

Piper's Vale Community Primary School

Raeburn Road, Ipswich, IP3 0EW

Inspection dates

3–4 December 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

- Pupils leave Key Stage 2 with attainment that is well below average, especially in mathematics.
- The actions taken to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check remains below average.
- In some lessons, teachers do not set work that is hard enough for the pupils, especially for the most able.
- Not all teachers check pupils' progress in lessons quickly enough to move pupils on to the next task in order to accelerate their learning.
- The extra lessons provided by teaching assistants to improve literacy and numeracy, require closer monitoring for their impact on pupil achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. As a result, there have been a number of improvements since the last inspection.
- Since the review of their performance, governors are now more effective in monitoring the work of the school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and have a positive attitude towards learning.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and provision has improved since the last inspection. It is now good.
- Children with speech and language difficulties are provided with specialist support and their speech is improving as a result.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The home/school liaison team supports vulnerable pupils well and, as a result, these pupils are making good progress in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 17 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work, both in lessons and as part of a work scrutiny with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with three groups of pupils, the headteacher and other members of the leadership team, three governors and the senior primary adviser for Suffolk.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well the questionnaires and comments parents write after a school event. They spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school and considered the views expressed in emails and written in the school's parent comment book.
- Responses to 33 staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its work, the school improvement plan, information on pupils' current progress, reports from the local authority, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diana Songer-Hudgell	Additional Inspector
Robert Bone	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Piper's Vale Community Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A large majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. Almost a third of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This is an above-average proportion.
- Around a fifth of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This proportion is slightly above average.
- Approximately a quarter of the pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is well above the national average.
- At more than half, the proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is twice the national average.
- The early years provision comprises of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis, mornings only.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of phonics, particularly in Key Stage 1, by ensuring that tasks reinforce previous learning without being too repetitive and that they challenge pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - set work that is hard enough for all pupils, especially the most able
 - regularly check pupils' understanding in the lesson and move them on to the next activity in order to accelerate learning.
- To improve leadership and management so that the literacy and numeracy subject leaders' carry out accurate analysis of the impact of the strategies used to support pupils' learning in order to evaluate the improvements made.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The actions taken by leaders to improve attainment in phonics have not led to an improvement in the number of pupils meeting the expected level in the national screening test. This is because the quality of teaching of phonics remains inconsistent between early years and Key Stage 1.
- Leaders need to analyse the impact of the literacy and numeracy out-of-lesson support delivered by teaching assistants on improving pupils' learning.
- The headteacher and senior staff have now established a culture of learning within the school to complement its nurturing environment. This means that pupils are expected to work hard and are taught about the need to respect others, the importance of good behaviour and to be responsible for themselves and others. Leaders are committed to equality of opportunity and pupils are taught about other faiths, cultures and human rights as part of their curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils have studied recent Nobel Peace Prize winners. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school.
- The headteacher uses performance management and regular monitoring of lessons to accurately assess the improvements needed and provides staff with the training required to improve their teaching. Teaching is now having a greater impact on improving pupils' progress. Pay awards for teachers are linked to their teaching and pupils' progress.
- The role of subject leaders has developed and they are now taking a more active role in improving the quality of teaching in their subject. They support staff to improve their subject knowledge and teaching. However, the numeracy and literacy subject leaders need to further develop their skills in measuring the impact of the steps they have taken to improve teaching sufficiently to judge the impact on raising attainment across the school.
- The local authority has supported the school to improve standards in a number of areas; for example, teaching, governance and subject leadership. They have withdrawn their intensive support for the school as they feel it is in a position to drive its own improvements. They are now supporting the school with its evaluation of performance.
- The headteacher knows the strengths and weakness of the school and has correctly identified appropriate actions in order to improve teaching and attainment. He has high ambitions for the school and he has introduced a new approach to teaching writing. He has appointed a speech therapist and addressed staff underperformance. All have had an impact on raising standards; although these are still too low, they are much improved on those from the time of the last inspection.
- The school encourages parents to celebrate the achievement of their children through assemblies and the annual awards evening. Information events are run for parents on topics such as helping your child read. Almost all parents and all staff who expressed a view feel that the school is well led and managed.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used to provide extra staff so that literacy and numeracy work can be undertaken in small groups outside the classroom. School data shows that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making the progress they should is increasing and the attainment gap for these pupils is narrowing in both Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Good use is made of the primary sports funding as pupils have access to a range of sporting activities after-school as well as sport lessons taught by a specialist teacher. The pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed the after-school clubs and being able to take part in sporting completions.
- Pupils study a range of subjects and the new curriculum is studied through topics that include opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity, understanding of the world, and scientific knowledge. Theme days, visiting speakers and a variety of trips linked to their learning give the pupils opportunities to learn about their local area and beyond. They have many opportunities to shine in a range of after-school

