

# St Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Street, Bungay, NR35 1AY

## Inspection dates

1–2 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		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

- The rate of pupils' progress from year to year varies too much so, over time, they are not achieving as well as they should.
- More-able pupils are not all learning at the right level and pace, and this holds them back from reaching higher standards.
- Key writing skills such as spelling, grammar and punctuation are weaker than comprehension and creativity.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to use mathematical skills in everyday activities to deepen their understanding.
- The school does not have an accurate enough picture of its strengths and weaknesses from which to plan improvement.
- Subject leaders do not know enough about the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects to be able to shape improvements.
- Until recently, governors did not have a clear understanding of how well the school was doing.
- Many parents feel they are not well informed about the work of the school and federation.

### The school has the following strengths

- Nearly all pupils reach the level expected in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Clear and decisive action by school leaders and governors is reversing the gradual decline in standards. Teaching is improving and pupils' rates of progress increasing.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and behave well in class and around the school.
- Pupils feel very safe in school because they know that adults care about them.
- Staff morale has improved. Staff work well together and have responded positively to recent changes.
- Leadership and governance have been strengthened so the school is in a good position to make improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector sampled parts of six lessons. Two were jointly observed with the acting executive headteacher and four with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the acting executive headteacher, other staff, governors, 18 parents and with representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and other direct communications from parents. The responses to 11 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. Reception children are taught as one year group. Other year groups are taught in three mixed-age classes: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Together with St. Benet's Roman Catholic Primary School in Beccles, the school forms The Federation of Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley.
- The executive headteacher has not been at school since November 2013. An acting executive headteacher was appointed in April 2014. In the intervening period, the federation's deputy headteacher, assisted by an experienced headteacher one day a week, fulfilled these duties.
- The deputy headteacher joined the school part-time in January 2014 and full-time at Easter 2014. Three of the four classes have teachers new to the school this academic year.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement by making sure that:
  - existing good practice is shared more widely in the school so that teaching is consistently good or better
  - teachers use their professional judgement fully to ensure high quality learning always takes place and do not follow a rigid lesson structure that inhibits learning
  - tasks for the more-able pupils are at the right level of challenge
  - pupils learn to spell, punctuate and construct their writing to a higher standard at an earlier age
  - learning regularly includes opportunities for pupils to practise and apply numeracy skills in other subjects, and in real-life and relevant activities.
- Strengthen leadership and management in the school and across the federation by making sure that:
  - self evaluation is accurate and used robustly to inform school improvement
  - subject leaders closely monitor the impact of teaching so that standards rise in their subjects
  - governors closely monitor and sufficiently challenge the work of the school, and develop a realistic view of the quality of teaching and learning over time
  - leaders and governors strive to improve communication with parents and instil greater confidence in the work of the federation.

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

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because their rate of progress varies too much from one year to the next, standards in writing and mathematics are too low, and the more able are not learning fast enough.
- Over time, the same pupils have made faster or slower progress from one year to the next because the quality of teaching has varied. The present Year 6, for example are making three times the progress in reading now that they did in Year 4.
- Progress in writing has been slower than it should because key skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar were not taught as soon as pupils were ready. As a result, many pupils entered the current Year 5 with standards about six months behind where they should have been.
- Progress in mathematics has been slower than it should because pupils have not been given sufficient opportunities to use and apply their basic numeracy skills to solve real-life and relevant problems.
- Over time, there has been an emphasis on making sure all pupils reach the 'expected' Level 4 by the time they leave the school, but not on challenging the more able. As a result, the more able often reach average rather than above-average levels. The learning activities given to these pupils can be too easy.
- Reading standards are improving because techniques are well taught and parents are highly involved in seeing pupils read regularly. How letters link to the sounds they represent (phonics) is taught appropriately and the results of the Year 1 screening in 2013 were average.
- Children start school in Reception with a wide range of skills and experiences that are broadly typical at this age. They make good progress and roughly three-quarters achieve a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1.
- There were not enough Year 6 pupils in 2013 known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without the risk of identifying them. Through the school, eligible pupils make similar progress to their classmates and attain similar standards. .
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because the school's nurturing approach builds their self confidence so they tackle tasks positively. The school works closely with their parents, too, to pupils' benefit.
- Expertise is shared between teachers from the federated schools to mutual benefit, for example to raise writing standards and improve achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is getting better, it has not been good enough over time for pupils to make consistently good progress, particularly the more-able. Pockets of high-quality teaching are not shared enough. Some teachers cut learning opportunities short because they use too rigid a lesson structure, resulting in a halt to progress when pupils who are engrossed are stopped in the middle of their learning.

