

Wimbotsham and Stow Community School

Chapel Lane, Wimbotsham, King's Lynn, PE34 3QH

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve; consequently progress is inconsistent, for most pupils, but especially the more-able.
- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough. Pupils' work is not matched to their needs; hence pupils do not always make good or better progress in lessons.
- Teaching assistants do not consistently promote effective progress for the groups of pupils they work with, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. They are not given clear instructions in how to develop pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not give enough guidance to pupils when they choose the level of work in class. Too often pupils are happy to settle for activities in literacy and mathematics that do not stretch them.
- Teachers do not routinely check how well pupils are doing in lessons, so they are not always aware of the progress pupils make or when they have finished the set activity and need to move on.
- Teachers are not consistent in advising pupils on how to improve their work. When advice is given, pupils do not always act on it.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting in books is not good enough, and is sometimes untidy. Pupils do not always take enough pride in their written work and letter formation can be unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards, so that pupils' progress is starting to accelerate. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, a good team of senior leaders and governors who share her vision of school improvement.
- Teaching in Reception is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision of how to develop the provision. Staff are well trained; the classrooms and outdoor space provide an exciting learning environment for the children.
- The behaviour of pupils around school is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They are able to talk with confidence about what they like about the school and things they would change. Pupils are safe and they feel safe.
- A good range of enrichment activities such as trips, visiting experts and sporting events add to pupils' enjoyment and broadens their learning experiences.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, three jointly with the headteacher. All teachers at the school were observed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, and members of the governing body. A governor representing the federation and a representative from the local authority were also spoken with.
- The inspector took into account the 18 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in survey responses from 10 members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school self-evaluation plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Samantha Stewart, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding given to the school for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- Virtually all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or education, health and care is broadly average.
- Early years provision is in the Reception class. All children are full-time.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in January 2014. There are only five governors, including parent governors. There have been several changes of teaching staff since the last inspection, including senior leaders and the headteacher.
- The school is currently in a soft federation with two nearby primary schools. Following the consultation which has taken place, this will become a hard federation on 1 November 2014. The governing body will be dissolved on 31 October 2014. A new governing body will be formed to run the three schools under 'The Bridges Federation'. The executive headteacher will lead the three schools with separate 'Heads of School' leading and managing each school on a day to day basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectation of what pupils can achieve
 - providing pupils with work that is challenging, and is matched to their needs, especially the most able pupils, and giving them guidance to choose more challenging activities
 - ensuring that other adults have clearly defined roles in all classes to extend and support learning
 - make sure that pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work and that this is used by pupils to develop their knowledge and skills
- Ensure that achievement is consistently good or better by:
 - improving the quality of pupils handwriting across the school
 - routinely checking that pupils understand what they are doing in lessons and that they are making progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good because the executive headteacher and other senior leaders are ambitious for the school and are taking the right actions to improve it. The executive headteacher has quickly put into place a precise system of six-weekly assessment of pupils' progress in writing, mathematics and reading; this is linked to a tracking system which helps staff to pinpoint any pupils who may be in need of additional support. These actions have already had a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- In a short space of time the executive headteacher has put in place rigorous systems to monitor how well teachers are performing. Information from observations and work scrutiny is used to help plan what each teacher needs to do to improve their practice and also to provide suitable training for all staff.
- Staff performance is managed well. All teachers are given clear targets which are closely linked to the whole-school improvement targets; these include improving the standards of teaching and the progress of pupils. The deputy headteacher manages the performance of support staff; their targets are also linked to school improvement.
- Pupil premium funding is spent effectively on extra help, specifically tailored for the individuals it is intended for, to support their improvement in literacy and mathematics. This is ensuring that they achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- The deputy headteacher has worked closely with federation subject leaders to devise the curriculum which is well thought out and provides a balance of skills and knowledge through links to exciting themes which fire pupils' imaginations. There are clear links within the newly developed curriculum to the understanding of life in modern Britain, such as the royal family and lessons learnt from World War One. Curriculum development has been helped by the strong links in the federation which enable leaders and all staff to improve their subject knowledge and have a wider range of resources.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education. For example, in the '100 Years Project' pupils find out about local people who served in World War One from names on the memorial in the village. Their findings are then linked back to the community through a 'reading café' and a memorial service which members of the community are invited to participate in.
- Middle leaders are effective. The special educational needs co-ordinator has quickly highlighted pupils at risk of falling below their expected targets. She then liaises with the teachers to write an action plan with specific targets and allocates both support staff and resources to pupils that need it. Although it is early days in the school year, in-house monitoring indicates that these pupils are making progress from their starting points.
- Primary school funding for sport is being used effectively to pay for specialist support for teaching and learning in games lessons. This includes professional development for staff to improve their skills so that physical education is more effective and to provide additional after school clubs, for example, cross country and archery.
- The executive headteacher and governors are determined to improve attendance. There are clear procedures in place which are followed to the letter. Pupils and parents have been made aware of the consequences of having time off school, and the impact this has on achievement. Attendance, although below national levels in the 2013/14 academic year, is improving and the attendance for the autumn term is above the national rate.
- Local authority support is having a positive impact on raising standards in the school. The school is part of the 'Norfolk Good to Great' scheme and is taking advantage of opportunities for professional development and training. There has already been a safeguarding audit and a behaviour audit which has enabled the school to put in place new policies and procedures for strengthening pupils' safety and well-being. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Governors hold the school leaders to account for the standards of achievement. By using the Ofsted Data Dashboard, they have a clear understanding of the school's performance. Governors can pinpoint weaker teaching and discuss how the systems put in place by the executive headteacher are addressing this.
- Governors are responsible for the headteacher's performance management and have set targets related to improving teaching and achievement across the federation. They regularly come into school to discuss all aspects of school life. The governing body have taken the decision to strengthen the current federation with two local primary schools. By doing this they have ensured that the governing body itself will have the capacity to challenge senior leaders by increasing the number of experienced governors. The governors have appointed an effective executive headteacher with a tried and tested track record of school improvement.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their school, and are polite and well mannered. They show respect for each other and for adults and they also care for each other. An example of this was the 'star of the day' in the Reception class who had been particularly kind to one of his classmates, helping him out when he first came into school.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility; this is highlighted particularly at lunchtimes with the Year 6 lunchtime monitors. They are responsible for younger pupils in the lunch hall, helping with packed lunches, cutting food, carrying plates and general tidiness. The atmosphere at lunchtime is that of a happy family mealtime.
- In most lessons pupils are eager to learn; on rare occasions there is a little low level chatter if pupils finish their work quickly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and that there are few incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour, which are dealt with quickly if they occur. There is a behaviour policy in place and pupils are able to talk about the green, yellow and red cards and the consequences of any unkind behaviour. Of the 18 parents responding to the parental questionnaire, the vast majority agree that their children are kept safe. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when working on the internet.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All members of staff are trained in keeping pupils safe and are checked for suitability before working in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all classes. Pupils' books show there is some inconsistency between the quality of work in different classes. While teachers plan work in the form of different challenges for pupils to select from, greater guidance is needed to make sure that they choose work which is difficult enough to stretch their learning. This is especially true for the more-able pupils.
- The teaching of literacy and mathematics is not consistently good. Work in books and lessons indicates that activities are not always adapted so that all pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers are not regularly supporting pupils enough with development points in marking and feedback which in turn has not spurred them on to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough for the presentation of pupils' written work. As a consequence they do not take pride in their work. Handwriting skills are not taught systematically through a whole-school policy.

