

St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill

School Lane, Haverhill, CB9 9DE

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is not yet consistently good. ■ Although the progress pupils make in reading and mathematics is improving this year, too few pupils are making good progress in Year 6. ■ The untidy and careless presentation of some older pupils' work is causing them to make unnecessary mistakes, particularly in mathematics. ■ The changes subject leaders have made have not been applied consistently by all teachers and so have not yet led to rates of progress being close to or above that of all children nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teachers' marking does not always show how pupils can improve their work and achieve higher levels of attainment. ■ Some pupils do not work hard throughout their lessons and so do not achieve as well as they should. ■ Pupils do not spend enough time using their number skills, for example to solve practical or real-life problems. ■ There is no guidance for teachers which shows what pupils in each year group should know or be able to do in all subjects. This means that teachers' expectations of pupils vary and pupils' progress is uneven.

The school has the following strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ By checking regularly, the new headteacher has been effective to date in improving the quality of teaching to raise achievement. ■ Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in the classroom and also in small-group sessions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children receive a good start to their school life in the Nursery and Reception classes. ■ Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons and scrutinised a range of pupils' exercise books. Two of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their views of the school and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, English and mathematics subject leaders, two school governors, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the special educational needs leader.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents who were dropping their children off at the school about their opinions of the school and took into account the 35 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View.
- Staff completed questionnaires about their views of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised governors' meeting minutes, school performance information, behaviour and incident logs, the school improvement plan and the school self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Robin Taverner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Isobel Randall

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities and are supported through school action plus or who have a statement is above the national average. The proportion supported through school action is average.
- At the time of the previous inspection the school was a lower school serving pupils aged four to nine. It has since converted to a primary school and now includes pupils aged four to 11.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are 12 classes in the school including a Nursery class. Some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The new headteacher joined the school in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - making sure that the most effective methods of teaching used in the school are adopted by every teacher
 - marking pupils' work in order to show them what they have done well and what they should do to achieve even better results.
- Improve the progress pupils make in reading and mathematics by:
 - having higher expectations of all pupils so that they work hard throughout their lessons
 - insisting that all pupils show pride in their work and present their work neatly and logically so that they do not make as many errors, especially in mathematics
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to practise their number skills, for example in solving real-life problems.
- Improve the leadership of teaching and learning by:
 - putting in place clear guidance for teachers so that they know exactly what knowledge and skills to teach their pupils in all subjects and across all year groups
 - supporting subject leaders to make sure that the improvements they have introduced have a positive impact in every class.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2013 too few pupils made expected progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and mathematics was below the national average in 2013. More are reaching these levels this year. Inspectors noted that the more able pupils are given challenging work to complete and make good progress in lessons.
- Year 6 pupils made much better progress and achieved higher levels of attainment in writing than in reading and mathematics in 2013. In writing lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress because they were taught to check their work carefully and make the necessary improvements.
- Children join the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age. Due to the strong teaching they receive in the Nursery and Reception classes, they make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education when the pupils enter Year 1.
- Phonics (the sounds letters make) is taught well to Year 1 and 2 pupils. As a result the proportion reaching the required standard in the Year 1 reading check was close to the national average in 2013. A higher proportion are reaching the required standard this year.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 2 achieve above average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013 pupils eligible for pupil premium were one term behind their classmates in mathematics and two terms behind in writing. However, in reading the same pupils achieved higher attainment than their classmates. Systems for checking the progress pupils make are quite new and so the school was unable to show how gaps in attainment and progress are closing over time for pupils currently in the school.
- However, recent assessment information shows that there are often only small differences in the progress pupils supported by the pupil premium make compared to their classmates. The additional funding is being used well. For example, a teacher has been employed to give extra support in mathematics and English so that pupils do not fall behind with their classwork.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities receive good support in lessons and also in smaller teaching groups. As a result they are making good progress.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Good teaching practice is not yet consistent in Years 3 to 6. Marking is a particular weakness. Some work is not marked at all. Where work is marked, comments do not always help pupils to know how they could improve their work and achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Teachers sometimes allow pupils to produce work which is untidy and haphazard. This is particularly evident in some mathematics books where poor presentation is preventing pupils making good progress because they are not taught to set out work in a logical way.

