

St Mary's Community Primary School, Beetley

Elmham Road, Beetley, Dereham, NR20 4BW

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
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

- Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is seldom better than average. Pupils' do not make fast enough progress in Year 6 to raise their attainment, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching has failed to challenge pupils sufficiently, especially the most-able pupils.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to develop or practise their skills in mathematics in other subjects.
- Not all subject leaders have monitored achievement and teaching sufficiently to bring about improvements in their subjects.
- The changes introduced by school leaders have not been in place long enough to ensure that pupils achieve well in all subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has brought stability to the school after a number of years of turbulence. She has an accurate picture of what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well-supported and, as a result, make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. They feel safe in school.
- Provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably and is now good. Pupils leave Reception Year well-prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons and saw teaching in all classes. The headteacher joined the inspectors for two of these observations.
- Inspectors also gained evidence on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by looking at the work in pupils' books and talking to the pupils about their work. Inspectors also looked at a number of exercise books from last year. They heard a number of pupils of different ages read.
- Inspectors attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with a number of pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including: records of behaviour, safeguarding and attendance; the school's evaluation of its own performance; the school development plan; information on pupils' progress and attainment and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to a few parents at the start of the school day. Views from 38 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and 20 responses from the staff questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

Caroline Parry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vondra Mays

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British and have English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and is around 13%, which is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is 16.2%. This is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children join the Reception class and attend full time.
- The school has had a high turnover of staff since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics so it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers set work that is hard enough, especially for the most-able pupils
 - provide regular opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve achievement in all subjects, so that the most-able pupils make more than expected progress, by tracking their progress as rigorously as other groups of pupils in the school and taking prompt action when weaknesses are identified.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the role of subject coordinators is fully developed so they regularly check that the quality of teaching is improving in their subjects
 - school leaders, including governors, continuing to build upon the improvements they have already made, particularly in monitoring teaching and the use of pupil performance data to target support for different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' attainment is not improving at a fast enough rate, due to teaching that is not challenging enough. Staff absences, particularly last year, mean that teaching has not been consistently good enough to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Not all subject leaders have monitored the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching rigorously enough to raise standards in their subjects, especially in mathematics. The school has appointed new subject coordinators this September, but they have not yet had sufficient impact on improving teaching and achievement. For example, the mathematics coordinator has introduced a new assessment policy but has not yet evaluated the impact on pupil attainment.
- The school has tracked the progress and attainment of the most-able pupils but has not taken action promptly when weaknesses are identified to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- The headteacher has brought stability to the school and a few parents reported this to inspectors. She has a very clear direction for the school and has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and effectiveness. The headteacher has improved the rigour and effectiveness of the arrangements for holding staff to account. In the past teachers' assessment of pupil attainment has not been accurate and the headteacher has introduced more rigorous assessment method and introduced a system for accurately tracking pupils' progress. She has set clear expectations for behaviour and, as a result, behaviour is good. The headteacher has the confidence of her staff; all those who expressed an opinion feel the school is well-led and managed. A large majority of parents agree.
- Information about pupils' progress is used well to identify those who need extra support to catch up with their learning. As a result, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are now making good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also making good progress due to the effective support they receive. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The sports premium funding is used effectively to promote pupils' physical health and enjoyment of sport. As a result of the funding, pupils now have two hours of sports a week taught by specialist teachers supported by their class teacher. Two members of staff are being trained to teach a range of different sports. Pupils take part in swimming, invasion games, gymnastics and dance. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend after-school sporting activities and sports competitions against other local schools. Pupils told inspectors they enjoyed sports.
- The curriculum enables pupils to study science, music, French, history, geography, art, design and technology and religious education through topic work. This adds to their enjoyment and enhances their understanding. For example, in the week of the inspection pupils were studying life since World War II as part of a topic on 'Modern Britain'. Pupils study a range of world religions and cultures and have the opportunity to appreciate music and poetry. The curriculum gives good support to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The school has a positive atmosphere where all pupils are encouraged to achieve their best in a supportive environment. Pupils have been involved in developing the values of the school and each week they get the chance to discuss these values in class. During the inspection pupils were reflecting on friendship and what it means.
- The management of teacher's performance is improving because staff are held more to account for pupils' progress. Information about pupils' performance is used robustly to judge teaching and this is linked to teachers' pay awards and informs staff training.
- The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- The school receives good support from the local authority through its membership of the Norfolk school improvement programme. The school has benefitted from support, with validation of its judgements on