- Not all teachers are routinely checking progress in lessons. Sometimes they are not aware when pupils need more help to complete an activity successfully or that they have already finished, and could be moved on.
- Although pupils' work is marked regularly, the quality of marking is inconsistent. Lots of praise and encouragement are given which motivates pupils. They say they find these comments useful although some admit that they do not always follow the advice given. The quality of guidance given by teachers varies; while it is useful to pupils in some classes, it needs to be developed in other classes so that pupils are given clear advice on how to improve and reach their targets.
- There are some examples of good teaching across the school and teaching is improving. Teachers are keen to develop and are able to reflect on each lesson and suggest how they could improve it next time. They form good relationships with the pupils and in most classes behaviour is managed well.
- Teaching assistants are not always making an effective contribution to pupils' learning. They are not briefed well enough about what their specific groups of pupils are meant to learn and how to help them.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Pupils have a wide range of strategies when reading words they are unsure of. Pupils of all ages are able to use their phonics knowledge (the sounds that letters make) to sound out and blend words together. Year 1 pupils knew about the information on the front of books such as the author and illustrator. Pupils enjoy reading; all those spoken to could talk about their favourite books.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress pupils make is variable. Work in pupils' exercise books from both this year and last year indicates that pupils have not made consistently good progress, chiefly in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 has been broadly average in recent years. There has been a small decline in the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Leaders have established a rigorous system for checking up on how well pupils are doing and providing focused support where it is needed most. As a result, pupils who have not made enough progress in the past are beginning to catch up.
- From their individual starting points pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs have made progress in line with their peers. They are well supported with additional activities designed by the class teachers in partnership with the special educational needs co-ordinator to meet individual pupil's needs. It is too early in the year to see the impact of this work.
- Results for pupils in the recent Year 1 national phonics screening test were in line with pupils in other schools nationally. This is an improvement on previous years when the percentage of pupils achieving expected levels was significantly below the national figure.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and improve their physical skills with a variety of chances to join in with sports and different activities such as running, football, cricket and archery. Pupils say they enjoy taking part in physical education lessons, where skills are being taught thoroughly, and in the wide range of popular clubs.
- There are too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding to comment on their progress without the risk of identifying them.

The early years provision

is good

Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Precise questioning by staff is used to move learning forward. There is a good balance between tasks that children have chosen for themselves and activities led

by members of staff. For example, a cutting activity led by the teacher encouraged children to develop their understanding of colour, shape and the accurate use of phonics skills to sound out words when writing names of fruits and vegetables.

- Each child has a learning journal which is being used to accurately record evidence of children's progress against the areas of learning. Information is routinely shared with parents via weekly open mornings. Parents are encouraged to add to the learning journals through 'wow' sheets on which they can describe their children's achievements at home.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Planning takes into account the need to develop children's skills, and their individual needs and interests. All staff play an important role in this process. They use precise questioning to widen children's learning, they assess children's understanding of what they have learnt and they feed back into planning for the next steps in learning.
- Most children start school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age, and make good progress. On leaving the Reception they are ready for Year 1. In recent years a very small number of children have joined the school part way through the school year, at a lower level than their peers. Although progress for this group of pupils has been slower, they are catching up with their peers.

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	120893
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	449301

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Derek Barnes
Headteacher	Alison Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2011
Telephone number	01366 382336
Fax number	01366 382336
Email address	head@wimbotshamstow.norfolk.sch.uk

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