- Teaching is still inconsistent because recently introduced changes have not had sufficient time to become embedded.
- There are not enough opportunities for teachers to learn from one another by observing colleagues who are skilled in particular techniques.
- English teaching is improved. The 'tools' of writing, such as grammar, are taught better. Pupils say they like the new writing approach very much and feel they are learning better.
- Pupils in the eldest class are regularly given opportunities to use their numeracy skills to find solutions. Pupils say they benefit because, 'Our teacher connects maths to real-life problems.' However, this is not so regular in other classes. Sometimes, parents work alongside the older pupils so parents make better links between learning in school and at home.
- Reception children are taught well. Tasks are imaginatively presented to arouse their interest and they enjoy working together cooperatively, often choosing to pursue adult-led activities when they choose their tasks.
- Teachers review pupils' work regularly and offer good feedback. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils are given time to read their teacher's comments and discuss how to 'up-lift' the level of their work. Pupils say, 'If you have a problem, our teacher goes over it in detail, she doesn't do it for you, you have to do it yourself, she just shows you how to do it.'
- Pupils are given further good opportunities to stretch and challenge themselves through the bronze, silver and gold success criteria. They are often thoughtful and perceptive in their choice.
- Questioning is used effectively. Teachers listen to, and use, pupils' responses well to extend and challenge their thinking. Pupils 'bounce' ideas off one another, listening to each other's answers and often modifying their own thinking in response.
- Teaching assistants are generally well used, focussing on specific groups of pupils and promoting their learning effectively.
- Teachers benefit from formal and informal links between the two federated schools, and opportunities to widen their expertise and experiences by working together.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The 'buddy' system, where older pupils guide younger ones in assembly, at lunch time and on other key occasions, is particularly effective and praised by parents. Bullying is very rare and quickly resolved.
- Although many staff changes have taken place in the recent past, the very positive relationship between pupils and staff has been maintained.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about learning. They recognise the benefit of a good education to their later lives and apply themselves very well. They listen closely to adults and almost always try their best. They take pride in their well-presented books.
- Pupils feel they have a real voice in their school. They are perceptive; for example, the school council are re-designing a survey of pupils' views because they felt the original questions were too

closed.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff put pupils' well-being at the heart of everything they do. Pupils' recollections of a visit to solve real-life safety issues, including how to use the internet safely, demonstrate good learning. In joint staff training, such as in child protection, the federation ensures staff are well prepared.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A sense of spirituality is at the heart of the school and pupils always have access to areas for quiet reflection. It is a warm, positive community where everyone is valued and values others.
- Parents say they are confident their children are safe and well cared for in school. They value the ethos and strong sense of community.
- Attendance is average and the vast majority of pupils are punctual to school.
- The school is clean and tidy; pupils tidy up after themselves and will pick up and put back anything that is in the wrong place.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because self evaluation is weak, subject leaders have limited impact, governors have only recently begun to ask searching questions of school leaders, and parents are frustrated by some poor communication.
- Self evaluation is broadly accurate but lacks the clarity and detail to be useful in determining what needs to be done first.
- Good improvements have followed training led by subject leaders, for example in writing, but the federation has not enabled subject leaders to have sufficient impact on teaching and learning to improve standards.
- Although parents are very positive about teaching and learning and feel their children do well, they have concerns. One parents summed it up, 'It is not mismanagement, just a lack of management.'
- The staff speak positively about the impact of the new deputy headteacher on teaching and learning and raising staff morale. One stated, 'She has given us a clear direction.'
- Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils. Expertise is shared across the federation so teachers have a clear understanding of what the information tells them and use it effectively. As a result, standards are rising.
- Additional sports funding is used effectively to widen pupils' opportunities and give staff useful training working alongside specialist coaches. Pupils enjoy participating and learning and refining techniques and recognise the benefits of exercise to their health.
- Pupils are excited by the new approach to topics. They like the 'wow!' factor that hooks them into the learning, and that they can give their ideas too. Both schools come together to enable pupils to enjoy a good range of visits, including residential trips. Pupils say they like the wide range of extra activities, too.

- Steps are being taken to join the local 'cluster' of schools but neither pupils nor staff have benefitted recently from participation in their events and activities.
- Local authority support is good in key areas; the school now has an experienced acting executive headteacher, a governing body strengthened by outside expertise and a school improvement board to provide additional resources and hold everyone to account for rapid progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors mean well, but only in the recent past have they begun to closely check data about the school's performance. In particular, they do not have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching. They have focussed too much on pupils' attainment and too little on whether pupils have made sufficient progress from their different starting points. Recognising this, the local authority and diocese have taken steps to strengthen the governing body so that it is better placed to fulfil its duties more effectively. Finances are well managed and governors know how additional funding for pupils eligible for pupil premium and sport funding are spent. Governors understand performance management and know what is done to reward good teaching. They have not been afraid to tackle underperformance. Safeguarding is seen as paramount, and governors ensure that all procedures meet requirements. Governors recognise that more must be done to improve communication with parents, particularly so they understand the benefits of federation.

## 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>	124779
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	430800

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Clare Valori
<b>Headteacher (Executive)</b>	Maria Uragallo
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01986 892502
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-edmundsrc.suffolk.sch.uk

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