

Ellingham Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Ellingham, Bungay NR35 2PZ

Inspection dates	11–12 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have tackled many of the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. However, they have not ensured that teaching is securely good.
- Progress of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 is too slow because, as leaders acknowledge, teaching has not been good enough.
- Progress in writing is slower in some classes because teachers do not regularly expect pupils to produce work at the standard that they are capable of.
- The role of middle leaders is not fully developed and they are not having sufficient impact on securing consistently good teaching across the school.
- The school's development plan does not identify clearly enough how leaders will measure success for each priority during the year and by the end of the year.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly but do not always make sufficiently clear the key strengths identified and most important areas that require improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff and governors work together as a team. There is a strong commitment by all to further improving the school so that all pupils achieve well.
- Leaders' work to promote a harmonious atmosphere has been effective, resulting in behaviour being much improved since the time of the last inspection.
- Pupils have a good start to school in the Reception class where they make good progress and enjoy interesting and varied tasks.
- Parental support for the school is strong. The large majority of parents hold the school, its staff and its leaders in high regard.
- Reading is taught and promoted well across the school so that pupils develop a real enthusiasm for reading and develop their skills well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to consistently good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers are better able to accurately identify what pupils already know and what they need to learn next
 - leaders provide clearer feedback to teachers about the strengths and areas for development in their teaching
 - teachers' marking has a more consistent impact on pupils' subsequent learning.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school's development plan sets out more clearly how success will be measured for each priority
 - middle leaders have a greater impact on improving teaching and learning
 - teachers are confident and accurate in assessing pupils' achievements so that the school's data accurately reflects pupils' outcomes.

