

Blundeston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Blundeston, Lowestoft, NR32 5AX

Inspection dates

18–19 March 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		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 have declined since the previous inspection. Pupils have not been making as much progress in reading, writing and mathematics as most pupils of their age, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement. It has not been good enough to get the best out of the pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Staff do not always show pupils how they can be successful in the lessons, or check pupils' understanding of concepts in mathematics regularly enough in order to fill gaps in their understanding.
- Until recently, leaders and managers did not have a strong enough impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The targets they set for teachers are not high enough.
- It is not easy for school leaders or governors to measure the success of the priorities in the school development plan because the wording is too imprecise.
- Changes of staff have affected the leadership of some subjects because some are still developing the required skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- Pupils' current progress is good throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group.
- Pupils behave well. They are keen and interested in their learning and they try hard.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good.
- Recent work shows that governors and school leaders know what to do to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school has good links with its parents and the local community and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons or parts of lessons. Two observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, two members of the governing body, including the Chair, pupils, members of staff and a member of the local authority’s advisory staff.
- Pupils were heard reading and observations were made of the teaching of reading.
- The inspectors sampled pupils’ work in different year groups, examined records of pupils’ progress and read the school’s development plan. A range of other documentation was examined, including policies, practice and procedures that relate to safeguarding.
- The inspectors considered the 31 responses from parents on Parent View, the Ofsted online parental questionnaire.
- Information was gathered from the school’s website and a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Rees-Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has been a primary school to the age of 11 for just two years prior to which it was a first school. In this time the school's catchment has widened and the number of pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs has increased. There have been several recent changes of staff.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils joining and also leaving the school at times other than the usual ones in the past two years.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals or those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is around the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress further by:
 - ensuring that teachers' use of targets leads to pupils' accelerated progress lesson-by-lesson making sure that pupils are aware of the ways in which they can be successful in their learning within lessons
 - ensuring that teaching assistants have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn for themselves and question pupils more effectively.
- Increasing pupils' attainment and understanding in mathematics by:
 - assessing pupils' knowledge more regularly and plugging gaps in their understanding
 - ensuring that younger pupils develop greater fluency in calculation ensuring that the more-able pupils are always provided with tasks that make them think hard.
- Improve aspects of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the performance targets for staff are sufficiently challenging and that the wording is clear so that it is can be certain whether the targets have been met
 - ensuring that ways of measuring success enable leaders and governors to check how well the priorities on the school development plan have been accomplished
 - developing the skills of staff with responsibility for subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils have not made enough progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and particularly mathematics. The proportions of pupils in 2013 making better than the usual amount of progress in mathematics was much lower than average. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected level improved significantly in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013.
- Pupils' do not have a rapid enough recall of number facts to 10 and 20 in Key Stage 1 which slows their speed of working.
- Results in Key Stage 1 have declined in the past two years and were below average in 2013 when there was a significant number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Results in mathematics in Key Stage 1 have declined over a number of years. However, overall KS1 results over time have been above average.
- Children's attainment when they first enter school varies from year to year but it is usual for the attainment of a significant number to be below that expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and well planned learning opportunities.
- In the national check of Year 1 pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make), results have been slightly above average in the past two years.
- Pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs make good progress because they have regular tuition in small groups. The majority of pupils entitled to the pupil premium are also currently making good progress. There were too few of these pupils in the 2013 Year 6 cohort to compare their performance with their peers without potentially identifying them.
- In response to effective strategies introduced, the progress of pupils currently in the school is improving in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers have not consistently identified the immediate things that pupils need to attend to in order to improve their work or ensure that pupils follow these through.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' on-going understanding well enough in mathematics to plug gaps where pupils are not confident in their learning. Because of this, pupils are slow to work out calculations.
- While lessons are well planned, the teachers do not provide sufficient guidance for pupils in how they can be successful in their particular activities. When they write in different styles, for example, pupils have no means of checking for themselves whether they have included all the points which should be included in any particular writing style.
- Teaching assistants are deployed purposefully across the classes but they are often too helpful to individuals who then do not have to think for themselves enough.

