

St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, Haverhill

School Lane, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 9DE

Inspection dates	8–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved rapidly since the last inspection. The headteacher's determination to develop strong teaching has resulted in good outcomes for pupils.
- Governors know the school well. They have high aspirations for the school and challenge leaders by holding them to account for the progress pupils' make.
- Leaders ensure that all groups of pupils now make good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Overall, teaching is good with some that is exceptional. Teachers plan challenging activities in English and mathematics to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Interesting tasks in the well-planned curriculum motivate and engage the pupils well. This enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils in this fully inclusive school are being well prepared to become confident citizens in modern Britain.
- Most pupils behave well, show pride in their school and are keen to learn. They say they feel safe and well looked after by adults in the school.
- The leadership and early years provision is good. The children show perseverance in their learning and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The excellent practice evident in the school is not shared widely enough to improve other teachers' skills.
- Pupils are not given a wide enough range of reading materials to improve their skills further.
- The different challenges seen in mathematics and English are not always evident in other national curriculum subjects to further deepen pupils' understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding to strengthen pupils' outcomes by:
 - continuing to share the exceptional practice already evident in the school so that others can improve their own skills
 - giving pupils a greater choice of reading material to develop their reading skills further
 - ensuring that the different challenges seen in the delivery of English and mathematics occur consistently in other subjects to deepen pupils' learning further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, leaders, staff and governors have created a culture of high expectations and a commitment to providing the best possible education for all pupils. Under the skilled leadership of the headteacher, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' outcomes, and personal development, behaviour and welfare have improved rapidly. The school's plans correctly identify the main priorities for improvement. These actions are clearly strengthening the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective team, ably supported by senior and middle leaders. They regularly monitor the teaching and learning within the school, accurately identifying relative strengths, and the limitations which require improvement. Identified support and training is closely matched to teachers' needs, and rigorous performance management drives improvements in teaching and learning. However, leaders do not ensure that the strong teaching practice within the school is shared widely enough to improve the skills of other staff.
- The school's policy for marking and assessment supports good learning. It ensures that teachers provide pupils with effective feedback to help them improve their learning further.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning, which is supporting their good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Systems for checking pupils' progress are thorough and identify any underachievement, which is then swiftly addressed.
- This fully inclusive school promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination. The school celebrates its diversity. Staff ensure that the stimulating curriculum develops an understanding of British values, including respect and tolerance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language, pupils from ethnic minority groups and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, work and play well together. The curriculum is enhanced through school visits, extra-curricular clubs and specialist practitioners.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. A specialist physical education teacher not only provides highly skilled teaching strategies to improve pupils' learning but supports the teaching practice of the school staff. The funding enables pupils to take part in additional school competitions, in which they are becoming more successful.
- School leaders ensure that additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used wisely. As a result these pupils receive effective social and academic support and make similar, and sometimes better, progress than others in the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their various starting points. The special educational needs leader ensures that provision, including the highly effective nurture support, addresses the pupils' personal, social, behavioural and academic needs.
- The work of the local authority has helped to improve the overall effectiveness of the school.
- Inspectors' conversations with parents and the responses of parents via Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, indicate that most parents are positive about the work of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors thoroughly challenge leaders to ensure that the school is improving. They have improved their knowledge and skills so that they now understand their roles and responsibilities more fully. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and the key priorities for further development. This is achieved by receiving information from the headteacher and external reports, and from their own robust monitoring visits. Governors regularly check and question the school's information on pupils' progress.
 - Governors check the finances of the school and know how the sports funding and the pupil premium are having a positive effect on pupils' outcomes and personal development. Governors link teachers' performance to pay and have supported the headteacher in tackling underachievement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that all staff training is up to date and that the school fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Governors and staff are highly aware of their duty to keep pupils safe. They are alert to the potential risk pupils face from modern-day issues such as extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The leadership's relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection has ensured that most teaching is good, with some that is exceptional. Evidence from pupils' books, the school's information about progress, and learning observed in lessons, shows that teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good or better throughout the school.
- Classrooms are attractive and welcoming. Good-quality work by pupils is displayed to celebrate their success. Pupils use literacy and numeracy displays to support their learning.
- Teachers' planning builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. The different challenges set in English and mathematics meet the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils to extend their understanding. This enables the most able pupils to reach high standards.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and provide activities that interest and engage pupils. Teacher's questioning probes pupils' learning and understanding well.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are making a significant contribution to the improving pace of learning across the school. Pupils listen carefully and are ready to start new tasks quickly and confidently.
- Pupils' reading skills are taught well. Early years and key stage 1 staff effectively teach the links between letters and the sounds that they make, so pupils have a clear understanding of how to read and spell unknown words. Most pupils enjoy reading and some say they would like an even greater range of books to read in school.
- New strategies are improving the teaching of mathematics across the school. The subject leader provides high-quality learning opportunities to enable pupils to use their knowledge to work out more difficult calculations. Teachers plan interesting activities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, when Year 6 pupils investigated 'Is the length of arm related to height?' as part of their science work, they successfully plotted their collected measurements on a scatter graph and discussed the lines of best fit.
- Imaginative tasks linked to other subjects give pupils opportunities to write for different purposes. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote confidently about a desert setting: 'Above the boiling, hot desert the sun reflects back from the glistening river'. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils use sensory experiences to explore the ancient Greek agora and compare values of democracy.
- Additional specialist staff provide a range of high-quality learning experiences across the curriculum. The pupils talk enthusiastically about their exciting learning activities in music and physical education.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils feature strongly in each class. The planned experiences contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Year 1 pupils are able to knowledgeably discuss the work of artists such as Bridget Riley, stating: 'Her paintings trick your eyes.' Year 5 pupils develop empathy, which they show when discussing, for example, 'people fleeing from their country'.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. They are also instrumental in assisting the most able pupils to reach high standards.
- Some of the teaching and learning within the school is of the highest standard. Teachers work well together but there are too few opportunities to share this excellent practice to further improve the skills of others.
- The school's effective approach to give pupils challenges of different degrees of difficulty in English and mathematics to deepen pupils' learning is not so widely used in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a fully inclusive ethos for all of its pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils show tolerance towards each other. They say, 'Our school is an easy environment to make friends in.'
- Pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about their learning. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

