

Ellingham Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Ellingham, Bungay, NR35 2PZ

Inspection dates 15–16 May 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

- Pupils do not make good progress in all year groups; they do not achieve the higher levels they are capable of by the time they leave the school because expectations have been too low for what they can achieve.
- Teachers do not use information about how well pupils are progressing to challenge them to achieve more, especially the more able.
- Teaching assistants do not support learning at all stages of lessons.
- Pupils do not make good progress in reading, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils are not set targets to improve their reading skills.
- Pupils do not have opportunities to complete mathematical investigations.
- The governing body has not challenged school leaders to improve achievement; it has not checked how pupil premium funding is spent.
- The new behaviour system, 'buzzed for learning', is popular with pupils but not used consistently well by all teachers. Behaviour is poorer in the Key Stage 2 classes.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are new. They do not show how well different groups of pupils are achieving and are not used by subject leaders to plan improvements.
- The school does not have a deputy headteacher; this makes it difficult for the headteacher to lead rapid improvements across the partnership, which is not having the impact necessary to improve achievement and teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. She has introduced changes that are rapidly improving achievement, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Teaching in Reception is consistently good.
- Parents are supportive of the school and rightly believe the headteacher leads the school well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire show morale is high and staff support the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. She saw five lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in Year 1 and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make).
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, four other governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The 24 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were considered, together with 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books as well as their work displayed in all classrooms.
- A number of documents were examined, including: the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding files, data on pupils' current progress and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6. There is a separate class for Reception children.
- The proportions 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 are broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care, is below average.
- In 2013, there were too few pupils in the Year 6 age group for floor standards to be reliably reported. (Floor standards are the government's current minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.)
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2014.
- The school is in a hard federation (a legal partnership) with Woodton Primary School. The schools share a headteacher, governing body and subject leaders. Woodton Primary School was inspected at the same time as this inspection and receives a separate inspection report.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be at least consistently good so all pupils make good progress by making sure:
 - teachers use information about how well pupils are achieving to provide work that challenges all abilities
 - pupils have opportunities to use their mathematical skills to investigate and solve problems
 - teaching assistants are used to support learning at all times in lessons
 - teachers have the relevant subject knowledge to teach effectively
 - pupils know their targets, especially in reading and make better progress in this subject.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring all staff, especially in Key Stage 2 classes, implement the new behaviour system.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - systems for checking pupils' progress provide information about the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils
 - subject leaders use data on pupils' attainment and progress to identify priorities, and to plan and monitor improvements in their subjects
 - governors hold school leaders to account for the standards pupils achieve and the quality of teaching
 - the school can demonstrate that additional pupil premium funding is used as intended for eligible pupils and its impact analysed
 - the management structure of the partnership is adapted to provide stronger leadership, improved achievement and better teaching.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough. The school has concentrated on pupils attaining in line with national expectations – for example, reaching Level 2 by the end of Year 2, and Level 4 by Year 6. As a result, pupils have not made good progress or attained the higher levels.
- In 2013, pupils made less progress by the end of Year 6 in reading than in writing and mathematics. National test results were not analysed thoroughly and improvement in reading was not prioritised. Pupils do not know their targets in reading and are making less progress in this skill, especially at Key Stage 2, than in other subjects.
- Younger pupils enjoy reading and sharing books, they are able to use their phonics skills well to sound out new or unfamiliar words.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving. Pupils are accurate in their use of calculation skills but lack opportunities to complete investigations and solve number problems. This restricts pupils' opportunities to reach the highest levels.
- Achievement in writing is not consistently good across classes. They do not make enough progress in Years 3 and 4 and have to catch up too much in Year 6. However, by the time they leave school, their writing improves and they spell and use grammar accurately.
- There were not enough pupils entitled to pupil premium funding in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals. These pupils made similar progress to their classmates in English and mathematics, but this was not due to any additional support as funds were absorbed into the main budget and not specifically allocated. The headteacher is now using funds to provide additional teaching and trips for eligible pupils.
- In 2013, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs did not make good progress in mathematics or reading. The special educational needs coordinator currently checks the progress of these pupils and changes are made to provide extra support if pupils are not making enough progress. Data show these pupils are, currently, making faster progress.
- Year 2 results have fluctuated and in 2013 no pupils attained the higher Level 3. The headteacher has communicated higher ambition and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making rapid progress. School data, verified in external moderation, together with work in pupils' books show almost half of pupils in Year 2 are attaining Level 3 in reading and mathematics.
- Children enter Reception with skills typical for their age group. They make good progress and often achieve a good level of development because staff use information about how well children are achieving to plan activities that help them make good progress. They are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The partnership is not currently improving achievement in English and mathematics. Subject leaders have not had sufficient time to monitor what is happening in both schools. The partnership is helping to improve achievement in physical education as pupils work together in after-school clubs and form teams to enter local sporting competitions.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- While some teaching is good, mainly in Reception and Key Stage 1, overall, it is inconsistent across classes and subjects in enabling pupils to make good or better progress.
- Teachers do not all use assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress to provide learning activities to challenge pupils of all abilities to move to the next stage. Work in lessons is sometimes too easy or too difficult for pupils to make good progress. This sometimes causes pupils to lose concentration and distract others from their work.
- Some teachers do not have good subject knowledge and their explanations are not clear in advancing pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson about parts of a flower, the function and location of different parts were not explained clearly. Pupils then struggled when having to identify these parts for themselves and made little progress.
- Teachers often make good use of practical resources to develop pupils' understanding. For example, the effective use of weighing scales in Year 1 and Year 2 helped pupils understand weight, estimating and comparison.
- In mathematics in Years 5 and 6, pupils lack opportunities to solve problems and tackle investigations. Teaching restricts them too much to presenting their work in particular ways and does not provide scope for them to use the mathematical skills they acquire.
- Phonics is taught well, especially to children in Reception. Children enjoy making up stories using objects to represent new sounds. Consequently, they develop positive attitudes in learning to read.
- Teaching assistants do not provide consistently good support for learning. They are not constantly deployed to help pupils who may need extra support.
- The school's new marking policy in writing and mathematics is helping teachers to accurately assess pupils' achievement. Pupils are beginning to correct their mistakes and improve their work.
- Teachers do not have the opportunity to observe the best teaching in school or at their partnership school in order to improve the quality of their own work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Older pupils are noisy as they move around the school building and come in from the playground. Some teachers do not manage behaviour well. Misbehaviour in lessons in Key Stage 2 disturbs learning for the majority of pupils, who follow school rules and want to do their best. These negative attitudes limit the progress that can be made in lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that staff are rigorously checked before they are appointed and the building is kept secure. The school works closely with outside agencies to safeguard vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils feel safe from bullying in school. They have good awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. They trust adults in school to help them should they have a problem and speak very highly of their headteacher and the support they receive from her.

