

Dereham Church of England Infant and Nursery School

St Withburga Lane, Dereham, NR19 1ED

Inspection dates

1–2 April 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

- Children do not sufficiently develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have declined over recent years, although pupils have begun to make more rapid progress.
- Teaching has not ensured that pupils make consistently rapid progress.
- New subject leaders have not had sufficient time to develop their monitoring roles fully.
- The management and analysis of data is not as efficient as it could be. The school does not always identify significant trends promptly.
- Judgements on the quality of teaching do not always take account of all the available evidence.
- The targets set for teachers to improve their performance are not defined precisely enough.
- Governors do not provide sufficient challenge to school leaders to ensure that the pace of improvement is accelerated.

The school has the following strengths.

- Pupils make mostly good progress in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Children's personal and social development in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning, and they feel safe. Behaviour is good.
- The curriculum is carefully crafted to accommodate pupils' interests.
- Teachers work hard to produce attractive learning resources and activities for pupils.
- Senior leaders know their pupils very well. Pupils are very well cared for. The indoor and outdoor learning areas are attractive and stimulating.
- Systems for evaluating how well pupils are doing are well-established. Staff mark pupils' work thoroughly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- Links with parents and carers are well-developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, five of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school’s senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the inspector also looked at the school’s own recent survey of parental views.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They 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

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dereham Infant and Nursery School is an average-sized infant school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates both Nursery and Reception children.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils come from a Traveller background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the additional funding known as pupil premium (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 broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, so that pupils' progress is at least good, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what all pupils, including the most able, can achieve
 - focusing, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, upon accelerating the development of pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Raise standards so that all pupils, including the most able, achieve well by:
 - ensuring the increased support for mathematics currently evident is reflected in significantly better attainment by the end of Year 2.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, and increase the pace of improvement, by:
 - ensuring that new subject leaders have an opportunity to develop their monitoring roles and acquire a thorough understanding of pupils' performance across the school
 - implementing more effective systems for the management and analysis of school data, particularly in relation to groups, and to the use of specific interventions, so that trends can be identified clearly and quickly
 - ensuring that the evaluation of the quality of teaching takes account of the full range of available evidence
 - improving the performance management procedures by ensuring that targets for improvement are more clearly defined and that staff are held more fully accountable for achieving them
 - ensuring that governors provide a greater degree of challenge to school leaders.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. While the standard of care is high, and children make good gains in their social and personal development, improvements in their skills and knowledge in language, literacy and mathematics are less rapid. Not all Nursery children continue to Reception.
- In Reception, staff also focus strongly on children's social and personal needs. As a result, children's gains in learning are modest in areas such as reading, writing and mathematics, but much greater in, for example, physical or social development. When they join Year 1, their attainment, although slightly improved in 2013, remains well below average. Not enough children make accelerated progress.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress in mathematics is less rapid and there has been a steady decline in standards, so that, in 2013, attainment was below average. Mathematics was also a weaker element at the previous inspection. There are positive signs in the current year, with some accelerated progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. However, there has not been time for this to show through in higher standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have sometimes complex special educational needs are supported well and make progress close to what is expected nationally. The level of challenge for the most-able pupils has been inconsistent, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding in Year 2 in 2013 attained at slightly higher levels than the others. There is a similar pattern in the current Year 2, with funded pupils attaining about one term ahead of the others. Both groups are currently making similar progress. Funded pupils benefit from specifically targeted support.
- The few pupils from a Traveller background attend frequently and make good progress from relatively low starting points, so that their skills are close to those expected.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check was in line with the national average in both 2012 and 2013. Increasingly effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is contributing to improvements in pupils' knowledge. Progress in reading, particularly in Years 1 and 2, is generally good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in the past has not ensured that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made sufficiently rapid progress in developing secure basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The carefully-designed outdoor areas provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning, although staff do not always build effectively upon children's enthusiasm to take their learning further.
- Learning in Years 1 and 2 is now more effective and progress is beginning to accelerate. However, this has not yet had a full impact on standards, particularly in mathematics.
- The checking of, and support for, pupils' progress has improved. There is some good practice in

the marking of pupils' work, with teachers identifying the next steps to enable pupils to move their learning on.