- Where pupils are taught a particular number skill in mathematics such as addition or subtraction, they are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their number skills, for example in solving real-life problems.
- There are strengths in the teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers and other adults readily talk to the children, questioning and providing challenges as soon as they are able to move to the next stage in their learning. The outdoor area is used well to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, a guttering system has been set up for children to experiment with the flow of water. Children make good progress with their basic skills including writing and number.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils know and can explain clearly what they are learning about. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They regularly check pupils' understanding so that they can gauge whether the work is at the right level of difficulty for them.
- There are some aspects of effective teaching in Key Stage 2, but these are not consistent. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils were studying the Shakespeare play, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', which they knew well and were very interested in. As a result they worked very hard and responded well to the challenges set by the teacher.
- In another Key Stage 2 lesson pupils made particularly good progress because they were taught what a good piece of written work should include and then they were required to check their work and improve it where necessary.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils throughout the school. They are quick to spot when a pupil needs support and by skilful use of questioning they help pupils to get back on track with their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Teachers, particularly in Years 3 to 6, do not always have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in class. Therefore, some pupils do not work hard throughout the lesson. They stop to chat to their classmates about subjects not related to their classwork, and so do not concentrate for extended periods of time. On these occasions they do not make sufficient progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils' safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. They know that if a problem occurs an adult will help them to sort it out. Pupils have good knowledge of how to keep safe including understanding the dangers of using the internet. Pupils feel safe on the playground and are not worried about being bullied.
- All parents spoken to by inspectors, and the vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, agreed that their children are safe in school and were not concerned about bullying.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered, particularly when eating their lunches. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- Attendance has been average for the last few years. Due to effective measures to reduce absence, attendance rates are improving this year.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There is no up-to-date guidance for teachers which gives details of what skills and knowledge should be taught in each subject and in all year groups. As a result, the quality of teaching in subjects including science, history and geography is very varied across the school. In some year groups there is very little evidence of good quality teaching in these subjects in pupils' exercise books.
- The new literacy leader has reviewed the teaching of reading and has introduced measures to improve pupils' progress. This includes developing a new library and improved ways of teaching reading in the classroom. The mathematics leader has introduced a new programme for teaching mental arithmetic. There are some early indications to show that these changes are helping to raise standards. However, as the quality of teaching is inconsistent, the impact of these improvements varies across different classes. There are still too few pupils making expected or better than expected progress in reading compared to national averages.
- The new headteacher is doing much to improve the school. She regularly checks the quality of teaching and shares with teachers the aspects they need to improve. This is having a positive impact but has not yet led to teaching being consistently good.
- The new headteacher has introduced effective procedures for managing teachers' performance which hold them to account for the progress pupils make over the course of the year. Staff have had good training about what makes teaching successful.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements.
- The school provides equal opportunities for its pupils through the use of teaching assistants in classes and also the provision of extra lessons for pupils who fall behind with their learning. The special educational needs leader makes sure that all pupils receive the support they need, which includes calling upon specialist support from outside of the school as necessary.
- Parents questioned by inspectors at the school gate, as well as the responses to Parent View, were very supportive of the school. Scrutiny of governors' minutes indicates that where parents do voice concerns, these are taken seriously by the school.
- The school promotes spiritual, social and cultural education well. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to take part in prayer. They are asked to reflect upon the messages in Bible stories and apply them to their own lives. The school makes good use of its parents to show aspects of different cultures from across the world.
- Pupils work and play well together. They enjoy school and get on well with the adults who teach and support them. Moral education is not quite as strong. Although pupils know the difference between right and wrong, not all pupils see the value of working hard in lessons.
- The local authority has provided effective support recently for the literacy leader to help raise standards in reading.
- Primary sports funding is having a positive impact upon the quality of physical education teaching. A specialist teacher is employed to work alongside class teachers. This has improved teachers' expertise and made physical education lessons more relevant to the needs of the pupils. There are a wider range of sporting opportunities in school and more children are taking

part in sport than was previously the case.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know, for example, that the progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 needs to improve and what the quality of teaching is like.
- Governors work well with the headteacher and appreciate the comprehensive and accurate information that is provided to help them make the right decisions for the school. They do not just rely on information provided by the headteacher, however, and have recently agreed to the commissioning of an external audit of school effectiveness.
- The minutes of governor meetings show that governors question the headteacher robustly about school data. Governors know where improvements need to be made.
- Governors are supportive of the improvements the headteacher is making and are keen to allocate resources to support these changes. They have therefore agreed recently to invest in reading books and resources to stock a new library.
- Governors are involved in the performance management of the headteacher and are aware of the links between the performance of teachers and their pay so that only good or better performance merits an increase.

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	124769
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	443823

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Kellerher
Headteacher	Clare Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
Telephone number	01440 703775
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