

St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Sudbury, CO10 2BJ

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Senior leadership lacked stability in 2014. The new headteacher and other senior leaders have not had time to have the intended impact on improving the quality of teaching and implementing a more vibrant curriculum to raise pupils' achievement.
- Not enough pupils make good progress through the two key stages because teaching is not sufficiently effective. Pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is too slow.
- The amount and quality of work pupils do across all subjects is insufficient.
- The quality of marking in pupils' books is not good in all classes and subjects. Teachers do not frequently check presentation, spelling and grammar in pupils' topic books.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to challenge the most-able pupils.
- Subject leaders, other than for English and mathematics, are not involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and improving standards in their area of responsibility.
- Across all key stages, boys do not do as well as girls. Strategies to help them do better are underdeveloped.
- Governors do not check progress of all groups of pupils well enough, particularly those who receive additional funding.
- The effectiveness of the early years requires improvement because teachers do not assess children well enough to build on their existing level of development.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Senior leaders, staff and governors are committed to consolidating recent improvement.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 are progressing well. They try very hard, enjoy their work and current achievement is better than last year.
- Pupils' behaviour, punctuality and attendance at school are good. The school is safe and welcoming.
- Pupils' ideas and wishes are taken into account to improve their welfare and life at school.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very strong. Pupils are very tolerant, kind and respectful of all adults.
- The provision and quality of teaching in the Special Support Centre are good. Pupils who attend the centre make rapid progress. Pupils who have additional needs are supported well in class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all classes at least once. Inspectors also observed pupils in smaller groups. Six classes were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors undertook 'learning walks'. These comprised short visits to a number of lessons to speak to pupils and look at their work, examine displays and observe behaviour.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, five members of the governing body, teachers who hold additional responsibilities and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, listened to them read and observed them during playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 35 replies to the staff questionnaire and 40 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school and during the mathematics workshop for parents that took place on the first day of the inspection.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, safeguarding policies, minutes of meetings, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dellis Smith

Seconded Inspector

Terence Cook

Additional Inspector

Rachel Welch

Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is about one in five, which is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to schools for pupils in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has two special classes (The Special Support Centre) which cater for pupils who have complex learning difficulties. There are currently 20 pupils in these classes.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children of Nursery age attend the school-run Nursery on a part-time basis in the morning. Children attend full time in Reception.
- The school runs a breakfast club each day and a range of activities after school.
- The current headteacher joined the school in January 2015. Two acting headteachers led the school during the autumn term 2014 following the departure of the previous headteacher in July 2014.
- The local authority is reorganising its schools. At the time of the previous inspection pupils left the school at the end of Year 4 aged nine years. Pupils now stay in the school until the end of Key Stage 2 and, in 2014, the first cohort of Year 6 pupils took the national tests.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide the most-able pupils with work that is challenging and enables them to learn quickly
 - effective strategies are shared among staff to improve boys' achievement
 - marking helps pupils improve their work in all subjects.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - ensuring that pupils present their work to a good standard in all subjects, and apply their spelling and grammar skills in lessons other than just English.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making better use of assessment in the early years
 - developing the monitoring skills of subject leaders to improve teaching and standards
 - devising a richer curriculum through the full range of subjects
 - providing governors with a wide range of information so that they can hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in all years and groups
 - ensuring governors analyse the impact of the pupil premium and check that strategies to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are effective.

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 leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils in all classes do not yet achieve equally well and make good progress. Further work is necessary to secure good teaching and high standards for all pupils.
- The headteacher, very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, has galvanised the new senior leadership of the school and restructured subject leadership following a period of instability. Neither team has had sufficient time to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and, as a result, too many pupils do not reach their potential across all subjects.
- Senior leaders quickly gathered an accurate knowledge of the strengths of the school and the weaknesses that are still to be addressed. Leaders at all levels, including governors, and other staff are committed and dedicated to ensuring that the school can be judged as good as soon as possible.
- Senior leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching. There are clear examples where feedback to staff is improving the quality of classroom practice but it is not yet consistently good, especially across all years at Key Stage 2.
- Subject leaders, other than in English and mathematics, are not yet fully involved in improving the quality of teaching. Their skills, particularly in developing the staff's subject knowledge and using assessment data, require improvement.
- The leadership of the early years requires improvement because staff do not assess children's existing levels of development well enough to ensure that all children, particularly boys, make rapid progress.
- The headteacher is implementing stronger systems for managing teachers' performance because, in the past, insufficient evidence was taken into account to check whether teachers had achieved their objectives. Targets for staff are now aligned with the priorities of the school improvement plan and to the progress pupils make over time.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective in protecting children. However, minutes of meetings and plans to support families in need are not distributed quickly enough to all supporting agencies and targets to address issues lack urgency.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils who spoke to inspectors are supportive of the school's work and recognise the significant recent improvements that are being made. They commented on the positive ethos within the school that the headteacher, supported by staff, has created in a relatively short time. This is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence, attendance and behaviour in and around the school.
- With the new senior and middle leadership teams successfully in place and a clear understanding of the priorities, coupled with some improvements in Year 6 achievement, the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) and pupils' attendance, the school has the capacity for further improvement.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. The expert leadership of the Special Support Centre is a strength. The coordinator is well organised and checks pupils' academic progress as well as their emotional and behavioural needs very well.
- Staff are designing a range of learning opportunities to meet the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. However, work across the full range of subjects lacks creativity. It often fails to challenge the most-able pupils or support boys' learning. Consequently, pupils do not demonstrate the excellent standards they are capable of achieving. They do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across subject areas.

- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Much of this is embedded in the school's Christian ethos. Pupils show mutual respect and tolerance for others and a very clear sense of right and wrong. The school is preparing pupils well for life in modern British society. Opportunities to learn about British values, such as democracy and tolerance, are made explicit in the school's policies, in assemblies and in the programme of personal, social and health education. Year 6 pupils are mature and confident. In this respect they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The governing body and senior leaders make sure that all pupils are treated equally and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils from the Special Support Centre are fully integrated in the life of the school and join in special events, including collective worship. Good links exist with visiting speakers from missions overseas, as far away as Thailand. This helps pupils develop a good understanding of other faiths. Links with the local community are strong and include pupils singing in homes for older people, together with making Sudbury cleaner and greener by collecting litter and planting trees.
- The impact of pupil premium funding is not monitored closely enough. As a result, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is wide and not closing rapidly enough. Pupils often work in smaller groups but the effectiveness of this additional provision has not been analysed well enough. The designated teacher for looked-after children has not yet received appropriate training. Consequently, the available grant and up-to-date personal education plan are not in place.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used to provide attractive equipment and a range of physical education activities, including team sport and clubs. Inspectors saw, and pupils confirmed, that behaviour at lunch time is good because pupils enjoy the activities which are well organised by the midday supervisors. The subject leader for physical education has not yet checked precisely the full impact of the funding on improving the quality of the staff's skills in teaching the subject.
- The local authority did not check the effectiveness of the school quickly enough and trends in attainment have slipped since the last inspection leading to low Key Stage 2 results in 2014. Since May 2014, however, support has improved. The local authority officers visit the school more frequently and the resultant reports accurately acknowledge where improvements are required. The full impact of the support and challenge on achievement is yet to be seen.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The experienced Chair of the Governing Body and governors show great determination to get the school back on track after a period of instability but governance is not yet fully effective.
 - During the autumn term 2014, governors identified the need to complete an externally-led review of the governing body to improve its effectiveness but this did not take place. Governors are beginning to ask more challenging questions of the senior leaders but they do not yet have an accurate view of the school's performance across all subjects and for specific groups of pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium funding.
 - Governors know how funding for physical education and sport has been spent but have not yet checked how this additional resource is improving the quality of teaching and pupils' skills in sport.
 - Governors have taken robust action to tackle underperformance in the past but staff progression through the salary scale points is not tightly related to pupils' progress because assessment data is not precise enough. The Chair of Governors meets weekly with the new headteacher. They are quickly setting up close working links and have created a helpful monitoring schedule for governors to check school's work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils like school. They show this by attending regularly, being very punctual to lessons and bringing the necessary equipment to do their work. Pupils are well supervised and move around school very sensibly. They are polite and respectful.

- Inspectors observed several occasions when pupils spontaneously helped one another, for example to carry equipment or help in learning if a friend was stuck. The 'pulling a turnip' activity in the Special Support Centre was a fun example of pupils being encouraged to work as a team to succeed.
- Senior leaders have been successful in supporting the small number of pupils who demonstrated less positive behaviour, particularly at lunch time. Exclusions are very rare. Senior leaders have also worked well with some families to reduce persistent absence.
- Good attitudes to learning are fostered from when children begin in Nursery. Pupils of different ages told inspectors that lessons are 'fun'. When teaching is good, pupils concentrate and try their best to get their work completed quickly and to a high standard. When teaching is less than good pupils take less care with their presentation and handwriting.
- Pupils understand the importance of treating others fairly and equally. One pupil summed this up saying, 'Everyone is unique.' Pupils look after those who attend the Special Support Centre very well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are well supervised and adults are vigilant. Safety is very good in the Special Support Centre. Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in the adults who take care of them. Pupils told inspectors that their representatives on the school council also listen to their worries and bring these to the attention of the adults.
- Parents and carers agree that pupils are safe at school. They stated that staff respond promptly to any concerns they raise and that pupils with extra needs are well catered for.
- The pupils spoken to were able to talk about different forms of bullying and told inspectors that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils were confident that if bullying should occur they would go to the anti-bullying ambassadors and adults would sort it out.
- Pupils in Nursery and Reception are able to talk about rules in the classroom that keep them safe when they are playing.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for instance when using the internet. Pupils are listened to and contribute to improving the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Not all teachers, including in the early years, are assessing what pupils understand and can do to inform the planning of work and so not all pupils are challenged well.
- In mathematics and writing, pupils are taught new concepts effectively in Key Stage 1 but pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is too slow. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical and writing skills in other subjects and in real-life or creative contexts.
- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils read frequently with an adult and they enjoy texts of increasing difficulty. However, not enough emphasis is given to reading for pleasure and supporting pupils to read at home through, for example, the better use of the reading logs.
- Work for the most-able pupils does not extend their thinking. In some classes, such as in Year 6, pupils are given different levels of challenge in order to progress well but this good practice is not consistent across the school. Teachers are not sharing effective strategies to improve boys' achievement.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work often does not give reasons for positive comments or specific guidance

