

# Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Norwich Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1RU

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Require improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school and so the progress pupils make is variable, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- In some subjects, such as science, history and geography, opportunities for learning are not consistently well planned. As a result, pupils make better progress in some classes than in others.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, particularly in mathematics and in writing, because some teachers lack a secure knowledge of the standard pupils are capable of achieving.
- Leaders' checks on teaching have lacked some rigour, especially in identifying swiftly when standards have slipped. In addition, when these have been identified, actions to address weaknesses have not always been put in place rapidly enough.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles and are yet to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils' spelling is not good enough across the school because teachers do not teach spelling in a consistent manner from class to class. This weakens the quality of pupils' written work.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides a strong model of effective practice in teaching for others to follow. He has taken effective action to secure improvements in many areas where he identified weaknesses, such as in reading and the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils develop a strong sense of what it means to be part of a community. They are supported in becoming responsible and thoughtful citizens.
- Governors provide strong support for the headteacher. They trust his expertise but also check the rationale for decisions, and the impact these have on pupils' outcomes.
- The school is highly inclusive. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs well met and make good progress. All pupils are enabled to feel part of the school. Adults provide a high level of care and nurture for all pupils, who feel safe as a result and behave well overall.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good and leads to pupils' consistently good progress, through teachers:
  - demonstrating equally high expectations of pupils in all classes
  - using assessment more precisely to identify what pupils already know and what they need to learn next
  - providing consistently good opportunities for learning in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, and for applying literacy and mathematical skills through these subjects
  - adopting a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, and ensuring that they reinforce regularly expectations of good spelling with pupils.
- Ensure that the most able pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable by:
  - providing tasks which deepen and extend their thinking
  - teachers gaining a clearer understanding of what constitutes attainment which is above the expected standard in each year group.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - leaders setting out clearly what they expect from all teachers to promote quality learning
  - the headteacher and subject leaders carrying out more rigorous checks on teaching and learning so that they swiftly identify where standards are slipping
  - new subject leaders developing their roles so that they have greater impact on securing improvement
  - setting up better systems for sharing staff expertise to improve practice.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has suffered a period of staffing turbulence. This, together with difficulties in recruiting staff, has hampered the efforts of the headteacher and governors to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better across the school.
- The headteacher is ambitious for all pupils and highly committed to improving the school. He has introduced many important and effective changes, such as to the teaching of reading, to the use of homework and to the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, because the quality of teaching is inconsistent, pupils do not make equally good progress in all classes and in all subjects.
- Until quite recently, the headteacher led all subjects because he lacked staff with sufficient experience and knowledge to take on leadership roles. He has wisely recognised that this was unsustainable and not wholly effective. New subject leaders are now in place and are beginning to develop their understanding of their roles in improving teaching and learning. However, they are yet to take responsibility for identifying and addressing areas for improvement for themselves and are too reliant on the headteacher. This is partly because they have not visited other classes to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subject or area. Consequently, they are not able to identify with sufficient accuracy what needs to improve and have thus yet to demonstrate any significant impact on securing improvements.
- Leaders provide structured mentoring support for those teachers who are new to the profession. However, they are not ensuring that this support is of the highest quality to enable new teachers to develop their skills and expertise further.
- The headteacher checks on the quality of teaching regularly. These checks have not always been rigorous enough to quickly identify when standards are slipping. Sometimes, feedback provided to teachers is overly positive, and does not clearly identify where they could further improve their practice.
- The school is highly inclusive because the headteacher has established an ethos where everyone is welcome. A number of parents told the inspector that they had specifically moved to the school following poor experiences for their child elsewhere, because they knew from friends that they would be welcomed. Pupils also spoke about the friendly nature of the school. 'We are all one big family', said one pupil. Pupils said that people from all backgrounds are valued and welcomed.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. Care and thought is given to how best to meet the needs of the small number of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school. The support provided, such as small-group and individual tuition, has a positive impact and, as a result, these pupils make good progress in school. Leaders have plans to increase their consultation with parents of disadvantaged pupils, to further refine and tailor their provision.
- The primary school sport funding to promote participation in sports activities is used well. Pupils said that they enjoyed the range of competitions and activities that are

available for them. Leaders encourage all pupils' participation. For example, they make sure that teams do not always comprise only those who have the greatest skills, but that pupils who are keen to improve their skills also have a chance to take part.