the quality of teaching and other areas of its performance, as well as staff and governor training.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the last inspection the governors have undergone a full review and, as a result, they have completely reconstituted their membership. They have conducted a skills audit to make sure they have a wide range of skills and have undertaken extensive training. Consequently, they are now effective in carrying out their duties.
- Governors understand the data on pupils' performance and ask searching questions of the headteacher and middle leaders. They are fully aware of the achievement of different groups of pupils and are developing their roles by allocating responsibility for closely monitoring the achievement of different groups to specific governors.
- Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and know how important it is that pay awards are linked to pupil achievement. They check all teachers have met their targets before agreeing a pay rise. Governors set appropriate targets for the headteacher.
- The governors carrying out their statutory duties including those relating to safeguarding. Together with leaders, they ensure pupils are safe in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have a good attitude towards their learning. Pupils arrive to lessons ready to learn and they are positive in their approach towards learning even when teaching is insufficiently challenging.
- Pupils take pride in their work and exercise books are neat and well kept.
- Pupils are typically polite and courteous towards one another and the adults in the school. As a result they get on well and respect one another. 'It's a happy school', was a phrase used by one group of pupils.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons, the dining hall and the playground, and pupils say this is typical. Pupils play energetically but safely. Year 6 pupils act as play zone leaders and run activities for younger pupils. They enjoy this responsibility and it contributes well to their personal development.
- Although a small number of pupils occasionally display challenging behaviour, this is invariably managed well by staff. As a result, there are very few instances of poor behaviour.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Most parents and all staff who expressed a view feel that behaviour in the school is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and meets statutory requirements.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school and that adults help them if they have problems.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare, and this is supported by the school records.
- Pupils understand the risks associated with technology and the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet.
- Almost all parents agree that the school keeps their child safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been challenging enough to bring about sufficient improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Teaching in mathematics has not focused sufficiently on pupils' weakness in the use of number and not all teachers give pupils regular opportunities to solve more complex mathematical problems. For example, the inspectors' review of the Year 6 mathematics exercise books revealed that all pupils are frequently given the same calculations, whatever their ability. Pupils do not have the same opportunity to use mathematics in other subjects as they do to use writing. Progress in mathematics is below that in other subjects in all year groups.
- Too much teaching is aimed at one group of pupils, so the most-able pupils are not always given work that is hard enough or moved onto harder tasks quickly enough. This slows their progress.
- A small minority of parents who expressed a view said they had concerns about the quality of teaching in the school. Nevertheless, the scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's records, show that teaching is improving. For example, inspectors compared the work in Year 4 books with that in their books from Year 3 and saw a notable improvement in the standard of their work.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of all pupils well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They support pupils to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as helping them to use resources to find things for themselves.
- Teachers mark work frequently and pupils respond appropriately to their improvement targets. Homework is frequent and much of it is linked well to developing basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- There has been an improvement in the teaching of reading and this is contributing to an improving picture. Pupils have the opportunity to read a wide range of books in lessons, and this helps to improve their skills and enjoyment. Pupils' attainment in writing is improving but their English spelling, punctuation and grammar is weaker. The school is addressing this with regular spelling tests and punctuation and grammar activities taught in conjunction with literacy lessons. Work in pupils' books shows that this is having an impact on improving the accuracy of pupils' writing.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in all subjects across the school. In 2014, at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels of attainment was low in mathematics, average in reading, although it was good in writing.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment was above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make the amount of progress expected of them in Key Stage 2, but the proportion making more than expected progress is well-below average in mathematics.
- The gap in attainment of the very small number of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in the school is small, at approximately two months in mathematics and reading and two years above in writing. However, the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and other pupils nationally was approximately twelve months below in mathematics and reading and eighteen months above in writing. The gap between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils nationally is starting to narrow.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has led to pupils' attainment being well-above average in the national phonics screening check. School data shows that progress in reading has

improved in the last year, especially in Years 3 and 4.

- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified and well catered for through targeted support. As a result they make good progress from their starting point.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that are below those typical for their age. As a result of teaching that is matched to their needs pupils make good progress from their starting point.

The early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership has led to an improvement in Early Years Provision. The Early Years leader has improved the indoor and outdoor learning environments. They are now more stimulating and enable children to learn well. Assessment on entry to Reception is accurate and takes into account the views of parents and nursery providers.
- Teaching has improved and, as a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2014 was in line with that nationally. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in mathematics and literacy has risen from well-below average to above by the time they leave the early years. Pupils are ready for Year 1.
- Staff are aware of the learning needs of the individual children and plan activities that meet their needs. For example, a group of children were enjoying themselves on the trampoline and obstacle course developing both their confidence and coordination. They assessed the risks associated with the activity well.
- Staff ensure that the children are well looked after in a nurturing environment. They encourage and develop good learning behaviour and as a result pupils listen attentively when adults are talking and follow instructions. They are eager to answer questions and enjoy the praise they receive when they are correct. They respond well to adults and appear happy in their learning.
- Children are polite to one another and cooperate with their work. Inspectors observed a group of pupils working in the creative area where they were helping one another choose materials, cut out shapes and asking questions about one another's work.
- Parents expressed satisfaction with the education their children receive in Reception.

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	121011
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	449016

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Farrelly
Headteacher	Jessica Balado-Lopez
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2012
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