- Improve pupils' progress in writing, by:
 - developing a clear whole-school approach to improving spelling
 - ensuring teachers have equally high expectations of pupils' writing in all classes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, supported by her deputy and governors, has tackled many of the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection with tenacity. However, they have not succeeded in ensuring that there is consistently good teaching in all classes at the school. Staffing issues at the same time at both schools in the federation have meant that leaders were overstretched. As a result, weak teaching has resulted in progress which is too slow for pupils in key stage 1.
- Support provided by some middle leaders has not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching in key stage 1 and in writing more generally. Middle leaders do not track pupils' achievement closely enough through looking at pupils' work as well as school assessment information. However, leadership of special educational needs is strong and the progress of these pupils is very carefully tracked. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is checked through visits to classes and observations of interventions as well as by looking at the progress pupils make.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils in key stage 1 are secure and so leaders' views of the achievement of these pupils is not entirely accurate.
- The school's development plan is not sharp enough in identifying clearly how leaders will measure success for each priority during the year and by the end of the year. This makes it difficult for leaders, including governors, to track the school's progress towards success in each area.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly. However, the feedback provided to teachers is not always specific enough so that teachers understand the key strengths and the areas for improvement which will be followed up during subsequent checks.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong partnership. They have created a strong staff team who are all committed to the school's further improvement.
- Leaders have ensured that systems for improving behaviour have been used consistently by teachers. This has resulted in good behaviour across the school, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection.
- There is a broad curriculum in place which pupils enjoy. Good opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are provided and a good range of clubs enhance the curriculum further.
- Funding provided to support disadvantaged pupils is well used to support pupils academically and socially. Initiatives are carefully evaluated and, as a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is good.
- Sports premium funding provided by the government to encourage participation in sports is also well used. It is used to provide specialist staff who work alongside teachers to improve their skills in teaching sports and, for example, to run clubs and to support participation in competitions. As a result, participation in sports has increased.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent. The large majority of parents spoken to during the inspection were also very positive about the school and its leadership.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are highly committed to the school and determined to ensure that it continues to improve. Following the last inspection, they commissioned a review of governance and responded quickly to its recommendations. As a result, they have improved their systems and now have a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Governors question leaders about aspects of the school during meetings and visits. However, their questions are not always sufficiently probing in relation to current achievement of pupils, which leads to some gaps in their knowledge.
 - Governors visit the school regularly with a specific focus drawn from the school's development plan. Governors recognise the impact that weak teaching has had on the progress of pupils in key stage 1 and have supported the headteacher in taking action to ensure that this is addressed.
 - They review the information provided to them in the headteacher's report and identify additional information that they require, for example in relation to attendance. They also support the headteacher, recognising, for example, when she had taken on too great a teaching commitment when staffing issues were pressing, and supporting the decision to bring in some additional teaching resources.
 - Governors review pay decisions carefully. They draw on evidence relating to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement before making any salary decisions and do not reward performance which is not good.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe in school are robust and well managed. Staff appointed to the school are carefully checked in accordance with statutory requirements. Records of concerns raised about pupils are detailed and are acted on swiftly. Leaders ensure that action is taken by the relevant authorities, checking regularly when there appear to be delays. Leaders are rigorous in their pursuit of support for pupils and families in need. Staff receive up-to-date training and so all know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school. While strong in key stage 2, particularly Years 5 and 6, teaching in key stage 1 has not been good enough. Leaders have taken action to address this weakness but, nevertheless, this poorer teaching has had an adverse effect on these pupils who have not made enough progress.
- The teaching of writing is variable. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils in lessons and so the writing that they produce is sometimes not at the standard of which they are capable.
- Assessment is not always used well enough to plan lessons which move pupils on in their learning rapidly. In Years 5 and 6, staff consider carefully what pupils already know and what they need to learn next when planning their lessons, but this is not always the case in other classes.
- Questioning is not used effectively enough in some classes to probe pupils' understanding. For example, when pupils give incorrect answers, teachers sometimes move on without asking pupils about their answers and using this as further teaching points.
- While the school's marking policy is followed by staff, it has a better impact on improving learning in some classes than in others. Where pupils use the comments made to improve their subsequent work, this is effective but, in some classes, teachers' comments have limited impact on pupils' learning.
- The teaching of spelling is not strong enough and so pupils regularly misspell words which they should be able to spell for their age. This is because, until recently, there has been no whole-school approach to teaching spelling, and still the approach taken by teachers to correcting and practising spelling varies from class to class. This impacts on the quality of writing that pupils produce.
- Pupils are generally engaged in learning, although sometimes teachers do not expect pupils to work as productively as they could. Where teachers have high expectations of pupils, pupils are highly motivated and engaged in their learning.
- Homework is used to support learning in school effectively. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 had made a 'God's eye' as part of their topic work, and their homework was to write a set of instructions for making this.
- Some good opportunities are provided for developing skills across other subjects. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils were writing about life in different Mexican cities, using skills learned in English to structure their writing. Fewer opportunities are given for using mathematical skills across other subjects.
- Teaching in science is strong in key stage 2 because teachers have good subject knowledge in science. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were investigating the parts of a flower, carefully dissecting and identifying each part and its purpose. Pupils were taught the specific vocabulary relevant to this and what each term meant. Pupils in key stage 2 carry out investigations, recording their methods and results and how they have ensured the investigation is a fair test. However, sometimes pupils are not expected to follow this by drawing conclusions about scientific concepts.
- Reading is now taught well. Improvements in the teaching of phonics, which is letters and the sounds they make, in key stage 1 ensure that younger pupils now develop their skills well and are able to apply these to their reading. This is beginning to address the slower progress made by these pupils over the past year. Reading in the older classes has a high profile. Attractive book corners in all classes are used by pupils regularly and teachers share an extended novel with pupils to encourage a love of reading. Home reading is monitored carefully and pupils are rewarded for regular home reading, appearing on the 'star reader' display when they read enough times in a week.
- The school has benefited from support from a local school to develop the teaching of mathematics. Teachers are growing in confidence in using more practical resources to support mathematical understanding and are providing good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to problems and investigations. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. These pupils are given adult support individually and in groups, and are also expected to develop independence by working sometimes without an adult but with appropriate resources. For example, in the oldest class, some pupils with special educational needs were working on a literacy task without an adult because the task had been appropriately matched to their needs and they were benefiting from working with others in their class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and told the inspector 'it's the best school ever'. Some Year 5 pupils volunteered to show the inspector many aspects of the school, proudly pointing out the garden areas, and displays such as their eco-poems, which they spoke about with enthusiasm. Pupils spoke about the many aspects of school that they enjoy, including the clubs, the friendly atmosphere and the help they receive from all adults in the school. They were unable to think of any way the school could be improved.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils say there is always someone in school to speak with if they are upset or worried about anything. Pupils understand about how to keep themselves safe including when using the internet and mobile phones because they are taught about e-safety regularly at school.
- Attendance at the school is good for all pupils and for groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, because pupils enjoy school. Parents spoken to during the inspection said that their child is happy in school and all parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire also said their child is happy in school. Leaders also regularly remind parents about the importance of regular attendance at school.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. They learn about other faiths such as Buddhism and Hinduism. They learn about values such as wisdom and forgiveness, and identify their own 'flowers of advice' linked to these themes. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on aspects of religion and how messages relate to their own lives. Eco-rangers take responsibility for promoting an understanding of how to protect the environment and pupils talked passionately about the varied outdoor learning activities that they take part in.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and, where teaching is strongest, show very high levels of motivation and engagement. They make sensible contributions to discussions, listening to each other and to adults, and volunteering to share their work.
- Pupils are sociable and play together sensibly at playtimes, boys and girls sharing together and, for example, playing football together. They take care of each other and recognise that difference is to be celebrated. One pupil told the inspector, 'It would be really dull if we were all the same.'
- Pupils told the inspector that there was no bullying in school and that any minor disagreements were always quickly resolved by staff. One pupil said, 'My teacher reminds us that we are all friends in this school.'
- Parents spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that the school ensures pupils are well behaved.
- Occasionally, when lessons are less engaging, pupils do not listen as well as they could when adults are speaking.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Due to weak teaching over the past year, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently not making rapid enough progress, and levels of attainment for these pupils are too low. Standards in Year 2 are currently lower than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The achievement of pupils in Year 6 in 2015 was lower than in previous years, particularly in reading and mathematics, with some pupils not making the expected level of progress. However, pupils currently in Year 6, together with those in Year 5, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching in the Year 5/6 class is good and staff have high expectations of pupils.