- The headteacher's new positive-behaviour system, 'buzzed for learning', is helping to improve behaviour. In classes where this has been used consistently, there is a marked improvement in classroom behaviour and pupils have developed more positive attitudes to learning and are making faster progress. However, not all staff are yet applying the system well.
- Absence is checked rigorously and expectations for attendance and punctuality are shared with parents and pupils. Attendance since January 2014 is better than the equivalent period last year. Pupils are rarely late for school. Pupils are proud to wear their school uniform, and do so smartly.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher has an excellent understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. She has the support of staff, governors, pupils and parents and, as a result, both teaching and achievement are showing some improvement.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and is used to identify areas for improvement, which are made priorities in the school improvement plan. The plan identifies the correct areas for development. The improved use of assessment data, the communication of higher expectations and support for developing the quality of teaching are leading to better results for pupils, especially by the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher has introduced termly tracking of pupils' progress by using regular assessments. However, at present, these assessments do not provide a breakdown of the performance of different groups of pupils in all years, and data are confined only to Year 2 and Year 6. Consequently, performance across the school cannot be easily analysed.
- The headteacher has taken many actions to help subject leaders to develop their skills. They are given some time to monitor teaching and pupils' work in both partnership schools, but they lack expertise in using assessment information to check the impact of their actions on teaching and learning. Competent leadership of Reception enables children to make good progress.
- When the headteacher assumed her post she quickly identified weaknesses in performance and the school called for support from the local authority, which had previously not been brokered to give support. Subsequently, the school now benefits from support from a local leader of education and support from a consultant. Currently, this support is helping to improve subject leadership.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers and set them targets for improvement have been established. Targets are linked to improved achievement and are linked to the national *Teachers' Standards*. They are reviewed regularly alongside findings from lesson observations and information about how well pupils are achieving.
- Recent changes have been made to the use of the pupil premium. Monitoring has been introduced so leaders have a better understanding of the effect of this funding on eligible pupils' performance. Additional teaching and opportunities, such as music lessons, are being made available to these pupils.
- The additional sports funding given to primary schools as part of the Olympic legacy is used well. A specialist physical education teacher is employed by local schools, and she contributes well to the professional development of teachers. Pupils love the lessons led by the specialist and enjoy the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting activities and tournaments.

- The partnership with Woodton Primary School runs without a deputy headteacher, and this sometimes gives leadership insufficient impact, especially if the headteacher is at the partner school. The school has seconded a temporary assistant headteacher to help improve weaker teaching and behaviour. This arrangement has only just begun, and has yet to show impact on achievement and teaching quality across the school.
- The school is planning a revised range of learning opportunities, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this change. Pupils' learning in all subjects is supported by many visits and visitors.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is helpful to them at a personal level. They experience a wide range of school trips to support their learning and use their own initiative to support charities. For example, pupils in Year 6 sponsor a schoolgirl in Africa; they raise funds to support her education and send letters to her.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have not been effective in challenging the school or holding it to account for pupils' achievement. They did not take responsibility for ensuring improvements set for them and the school at the previous inspection were addressed
- The governing body has not checked how pupil premium funding has been spent or the impact it has on the achievement of this group of pupils
- The headteacher has helped the governing body to develop and governors have conducted a self-evaluation. However, their findings were overly generous as to their effectiveness. Governors have not attended training to help them challenge and support the school. This has led to additional pressure to the time of the headteacher as she is currently leading governor development
- Under the guidance of the headteacher the pay policy has been reviewed to reflect that teachers will be paid according to their performance; salary progression will be withheld if pupils do not make enough progress
- Governors are provided with helpful information by the headteacher about how well pupils are achieving but they lack the expertise to question how this could be improved
- Governors are beginning to check the quality of teaching by making monitoring visits to classes and meeting with subject leaders
- Reviews of governance, use of the pupil premium and more effective liaison across the federation are recommended to help governance to be fully effective.

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	121035
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	444057

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Ward
Headteacher	Charlotte Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
Telephone number	01508 518250
Fax number	NA
Email address	head@ellingham.norfolk.sch.uk

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