

Cockfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 0LA

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides good leadership and, supported by other leaders and managers, has been effective in improving the school. She has raised achievement and improved the quality of teaching.
- Governors have provided good support in this, and they are ambitious for the school. The governing body has developed its role since the last inspection and now makes a good contribution to school improvement.
- Teaching is good, with particular strengths in the early years, Key Stage 1 and Year 6.
- The school provides well for children in the early years. They make good progress and are well prepared for moving up to Year 1.
- Many pupils in the rest of the school are making good progress and successfully filling previous gaps in their learning so that standards are gradually rising.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Their positive attitudes to learning have a good effect on their academic progress and personal development.
- The school provides an exciting and varied curriculum which is enriched by many educational visits and special events. This helps to promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some variation in the amount of progress pupils make in different year groups, mostly at Key Stage 2.
- On occasion, teachers do not make sure that work provides the right level of challenge for pupils, including those who are most able.
- Teachers do not raise pupils' awareness as much as they could about what high-quality writing looks like or pay sufficient attention to correcting their spelling mistakes.
- Children in the early years take their reading books home, but the school does not provide any other tasks for them to do at home to involve parents in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 lessons. In combination with looking at pupils' books, talking to them about their work and checking their progress over time, this provided a balance of evidence on teaching and learning. The inspector listened to some pupils at Key Stage 1 read, looked at arrangements at break, observed an assembly and talked with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher who is also special educational needs coordinator and literacy leader, and the early years leader. Interviews took place with a group of six governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 25 responses to the online survey, Parent View. She spoke to a small number of parents when they brought their children to school and took into account the school's own recent parental survey. She also considered the six completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- As a result of the reorganisation of education in Suffolk and the abolition of middle schools, Cockfield Primary School has expanded its age range. This is the first year that the school has had pupils in Year 6.
- Pupils throughout the school are taught in mixed-age classes. Children in the Reception Year, who attend full time, learn in a class with pupils in Year 1 and, sometimes, also with those in Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn together, as do those in Years 5 and 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. This funding is for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the last inspection, and only a minority of the teachers present at that time are still employed by the school. For much of this academic year, the headteacher has been teaching the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6 for three days each week. A new teacher has been appointed to teach this class full time from the beginning of next term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and increase the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress, especially at Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure that teachers always match work to the next steps in learning for different groups of pupils and that they provide enough challenge for the most able pupils
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to see examples of high-quality writing
 - making sure that teachers take a more rigorous stance in pointing out spelling mistakes when marking pupils' work and in providing guidance to the most able pupils about how they could make their writing even better
 - providing additional activities for children in the early years to complete at home to extend their progress and involve parents more closely in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and clear direction for the staff. She has high expectations and has been determined in her efforts to improve the school despite a number of staffing difficulties. She has successfully put in place many essential systems that were lacking at the time of the last inspection and has brought the school to a position where it is well placed to improve further. By teaching for part of the week in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the headteacher has ensured that these pupils have had a positive experience and been well prepared for moving on to secondary school.
- With good support from the senior teacher and early years leader, the headteacher has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and is systematically raising pupils' achievement. There is a strong commitment to continued development, and leaders have established a culture in which teaching can flourish, pupils are expected to behave well and relationships are harmonious.
- The leadership of teaching is good and there are rigorous systems for managing teachers' performance. Although the school's firm stance in tackling underperformance has been a factor in the high turnover of staff, it has also led to improvements in teaching and learning. Support for newly appointed teachers is good and staff morale is high.
- Leaders collect a good amount of data and analyse this effectively to find out how much progress pupils have made and to identify where improvement is needed. This helps them to make sure all pupils receive equal opportunities and that there is no discrimination. Joint assessment with teachers from other schools has helped to overcome some past inaccuracies in assessment and ensured that the school is now in a position where information about pupils' attainment and progress is accurate.
- The school makes effective use of its pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have spent the money to provide one-to-one teaching and intensive support in literacy and numeracy. They have also spent some of it to provide an additional teaching assistant and to purchase resources to support the learning of eligible pupils. This is helping these pupils to make similar progress to their classmates.
- The school makes good use of its primary physical education and sport premium funding to increase pupils' physical skills and expand the experiences available to them. It has used its funding to provide staff training in gymnastics and dance, and opportunities for pupils to attend sports clubs. It has used it to increase the take-up of sport outside school, including through links with the local football association and a gym club in Bury St Edmunds, and to extend pupils' involvement in inter-school sporting events.
- The curriculum is exciting and varied and promotes pupils' academic achievement and personal development very well. The many educational visits and special events do much to expand and enrich pupils' learning. For instance, during the recent African Adventure, pupils in Year 6 had a small taste of life in Africa, sleeping in mud huts, learning how to purify water and taking part in other practical experiences. Such activities help to motivate the pupils and contribute a great deal to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school teaches pupils about British values and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain. It focuses on a new value each half term and, earlier this year, the school held a special week where pupils learnt about the different cultures, customs and traditions found in this country. To coincide with the General Election, the school formed its own 'government' where pupils gave speeches, and the school council is run along parliamentary lines.
- The school has close links with the church and the local community and, in most respects, it works well in partnership with parents. The friends' association is active in raising funds for the school. Although a few parents were critical about aspects of the school's work in their completion of the Ofsted survey, Parent View, those who spoke to the inspector and who completed the school's own recent survey expressed almost entirely positive views.