activities, such a film club and music. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Safeguarding and safe recruitment measures meet all statutory requirements. Senior leaders, governors and staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. The home/school liaison team make a valuable contribution to keeping pupils safe.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have undertaken a review of their performance and undertaken a range of relevant training since the last inspection. As a result, they are now more effective in carrying out their duties.
- Governors are fully involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors scrutinise pupil achievement data and ask searching questions of senior and subject leaders. They have also taken part in a full review of the school, shadowing lesson observations, and are therefore fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The Chair of the Governing Body meets weekly with the headteacher to review the work of the school.
- Governors understand pupil achievement data and the progress of different groups of pupils. They worked alongside senior leaders in making decisions about when best to arrange extra support for disadvantaged pupils. They are aware of the quality of teaching within the school and of performance management procedures. Governors understand that teachers' pay is linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and only allow pay rises where pupils make good progress.
- Governors are committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all pupils. They carry out all their statutory duties and allocate resources appropriately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils know the school's expectations regarding behaviour and understand right from wrong.
- Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. They are eager to ask and answer questions. When asked to work in pairs or as a group, they co-operate well and support one another with their learning. Work in books is well presented because pupils take pride in their work.
- Pupils move around the school showing care and consideration towards one another. Inspectors saw pupils opening doors for each other and moving aside to allow others to pass. They play well together.
- A group of Year 6 pupils are trained as play pals and they help the younger children at lunchtime by supervising play areas, reading to pupils during wet break times and supporting play activities. They carry out their duties conscientiously and with a great deal of pride.
- In lessons, pupils respond promptly to their teacher's requests. However, in a few lessons, where the work is either uninteresting or not hard enough, pupils can lose interest. Nevertheless, disruption to the lesson is minor as they respond well to their teacher's request to focus on their work.
- The school has a small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour in lessons and around the school. The school has a wide range of support available to meet the needs of these pupils and, as a result, the number of incidents of misbehaviour within the classroom is small.
- Almost all parents and staff agree that behaviour in the school is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils are supported exceptionally well and the school caters for a wide range of social needs. The school has many examples of pupils who have benefited from the care and support provided by the home/school liaison team.
- Access to the school is secure and senior staff are on duty every afternoon, when they make sure that all pupils are collected by a known adult. Visitors to the school are checked before they are allowed to leave

the reception area.