on how the pupils can improve it. Pupils do not respond to their teachers' marking on a regular basis and, as a result, their progress is not as rapid as it should be.

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve across the full range of subjects are not high enough. The amount and range of work in subjects other than English and mathematics is insufficient. This is particularly the case in science investigations, geography, computing, and art and design. In these subjects, pupils do not cover enough work to make good gains in their skills and knowledge.
- Topic books are poorly presented because pupils are not consistently encouraged to take care with handwriting, spelling and grammar. In some books seen by inspectors, pupils had presented their work neatly and correctly in English and mathematics. The same pupils had not applied these good skills to their topic books and writing often included simple mistakes that were unchecked by teachers.
- There are several strengths in the quality of teaching across all years. These include the positive relationship between adults and pupils, the good atmosphere for learning so that pupils are not worried to 'have a go', and the opportunities given to pupils to share their ideas and discuss their learning.
- The provision and teaching of pupils in the Special Support Centre is consistently good. One parent explained how her child had come on 'leaps and bounds' and how his reading and understanding of numbers had improved since attending the centre. The teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team and pupils make rapid progress.
- For other pupils with additional needs, frequent discussions with class teachers ensure that learning difficulties are identified promptly and timely support is put in place. Many of these pupils are taught in small groups or are supported effectively within the classroom. Pupils respond positively to instructions and explanations.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection that took place in 2011, achievement has not kept abreast of the national rate of improvement and it is no longer good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics when pupils left Year 6 in 2014 were two terms behind the average of other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils making expected progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was below average.
- The majority of the most-able pupils did not reach sufficiently high levels of attainment in 2014 compared to those of similar pupils nationally, especially in mathematics and writing. From scrutiny of pupils' books during this inspection and analysis of the school's own data, pupils currently in Year 6 are on track for improved results in 2015.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 in these subjects was below the national average.
- In the most recent Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average. This represents a significant increase on previous years. This is because the teaching of phonics is much improved and is now good. Pupils who do not reach the required standard in Year 1 do so by the end of Year 2.
- The most-able pupils and boys are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough and, as a result, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing is too slow. Pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems and practise their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are positive about their reading experiences at school. Pupils who read to inspectors were confident and used their knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils could talk about a range of authors and identify their favourites. The school does not do enough to

encourage independent reading, including reading for pleasure.

- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school or when compared to others nationally and the gaps are not closing. In the 2014 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were more than three terms behind both other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally in mathematics, reading and writing.
- In the early years, children join the school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. The proportion reaching a good level of development in 2014 was slightly above average but boys' level of development was well below that of girls.
- As a result of focused interventions, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress of pupils in the Special Support Centre is rapid from their low starting points.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The leadership of the early years requires improvement because the information gathered from assessment is not used effectively enough to ensure all children make rapid and sustained progress. Boys and the most-able children underachieve and therefore, in some aspects of their learning, these children are less well prepared to start Year 1 than they should be.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teachers do not always plan activities that challenge children sufficiently. Although staff acknowledge the low level of boys' development when compared with that of the girls, they have not yet applied effective strategies to reduce this wide gap.
- Phonics is taught well and 'learning journeys' clearly show how children are progressing. Most children recognise letters and the sounds that they make but some still struggle to group letters to say a full word correctly; this slows their reading. All are, however, very keen to read with an adult.
- Children do less well in use of number than in other areas of learning. Opportunities to develop this aspect of learning are not sufficiently considered in the planning of activities.
- Children with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- There are positive relationships between the adults and young children. Children are eager to learn. Behaviour is good and children are well listened to. They feel safe and show consideration for others.
- Information gathered from home visits contributes to the initial assessment of learning and to good communication with parents and carers who are kept informed of their child's progress.
- The provision is well resourced and the outdoor area is well organised. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their physical and emotional skills. In this respect, by the time they leave Reception the large majority have the confidence and emotional resilience needed to start Year 1.

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	124757
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	461405

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Ford-Platt
Headteacher	Daniel Woodrow
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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