave than those seen this year. However, while pupils currently in Year 6 are currently making good progress, their previously slow progress means that their results are unlikely to match national averages in writing and mathematics.
- Reading is promoted well in the school. Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly in school and parents are encouraged to read with their children. As a result, outcomes in reading are stronger than in mathematics and writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not brought about good rates of progress over time, especially in writing and mathematics.

- In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that the more-able pupils are pushed to move their learning forward quickly and go on to achieve the higher grades, particularly in mathematics and writing. More-able pupils often spend too much time doing more of the same kinds of work and are not given the opportunity to extend their learning by being set harder work.
- Although much of teaching observed in the inspection was good, there is no outstanding teaching. The school has recently started working with some outstanding schools to help more teaching become outstanding, but this initiative is only in its early stages and its impact is not yet apparent.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and generally ensure that pupils develop good attitudes to their learning. In most lessons, teachers make sure that no time is lost and that pupils work hard and keep interested and busy. However, in classes where there are more boys than girls, teachers do not always ensure that boys concentrate on their work sufficiently. As a result, the boys make less progress than they should.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, often their comments do not show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Where teachers do give this advice, teachers do not all ensure that pupils act on it. Consequently, the same errors are sometimes repeated in pupils' books.
- Teaching assistants are generally used well to support learning across the school. In the main, they work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils understand what they are learning about and that they persevere when they find the work difficult.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers quickly establish orderly routines. This helps children to settle and to grow in confidence. As a result, children are eager to explore their environment and work cooperatively in pairs and small groups. Relationships between children and adults are good, and children are keen to try out new experiences. Teachers use questioning well to support learning when children are taking part in adult-led activities. As a result, progress in these sessions is good. However, progress is not as good when children are learning through play on their own. This is because the activities set out for children are sometimes not sufficiently challenging. This is especially the case in the outdoor area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or mobile devices is not wholly secure. Most pupils have a general awareness of the dangers posed by misuse of these systems and devices but not all understand these risks in detail. They are not confident of their ability to prevent their misuse by others.
- In other respects, pupils feel safe in school. Parents agreed with this. They say their children are very happy coming to school.
- Attendance is below average, but it has improved this year. There are good systems for tracking attendance and following up any unexplained absences.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, most pupils show a positive attitude to their work and enjoy learning. They present their work neatly in their books and take pride in their own achievements and those of others. Occasionally, when the work set is not sufficiently well-planned or interesting, their concentration wanes.

- Behaviour is well managed by adults, and pupils respond quickly to guidance and direction. There are rigorous procedures to support the minority of pupils who have challenging behaviour. The school works closely with other agencies and has had a positive effect on pupils who have previously found school a challenging place to be. There have been no exclusions.
- Younger and older pupils enjoy playing together and respect that they may like to play different games as well as playing in mixed-aged groups.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and welcoming. For example, they greet visitors warmly, say 'please' and 'thank you', and hold doors open for each other. They line up and move around the school in an orderly way.
- Pupils respond readily to opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. The school council has made a good start to its work. Representatives are elected and they consult pupils about things that matter to them.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement. Currently, leaders' own teaching commitments have made it difficult for them to monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively. Although leaders collect and analyse information about pupils' achievement regularly and use this to plan improvements, they do not check systematically that these are having the desired impact on attainment. Priorities are not implemented quickly enough.
- Subject and other leaders are not new to their roles but they have only recently started to analyse pupil performance data and measure the impact of improvements across the school. Not all of them are carrying out these new responsibilities equally effectively because they do not all have the skills needed to lead their areas of responsibility well.
- In the past year, leaders have brought significant improvements to teaching and now have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have identified the steps that need to be taken to improve teaching further. Budget constraints have been blamed for the fact that some key plans for developing the school have not happened quickly enough.
- Leaders have forged good partnership with local schools and are working effectively with a Local Leader in Education from an outstanding school to assist in moving forward teaching and learning. As a result, teaching has improved and the majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good.
- Many recently introduced improvements are beneficial. The management of teachers' performance is much improved and is rapidly improving the quality of teaching across the school. In the past, the assessment of teachers' effectiveness has not been securely based on data describing pupils' progress. However, this is now being addressed and leaders have put in place better procedures to track the progress of different groups of pupils across the school and to identify accurately the impact being made by individual teachers.
- The school has the confidence of its parents. Several parents spoken to by the inspector said that they could see changes happening in the school. They confirmed that, although the school was still in a period of transition, they were confident that the headteacher was moving things in the right direction.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the curriculum and links with the local community. This contributes to pupils' good behaviour and generally good attitudes to learning throughout the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life and consider how these relate to their own experiences. For example, pupils watched a clip of a Christian Aid film about a Third World country and discussed how charities can help make the world a better place to live.
- All statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The school checks carefully on all the adults working with pupils and provides regular training for staff on child protection.
- The school has used its additional sports funding to increase the amount of after-school sports clubs. As a result of this, the percentage of pupils attending sports clubs has increased. The funding has also enabled greater opportunities to participate in sporting competitions, which has increased the number of pupils taking part. Additional training has provided teachers with an increased awareness of the physical education curriculum and have improved the quality of lessons in this subject.
- The school makes good use of the practical support offered by the local cluster of schools; for example, ensuring that work is accurately assessed against National Curriculum levels. This is helping teachers and leaders to develop a more accurate picture of pupils' achievement and the progress they are making.
- The local authority has recently provided some support for the school. The Local Leader in Education is supporting leaders to move the school forward. However, the authority has not intervened sufficiently or prevented the decline in progress evident since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not previously held the school to account for the weak achievement of its pupils. More recently, and since the appointment of the current headteacher, governors have identified that they need to check the work of the school more frequently and systematically. They are aware of where the school needs to improve and are working to put systems in place to ensure that the school secures rapid improvements in pupils' progress. They check that pupil premium spending is having a positive impact on eligible pupils' progress. However, in the past, they have been too distracted by difficulties in providing adequate school staffing due to budget constraints and have paid too little attention to how the school's performance compares with that of other schools. Governors have not had a secure enough grasp on the level of pay teachers get or ensured that the teachers' career progression properly reflects their effectiveness.

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	124731
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	432331

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	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Lewis
Headteacher	Mark Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 201
Telephone number	01379 586393
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