- Leaders and governors are open and honest in their evaluation of the school's work. They are keen to identify and learn from good practice elsewhere. They have welcomed the support provided by the local authority, and visited other schools locally and beyond to see what they can do to further improve the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for well. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about their own and other faiths, for example. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world and its problems, for example exploring in a religious education lesson the question, 'Does religion cause wars?' Pupils found out about conflict around the world and the reasons for it, and were able to make sensible and mature comments about their findings. Leaders take time to ensure that every pupil is valued and get to know them as individuals. One example is the 'interest table', where a different child is selected each week to share with the school their particular interest, bringing in pictures and items to illustrate this.
- Leaders ensure that pupils experience a broad and interesting curriculum. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about 'den day' when they bring in tents and set them up outside. Pupils also spoke about the Friday afternoon curriculum where pupils get to select from a range of different learning opportunities, such as enterprise, cooking and gardening. Visits by local authors are much enjoyed, as are visits, for example, to art galleries, residential trips for older pupils and whole-school trips to London. However, not all teachers make the best use of the curricular opportunities available to promote high-quality learning in all subjects.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school, and every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their child liked coming to school. Parents spoken with during the inspection, and many who responded online, were particularly complimentary about the headteacher's leadership. A representative comment was, 'Mr Dekker is an inspiration to my son and also to me.' However, leaders are aware that some parents are concerned about the behaviour of one or two pupils. The headteacher is taking effective action to alleviate these concerns.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly motivated and well organised. They have worked with the support of the local authority to improve their effectiveness. As a result, they are now much more focused on pupils' outcomes. Leaders have faith in the headteacher, but are also prepared to challenge him when needed. For example, governors asked detailed questions about changes being made to the curriculum and how this would support pupils' writing.
- Governors check that financial decisions are carefully planned and evaluated. They think carefully about spending on staffing, for example, and about how funding for disadvantaged pupils is used. They know where spending is having a positive impact because they ask probing questions in their committees and full governing body meetings.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders know all pupils well and take their welfare and care extremely seriously. Checks on staff working at the school are carried out rigorously and double checked by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. Training for staff is carried out regularly and staff spoken to during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of what to do if they had a concern about a child.
- Leaders ensure that they follow up concerns rigorously, speaking with parents when appropriate and with external agencies when needed. They ensure that action is taken to keep pupils safe. This is evident through records of concerns and actions taken, although some paperwork was not organised as clearly as it needs to be. This has now been addressed.
- Pupils say that school is a safe place and that adults take care of them. The vast majority of pupils spoken to and parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child is safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, while strong in some classes, is not consistently good across the school or in all subjects.
- Teachers are inconsistent in their expectations of pupils. Pupils' books show that they are not always expected to do their best work or to take sufficient care with their work. For example, pupils sometimes misspell words that they are able to spell and are not expected to correct their errors. Sometimes, teachers do not expect pupils to produce the amount of work of which they are capable within the time given.
- In some classes, teachers use assessment well to identify what pupils know and what they need to learn next. For example, in one class the teacher explained where the gaps in learning were for pupils in relation to fractions, and proceeded to effectively address these gaps. However, not all teachers use assessment well enough to plan lessons for pupils' needs in mixed-aged classes with a wide range of abilities, to enable them to make good progress. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6.
- The most able pupils are often not given work which challenges them sufficiently. In mathematics, for example, the most able pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop their skills in reasoning. In writing, it is sometimes not made clear to the most able pupils what features they need to include to improve the quality of their writing.
- Teachers do not all understand equally well what is the standard expected of pupils nationally in each year group, and what would mean a pupil is working above national expectations. As a result, teachers are not all accurately establishing where pupils currently are and where they should be by the end of the academic year.
- Time is not always used productively. For example, in some classes, pupils come in at the start of the day and immediately engage with a task prepared by the teacher. In others, time is not as well used, with pupils waiting as others get ready and registers are taken. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic when spoken to, and in some classes they concentrate well. For example, during the inspection pupils in Years 1 and 2 were

trying hard with their writing because the teacher had emphasised that this should be their best work. She played music to create a calm atmosphere and provided word mats to support learning. Consequently, pupils made good progress in applying their writing skills. However, sometimes pupils do not work as productively as they could. On occasion, where the teacher has not established clear expectations, pupils stop and chat when they should be working and are not concerned about finishing their work.