- Pupils play well together at break and lunchtimes. They are very active, playing games and safely using facilities such as the trim trail.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their roles of responsibility, including those of school councillors, house captains, playground buddies and e-safety champions.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe, including from the dangers of the internet. Pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and healthy.
- The highly effective nurture provision supports pupils' personal, social, behavioural and academic needs during lessons and at breaktimes.
- As a consequence of clear teaching about different types of bullying, pupils can accurately identify bullying. Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out between friends.
- Most parents agree that the school cares well for their children and keeps them safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. As they move safely and quickly to and from class, older pupils chant multiplication tables, making the most of every learning opportunity.
- Pupils know what is expected of them and most behave well in class. Their attitudes to learning are good, especially when they are given challenging work, as they want to succeed. While there are occasions when a few pupils may lose focus, lessons are rarely disrupted.
- Pupils say that bullying and racist incidents are rare, but when they occur, staff deal with the incidents effectively. This view is supported by the school's behavioural logs. The school has very few fixed-term exclusions.
- Attendance is improving. The school is working closely with those pupils who are persistent absentees to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' outcomes have improved since the previous inspection because the quality of teaching is now good or stronger.
- The school's recent assessment information and the quality of work in pupils' books indicate that the majority of pupils in all year groups are making good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. The improving teaching enables pupils to learn new skills confidently, especially in mathematics.
- The school's checks and the quality of work in books for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that nine pupils out of every 10 will reach or exceed the age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Most pupils will make good progress.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was high in 2015 compared with the national picture, and is expected to remain high again this year. This is due to the effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in the early years and Year 1.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception Years with skills and understanding that are just below or typical for their age. Pupils make effective progress due to good teaching. The proportion of children set to attain a good level of development at the end of Reception is above average.
- The school's recent focus on reading is improving the rate of pupils' progress. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read confidently and fluently to an inspector. Pupils say they enjoy reading but would like to have an even greater selection of books to choose from.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils reach similar standards to their peers and make good progress from their starting points.
- Ethnic minority pupils and those who speak English as an additional language do as well as, or better than, their peers because they thrive in the inclusive school community.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress overall from their individual starting points through well-targeted support. Additional help is closely matched to their needs and provided by well-trained teaching assistants. Both the nurture provision and advice from outside agencies support the pupils' learning well.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They choose the challenge which provides the harder work to deepen their learning. These different levels of challenge are