- The school has good procedures for keeping pupils safe, and its safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. It makes sure that staff are fully trained and conducts regular checks to make sure the school site is secure. Staff keep appropriate records in relation to safeguarding and child protection, and governors are appropriately involved in checking that health and safety procedures are followed.
- The school has made good use of the support provided by the local authority, particularly through the wide range of training courses provided for staff and governors. Advisers from the local authority have supported improvements in the early years, in English and mathematics, and the local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. The governing body has made good use of training opportunities and strengthened a number of areas of its work since the last inspection. After conducting an audit of governors' skills, it sought to increase the expertise of its members. Individual governors provide some valuable expertise. They are now linked to subjects and aspects of the school's work and conduct regular visits to gather information for themselves. As a result, they are playing a bigger part in school improvement and are ambitious for the future.
 - Governors talk knowledgeably about the school's data, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding. They understand how well pupils in the school achieve in relation to pupils nationally. The governing body knows that teaching is now generally good and governors make sure that the most effective teachers are rewarded financially. They have provided effective support to the headteacher in the past in tackling underperformance in order to improve the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school, and attendance is above average. They have positive attitudes to learning and respond well to the activities the school provides for them.
- In lessons, pupils readily contribute their ideas and apply themselves well to a range of tasks. They work well together and show respect for one another. They behave well in assembly and are polite and helpful as they move around the school. Pupils say that the school is friendly and welcoming. Break times are sociable and well-organised occasions. Pupils play together harmoniously, and older pupils frequently support the younger ones.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's rewards system, and they say that their learning is not disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. School records and inspection findings show that behaviour in lessons is nearly always good. Just occasionally, pupils lack a sense of urgency, which is why behaviour is not yet outstanding, and teachers do not always instil in them the importance of focusing intensely to achieve as much as possible.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are positive about the various ways in which the school helps them to feel safe. They are able to talk about e-safety and how to stay safe when using the internet or mobile phones, and value the fact that the school provided training for their parents in this as well. Pupils in Year 6 found the visit during the inspection by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) helpful in its coverage of safety, bullying and social aspects of keeping safe.
- When asked about bullying, pupils said, 'We don't have that here. There are no problems with bullying.' They went on to say, however, that there is a small amount of name calling, but that it is dealt with at once by teachers. School records indicate that there are very few incidents, and pupils generally get on very well together.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The school's own records of teaching, information about pupils' progress, work in their books and other inspection findings indicate that teaching is good. It is particularly strong in the early years, at Key Stage 1 and in Year 6.
- Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with their pupils and provide them with varied activities to stimulate their learning. These frequently involve practical investigations or build on direct experience, such as an educational visit. Work often relates to real-life situations and spans a number of subjects, as in a geography lesson where pupils found out about the miles our food travels. This involved them in reading labels, in mathematical calculations, map reading, speaking and listening, and recording what they had found out.
- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. Teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers prepare their lessons well and make good use of practical activities to support pupils' learning. They use questions well to check pupils' understanding and provide opportunities for them to investigate for themselves. Where pupils pick their own level of challenge, they usually choose effectively. Teachers mark pupils' mathematics books regularly, with clear pointers for improvement, and often set them extra little challenges to complete.
- The teaching of reading is good. In the early years and at Key Stage 1, phonics teaching is good and, throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to practise and develop their reading. Support sessions, such as those where some pupils read to Bruno the dog who comes in each week with a member of the governing body, contribute well to the development of pupils' skills and confidence. The school has increased its resources to support guided-reading sessions. These generally provide pupils with good opportunities to develop relevant skills, although not all sessions are planned as specifically as they could be.
- The teaching of writing is good in the early years and at Key Stage 1. In the mixed-age class for pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, the teacher and teaching assistants match activities well to the next steps in pupils' learning. Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills in a range of subjects, and the wealth of school trips gives pupils exciting things to write about.
- At Key Stage 2, teachers plan their literacy lessons to provide interesting activities, and pupils have opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Pupils' progress has not been as rapid in writing as it has in mathematics and reading, however, because teachers do not do as much as they could to raise their awareness of what high-quality writing looks like. While marking generally provides pupils with some helpful advice about how to improve their work, teachers do not pay enough attention to correcting pupils' spelling mistakes. The work of the most able pupils is also praised sometimes without providing them with clear pointers about how it could be made even better.
- While teachers generally match tasks well to the learning of different groups of pupils or allow them to choose work at different levels of difficulty, there are occasions when the whole class does the same work. Given that pupils generally learn in mixed-age classes, this results in some making less progress than they could when this occurs.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- The school's data and work in their books show that pupils currently in the school have nearly all made at least the expected amount of progress, and achievement is good in most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, standards are rising, especially at the lower end of the school.