- Teachers take considerable care in the preparation of interesting tasks for pupils. These are attractively presented and carefully tailored to the needs of each group of pupils.
- Pupils supported by pupil-premium funding benefit from well-targeted adult support. Well-trained teaching assistants provide effective support.
- When teaching is most effective, pupils learn well. In a Year 2 mathematics session, pupils undertook practical activities on liquid measure. They had to measure the volume of liquid accurately, as they prepared colourful cocktails. The range of tasks provided well for all ability levels so that all were enthusiastically engaged in practical activities and made good progress.
- Effective teaching of reading skills ensures that older pupils make mostly good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are very positive, contributing strongly to improving progress. Pupils demonstrate a love of learning, when lessons are sufficiently motivating.
- Inappropriate behaviour is rare, with no recent exclusions. Few parents who offered their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils eagerly undertake responsibilities, as when they tend to the many garden plots which enhance the outdoor environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will resolve any difficulties.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of a range of risks. For example, Year 2 pupils know that there are potential risks in dealing with road traffic, or when using computers. In these ways they are suitably-prepared to move to junior school.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils know that bullying may take many forms, but have a shared confidence in the school's ability to protect them.
- Following a decline, attendance has risen strongly and is now broadly average. With more rigorous systems, persistent absence has reduced. Pupils arrive at school punctually.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the school has an abundance of data, current systems do not make it easy to retrieve or analyse key information. Too much focus on individual pupils means that the 'bigger picture' of trends and overall impact of initiatives is sometimes unclear.
- School leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning are broadly accurate, but are not consistently linked to the progress pupils make over time. Systems for setting teachers' targets so that they improve their practice are beginning to ensure a closer link between teachers'

performance and pay progression. However, targets are not sufficiently precise to hold staff fully to account for pupils' progress. This, in turn, contributes to a slower pace of improvement.

- School leaders are over-positive in their evaluation of the school's strengths. Judgements do not take sufficient account of the weaker aspects of achievement or recognise the need to drive change more rapidly.
- The headteacher's commitment is evident in many facets of school life, including the high quality of pastoral care, the extensive knowledge which staff have of individual pupils and the exceptional quality of, for example, the outdoor areas.
- Recently appointed staff with specific responsibilities and key subject leaders are eager to have an impact on raising achievement, although they have not yet had time to develop their monitoring skills or to demonstrate significant impact. Overall, recent appointments are contributing strongly to the better quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is very precisely tailored to the interests of pupils. It is appropriately focused on securing improvements in literacy and numeracy skills, but also introduces themes such as 'Celebrities' which strike a chord with the pupils. Pupils currently access a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities which boost the development of their physical skills.
- Senior leaders track the progress of groups and individuals closely, identifying gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They tailor the provision of extra teaching, particularly for pupils supported by additional funding, so that it is more effective in closing gaps in pupils' learning.
- Use of the primary sports funding is appropriately planned. This is improving the quality of sports coaching and pupils' health through the development of staff coaching skills, alongside new after-school sports activities.
- Support from the local authority has been relatively minor, in line with what is provided for any school previously judged to be good.
- Provision to promote pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is a strength. Links with the nearby church are strong. The 'reflective area' in the school grounds makes a significant contribution to pupils' sense of spirituality. Cultural awareness is a less well-developed element. Community links and partnerships are actively developed. The school works hard to develop its links with parents and carers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed and very supportive of the work of the school. They willingly undertake training to improve their skills and understanding. However, the level of challenge they provide to school leaders is not sufficiently rigorous. They are at times over-dependent upon the senior leaders for direction. They have been too ready to accept the school's view of standards and achievement. While they have some understanding of data, they are not sufficiently secure in their analysis of the school's performance, relating it to that of schools nationally. For example, they recognise the provision the school makes to support groups of pupils but are not thorough enough in evaluating its impact on their learning. Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They have a secure knowledge of the quality of teaching. However, while they are committed to ensuring that pay and promotion are more closely linked to teachers' effectiveness, some weaknesses remain within the system for managing teachers' performance. Targets are often insufficiently precise. Governors do evaluate the impact of

additional funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement and they ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All other statutory duties are met.

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	121195
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	439595

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gretton
Headteacher	Karen Gay
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
Telephone number	01362 692727
Fax number	01362 691083
Email address	office@dereham.norfolk.sch.uk

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