not so widely used in other subjects to ensure that pupils of all ability groups make the best possible progress across the curriculum.

- Pupils' improving outcomes, and their good behaviour and personal development, mean that they are prepared well for the next stages of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision for both Nursery and Reception children is good. The children in the two year groups mix well together.
- Pupils usually enter the school with skills and understanding that are typical or just below typical for their age. They make good progress because teaching is good. The proportion of children currently set to attain a good level of development at the end of Reception is above average. This supports the children's readiness for Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The deputy headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths of the provision. The enthusiastic early years team know what needs to be done to improve the learning experiences of the children.
- Adults use interesting learning opportunities to consolidate and extend children's learning, both inside and outdoors. Staff ask appropriate questions so that children engage well with their activities. For example, some children used their knowledge of taller and shorter to make a tower taller than themselves and then extended it to be as tall as an adult. They used a step to ensure that they could safely build the high tower.
- Phonics is taught effectively in the early years. Children use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to support their spelling, reading and writing. Children's books show good progress in their writing skills from initial mark-making and the formation of individual letters to writing complete sentences. Children are encouraged to develop their imagination in writing, seen, for example, when the Reception class wrote telephone messages, prescriptions and patient details in the 'doctor's surgery'. The children showed care and compassion when taking 'patients' temperatures and enthusiastically bandaging 'injured' arms and legs.
- All early years staff contribute to the electronic assessment system for recording children's learning. The resulting learning journals contain detailed assessments for all areas of learning. This includes assessment for the new mathematics strategies. Parents can also contribute to their child's electronic learning journey.
- All children achieve well because of the detailed, accurate assessment, which is used to inform the planning of activities. The school's nurture provision and any additional funding is used effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs or disability, who achieve equally as well as other children in the setting. The most able pupils take advantage of appropriately challenging activities to enable them to progress quickly.
- The children are happy, behave well and follow routines. They show respect to each other and listen carefully to adults. The children show perseverance and stay on a task until its completion.
- The indoor and outside provision is well resourced to give stimulating learning opportunities for all pupils. The outdoor learning area is continually being upgraded with helpful support from the parents.
- The outdoor learning strategies in the woodland area are thoroughly enjoyed by the early years children. In their wellingtons and protective clothing the children run and roll through the long grass. The activities develop children's speaking and listening skills, vocabulary and confidence. As one excited child stated while walking through the long grass, 'I didn't expect this to happen, my legs have disappeared.' The children use their problem-solving skills, for example when thinking about the best way to lay sticks for an open fire.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. Children's personal development and welfare are good. They learn how to keep safe and healthy.

School details

Unique reference number	124769
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10011849

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Kellerher
Headteacher	Clare Robinson
Telephone number	01440703775
Website	www.stfelixhaverhill.com
Email address	admin@st-felixrc.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There is an above-average proportion of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There is a well-above-average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- Early years provision is full time for children in the Reception Year and part-time for children in the Nursery Year.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons and attended a music assembly. Five observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at breaktimes. An inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspectors took account of 52 responses to the Ofsted online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the beginning of the school day. The questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff and 19 pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Rand	Ofsted Inspector
James Adkins	Ofsted Inspector

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