- Children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. At the end of the Reception Year in 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was a little above the national average. This was a major improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection, and children currently in the Reception Year are making good progress.
- The school's results in screening of pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) at the end of Year 1 were above average in 2014. This was a dramatic improvement on the previous year's results. The proportion of pupils who successfully retook the test in Year 2 in 2014 was also above average. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in phonics in the early years and at Key Stage 1, and pupils who read to the inspector were able to draw on their knowledge to decipher some challenging new words.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 was average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. While standards remain broadly in line with national expectations, they show some improvement on last year's results. Furthermore, these pupils have made good progress during their time in Key Stage 1 because their attainment was low when they moved up to Year 1 in 2013.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are around half a term ahead of national expectations for their age in reading and mathematics, and just over a term ahead in writing. The school's data show that a high proportion of these pupils have made good progress across the key stage in reading and mathematics, filling previous gaps in their learning, and most have made at least the expected amount of progress in writing.
- There is some variation between year groups, particularly at Key Stage 2, in the proportion of pupils who have made more than expected progress. While this reflects some variation in the quality of learning, it is also partly explained by the very small numbers in each year group. In years with only six or seven pupils, individuals account for a significant percentage of the group and so have a strong effect on overall attainment.
- Pupils' books and the wealth of displays around the school show that pupils produce a good amount of work in a range of subjects. This was evident during the inspection, when pupils made good progress in art, design, technology and geography lessons as well as in most English and mathematics lessons.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment with that of their classmates or with pupils nationally without identifying individuals. The school's own data indicate that they have made similar progress to other pupils in reading and writing and slightly better progress in mathematics.
- The school provides effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils with particular difficulties and their parents praised the support provided. This is based very much on the staff's detailed knowledge of individual needs, and these pupils benefit from the added attention that is available in small classes. As a result, they make similar progress to their classmates.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall, and those in the current Year 6 have done particularly well in writing and mathematics. They sustain and structure their ideas well in writing, producing their best work when writing factual accounts, but their choice of vocabulary is not always as imaginative as it could be. In mathematics, they have well-developed problem-solving skills, quick mental recall of number facts and produce work across a good variety of topics.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is led and managed well. The school has good systems for gathering information about what children can do when they join the Reception Year, and staff liaise closely with the local pre-school, which most children attend, as well as with parents.
- Although standards in the past have been well below those nationally at the end of the Reception Year, they improved significantly in 2014, and children currently in the early years are making good progress across the different areas of learning and are being well prepared for moving up to Year 1.

- Teaching is good, and children benefit from a great deal of adult attention, as there are only a small number in Reception this year. The teaching assistant, who is highly skilled in working with this age group, frequently works with them on activities that are closely matched to their learning needs. They have good opportunities to develop their language and regularly practise their literacy and mathematical skills. The children respond very well to the activities on offer. They behave well and clearly feel safe.
- The outdoor area has been developed since the last inspection and now provides interesting and varied learning opportunities. There are also regular sessions where children learn for an extended period of time outside, either in the wooded area, the field or at a nearby meadow.
- There are effective systems for recording and tracking children's progress, and for informing parents about their children's development. Staff produce detailed observations of children's progress and regularly identify the next steps in their learning. While parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and children take their reading books home, the school does not provide other activities for parents to do with their children at home to support their learning.

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	124694
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	462037

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Sharon Potter
Headteacher	Trudie Harkin
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
Telephone number	01284 828287
Fax number	01284 828287
Email address	admin@cockfield.suffolk.sch.uk

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