- In subjects other than in English and mathematics, the worksheets provided sometimes limit pupils' independence in organising their own way of setting out their work and developing their writing skills further.
- Teachers are good at explaining pupils' longer term goals. They write target statements in words that pupils understand. Teachers keep careful track of progress.
- Teachers offer a good variety of approach. For instance, they make good use of large electronic screens to introduce new learning to help pupils' concentration. Their good preparation of the materials and also of learning resources contributes to efficient use of time in lessons. Teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 and pupils' progress accelerates in these classes.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a spacious and attractive environment contributes to these children's good progress. Every opportunity is taken to help children form letters correctly and leave finger spaces between words, for instance when the children make mother's day cards. There is a good range of activities for children to choose.
- The teaching of children's early reading is good resulting in above average results in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check. The teaching of reading for older pupils has been inconsistent until recently. Recovery is now evident.
- Teachers have good relationship with pupils and manage them well. They provide pleasant, ordered, working environments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very positive about school, enjoy their learning and the extra activities. They behave well in class and around the school.
- Pupils are very polite, for example holding doors open for others. They are considerate of each others' needs. Documentary evidence indicates that behaviour is usually good. In class all groups of pupils try hard and they adopt responsible attitudes to learning, listening carefully to the contribution of others.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because the impact on their learning is not consistently strong. Occasionally, when teaching is not good, their attention wanders and enthusiasm wanes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. They have confidence in the staff. One said, 'We are confident to be ourselves and don't have to pretend to be something else.' They know that they can express their feelings if they are upset and tell the teachers or another adult who then 'make you feel comfortable and happy.'
- Pupils have a good knowledge of their own safety and know about different forms of bullying. They understand how to deal with cyber bullying. They are aware of dangers on the internet. Several pupils bike to school and know about road safety matters.
- Pupils take a responsible part in assemblies, for example leading the prayers. Pupils get along well together and there have been no prejudice incidents, such as racist remarks.
- Warm, caring relationships established by the Early Years Foundation Stage team means that children develop self-confidence, high self-esteem and positive relationships with each other

quickly and make good progress in this area.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school development plan has the correct priorities for further improvement but the wording to indicate whether different initiatives have been met is too imprecise. It is not easy for school leaders to measure how successful it is.
- The organisation of the arrangements for teacher's professional development ensure the inclusion of all staff but the targets for their performance are not always precisely worded and in some cases not challenging enough.
- Recent changes of staff have meant disruption to the development of some subjects. Some staff have little experience of developing their subjects, managing them across the school and in assessing the quality of provision. Good leadership of English and mathematics is helping to improve the curriculum in these aspects.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a good working partnership. The range of lesson observations undertaken by them details both strengths and weaknesses and is contributing to pupils' improving rates of progress.
- Spending of the primary sports funding on sports coaches who have introduced new sporting activities has increased the amount of pupils' involvement in sport. The coaching of staff in teaching physical education, particularly dance and gymnastics, is increasing their confidence in providing purposeful lessons.
- The pupil premium funding has been spent effectively on extra staff for groups of pupils making it possible for small group work. Its effectiveness is seen in the majority of these pupils making better than expected progress currently in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The range of subjects taught provides pupils with a broad range of experiences with good opportunities for extra activities which contribute well to pupils' social development. Pupils take a keen interest in environmental matters and the development of the school grounds.
- The school's good links with other schools support staff's professional development through jointly arranged courses. These links also help ensure the accuracy of pupils' writing levels as teachers check each other's assessments.
- Good links with the local community, including the church, help the school make a strong contribution to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and awareness. Links with parents are effective.
- The local authority has recently been more involved in the school than previously. Its help with joint observations of teaching has helped senior staff judge teaching quality accurately. The local authority has worked particularly well with governors to increase their skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is developing well. It is well led. Members now challenge and hold the school to account through well directed questioning.
 - Members' recent links with classes are giving them a more direct insight into the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

- Governors understand the appraisal arrangements, the link to pay and to the 'Teachers' Standards'.
- They are familiar with the way in which the pupil premium money and sports fund are being spent, the impact on the pupils' involvement in sport and the progress of those pupils entitled to the pupil premium.
- Training has given them a good understanding of progress data.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet 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	124751
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	440621

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.

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Liddell
Headteacher	Kate Schonhut
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2010
Telephone number	01502 730488
Fax number	01502 730488
Email address	admin@blundeston.suffolk.sch.uk

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