- Progress in reading and mathematics across key stage 2 is now stronger than at the time of the previous inspection because leaders have focused their improvement work on these important areas.
- Progress in writing is not rapid enough in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Teachers do not regularly expect pupils to produce work of a high enough standard in lessons, and do not plan lessons which extend the most-able pupils in writing. Pupils' spelling is frequently weak and corrections made by teachers do not help pupils to spell correctly in their subsequent writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress in the school because the leader for special educational needs and all staff carefully match work to pupils' needs and provide appropriate support.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make good progress, often making more progress than others in the school because funding provided to support these pupils is well used.
- Achievement in science is strong in key stage 2. Pupils are taught well and are developing their skills and understanding of science well.

Early years provision

is good

- From broadly average starting points, children in the Reception class make good progress. In 2015, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception year was above the national average.
- Provision in the Reception class is good. Children enjoy a wide range of interesting activities indoors and outdoors. The recently developed outdoor environment is used well to provide facilities and activities such as a mud kitchen, growing areas, construction equipment and weaving tasks.
- Children are encouraged to be independent. They know where to find resources and enjoy learning with each other and independently. They show perseverance, staying with tasks for extended periods of time. For example, during the inspection some children were playing in the mud kitchen, 'baking cakes' by mixing mud, transporting water carefully in containers and taking time to get the consistency right for their purposes.
- Adults support children well. They ask questions to extend learning and carefully intervene in children's play. For example, the teacher joined a child who was counting 'magic beans' encouraging him to count carefully and to talk about one more and one less.
- Teachers accurately assess children's abilities. They carefully record children's achievements in electronic learning journeys. Staff use these records to plan tasks which extend children's learning.
- Children are happy and behave well in the Reception class. They cooperate with each other, share resources and talk happily to each other and to adults.
- Adults know all pupils well and ensure that their welfare needs are met and that they are kept safe.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to the assessments of their child's achievements by submitting electronic contributions and by commenting on assessments which they access securely on their mobile phones.
- Arrangements for children starting at the school have been altered so that adults visit the pre-school settings prior to children starting at the school. This is ensuring that transition for pupils between settings is smooth.
- While pupils make good progress overall, the proportion of children making better than expected progress is not as high as it could be. This is because sometimes staff do not provide the opportunities for the most-able children to extend their learning more rapidly.
- Occasionally, staff do not intervene soon enough to ensure that boys and girls take part in a variety of tasks, for example encouraging girls to take part in more active tasks and boys to participate in independent writing tasks.

School details

Unique reference number	121035
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10011842

This inspection 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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Ward
Headteacher	Charlotte Whyte
Telephone number	01508 518250
Website	www.ellinghamandwoodton.co.uk
Email address	office@ellingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller school than is found nationally.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. There is a separate class for Reception children.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability supported by an education, health and care plan or statement is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below average.
- The large majority of pupils at the school are of White British heritage and a very small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for pupils' achievement, which is the minimum standard expected of schools for pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6.
- The school is federated with Woodton Primary School. The schools share the same headteacher, deputy headteacher, governing body and subject leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all classes. Some joint observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- The inspector spoke with a small number of parents, took account of 25 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and met with some pupils from Years 4 to 6.
- The inspector heard a small number of pupils read.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and with four members of the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff, arrangements for e-safety (keeping children safe online when using electronic media) and risk assessments.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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