- All staff are trained in a range of safety procedures; for example, first aid and the use of epipens for those pupils who suffer from serious allergies.
- Attendance is now broadly average because the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced from above average to below.
- The school makes sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, when using computers and outside of school. The school runs 'Learning Together' workshops for parents and pupils on e-safety, road safety and keeping safe in the home. The school has developed a partnership with the Safer Neighbourhood team from the local police, who run workshops for pupils on aspects of personal safety.
- The school successfully fosters good relationships and, as a result, bullying is very rare. Pupils confirm this. They say that if it does happen, then there is an adult to support them.
- Most parents that expressed a view feel that their child is safe and very well looked after in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 requires improvement because teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Unlike the teaching in Reception, pupils often spend too long on a letter sound or word before they move to the next stage, and not all activities are made interesting enough for the pupils, nor do they sufficiently reinforce previous learning. This slows pupils' progress in developing their key reading skills.
- Evidence in pupils' books and direct lesson observations carried out during the inspection show there are still inconsistencies in teaching across the school. Pupils are not always set work at the right level as the same activity is set for the whole class. As a result, some pupils are not making good progress because the work is either too hard or too easy for them.
- Not all teachers are checking pupils' progress in the lesson regularly enough to help those pupils who are finding the work difficult or to move pupils on to a new activity as soon as they are ready.
- Relationships in lessons are positive between adults and pupils and, as a result, pupils enjoy learning. Teachers plan activities that interest pupils and link their learning to real-life activities; for example, pupils learning to count in multiples using coins.
- Where pupils learn well, staff have high expectations and set challenging work that engages pupils in their learning. For example, in English, Year 6 pupils were developing their vocabulary and writing skills through an activity which interested them. All were fully involved in their learning, and questioning was used skilfully to check their learning and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils made good progress.
- Teaching assistants are well trained. In class, they work alongside teachers supporting pupils with the literacy and numeracy skills they need to complete their work. As a result, supported pupils learn well.
- Teaching in the higher-level mathematics classes is good as it provides challenging work for pupils that encourages them to think more deeply about methods used to solve mathematics problems.
- Teachers correct spelling errors, show pupils where they have made mistakes and give pupils next steps targets that show them how to improve their work. Inspectors saw evidence of pupils' work improving as a result of pupils following up on their targets.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The number of pupils meeting the expected threshold in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 remains well below average.
- In 2014, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, attainment was broadly average in writing but it was well below average in reading, mathematics and English punctuation, spelling and grammar. Attainment in mathematics and in the English punctuation, spelling and grammar test was a year behind pupils nationally. Nevertheless, the test results in 2014 represented a marked improvement on the previous year, when pupils left the school with very low attainment: around 18 months behind pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and two years behind in the English punctuation, spelling and grammar test.
- The proportion of pupils who met the end of Key Stage 2 threshold Level 4 (the nationally expected standard) improved in 2014 and was closer to average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was well below average.
- The proportion of pupils making the nationally expected rate of progress in Key Stage 2 in 2014 was in line with that expected nationally. The proportion making more than expected progress was above average in writing but below in reading and mathematics.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding requires improvement. In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in the school and pupils nationally was approximately 20 months in reading and mathematics, and approximately 10 months in writing. The gap when compared with other pupils in the school was approximately 16 months in mathematics, 20 months in reading and eight months in writing. School data shows the gap is closing in Key Stage 1, and, in the present Year 6, the gap has halved in all subjects.
- School data shows that the most-able pupils in the current Year 6 are making expected progress in all subjects. However, mathematics is the only subject where pupils are making more than expected progress. This is because these pupils are provided with more challenging work as they are now taught as a separate group. The progress of the most able is similar in other year groups. The most-able mathematicians in Year 5 are also taught higher-level mathematics.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typically expected for their age in most areas of development, especially in speech and language skills. The good progress they make in the early years means that they leave the Reception Year adequately prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The school accurately identifies the specific learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result of targeted support, they make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

The early years provision**is good**

- This is well run provision. Staff in both the Nursery and Reception Year accurately assess children's level of skill and involve parents and other professionals in the process. Careful planning of activities ensures that learning meets each child's individual learning needs.
- A number of children have speech and language skills below those expected for their age. The school has employed a speech and language therapist to work with these children. As a result, their speech and language skills are improving, which is supporting their learning.
- Activities focus on developing children's language, writing and understanding numbers. Phonics is taught well in the early years, and inspectors saw evidence of children making good progress with their understanding of letter sounds. As a result, children are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1.

- Good relationships between adults and children support their learning, and children are slowly nurtured into being avid and keen learners. Children's self-confidence is developed. This results in their willingness to try new ideas and talk about their work. For example, one group of children who were running the 'take-away restaurant' talked about their roles and invited inspectors to try a dish from the menu.
- Children learn in a caring environment and, as a result, behaviour is good. Children show respect for one another and their environment. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing equipment.
- Good use is made of the outside learning area.
- Children, particularly the more able, sometimes spend too long on an activity they have mastered rather than being moved on to something new.

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	132836
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	442074

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Thomas
Headteacher	Paul Arch
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
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