- In some subjects, such as history, geography and science, some teachers do not expect enough of pupils. They do not provide sufficient high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and understanding and so progress is inconsistent. For example, in one class, pupils had carried out a range of scientific experiments and were learning how to draw conclusions about what they had learned; in other classes evidence of scientific learning was not of a high standard.
- In some classes, teachers link learning in English to other subjects well, such as creating biographies about the life of Van Gogh and then producing paintings in his style. However, in other classes, the links which have been planned for when leaders reviewed the school's curricular plans are not developed as well by teachers. As a result, pupils lack opportunities to practise and apply their skills in English and mathematics within new contexts.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. This has helped pupils to make much better progress in their knowledge of sounds than was previously the case. Teachers organise phonics sessions well and pupils use their phonic knowledge when reading. This was evident when the inspector listened to some Year 1 pupils who are at an early stage in reading, but who were using their sound knowledge well to work out words. Guided reading is used well to develop pupils' reading skills as they progress through the school, and this contributes to pupils currently making good progress in reading.
- Teaching assistants support learning well in all classes, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ask questions to develop learning and support pupils by explaining concepts in different ways. They work well with class teachers so that they know exactly what to do during lessons. Pupils who are disadvantaged also benefit from well-planned support so that they make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide feedback, in line with the school's policy. Some teachers also provide good feedback during lessons to help pupils move on in their learning, for example by intervening rapidly when identifying pupils' misconceptions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are able to talk about their school and their work, explaining to the inspector what they are learning about in lessons and enjoying showing their work in books. This is because leaders provide lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. For example, pupils in key stage 2

annually stage a Shakespeare production, and in classes they regularly engage in work where they talk about their learning with a partner.

- Pupils are given good opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as 'learning ambassadors' in classes where some pupils help others if they need it. Older pupils take responsibility at playtimes and lunchtimes, and often help younger pupils even when they are not given particular responsibility for doing so.
- All staff know pupils well and pupils are confident that there is always an adult to speak to if they are worried or upset. Pupils who have particular needs are very well catered for, with staff making sure that resources and support are provided where necessary, for example for pupils with disabilities.
- Pupils know about how to keep themselves safe because they are taught about aspects such as internet safety. They recognise what bullying is, because this is taught regularly, for example in anti-bullying week. They are confident that bullying is rare in school.
- Leaders support parents and families well. The school's parent support adviser helps parents to overcome problems which may impact on pupils' learning. Leaders have allowed parents to bring their pupils into school from 8.15 am, supervising them before the start of school, to enable parents to get to work and to ensure that pupils are on time and have good attendance.
- Leaders have put in place good systems for further promoting positive attitudes to learning, creating characters that represent positive learning behaviour. Consequently, pupils know that they need to show resilience when faced with tricky problems, like 'Reece the Resilient Rhino'. They receive awards in assembly for demonstrating these particular attitudes. However, teachers are not all equally good at promoting these attitudes within class on a daily basis, and so the system does not have as much consistently positive impact as it should.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They learn about different faiths and cultures. For example, pupils learned about Buddhist flags and their meaning, reflecting on what this might mean to them. Pupils regularly write their own prayers and these demonstrate that pupils are caring and thoughtful, often prayers asking for help to be kind and generous towards others, or for help for members of their families. Pupils celebrate diversity. They told the inspector that 'it's good to be different; we all are different', and 'even though it's a Christian school, you don't have to have the same beliefs to come here and you will still be welcome'.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for one another and for adults in school. They respond willingly to adult direction and demonstrate a willingness to learn.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play sensibly together, older pupils playing with younger ones. A good range of equipment is available and pupils are sensible in selecting and using equipment. Leaders have clear rules for pupils' play, restricting large games, such as football, when the field is not in use to avoid accidents. Pupils are well supervised at playtimes by the school's midday supervisors, who also encourage pupils to take part in games. As a result, pupils told the inspector that playtimes are,

for the most part, happy times when pupils get along well.

- In lessons, pupils generally behave well. During the inspection, no instances of poor behaviour were seen. Those pupils who have particular difficulties with their behaviour are well supported by adults. However, some parents and pupils said that learning is occasionally disrupted by pupils not doing as the teacher says in the one class, and leaders are addressing this appropriately.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school and leaders promote good attendance effectively. Leaders ensure that parents know the importance of regular attendance by their child at school. Class attendance figures are issued each week, via the school's newsletter, and the class with the best attendance is celebrated. Leaders meet with the parents of any pupils whose attendance falls to identify any issues and to ensure that attendance quickly improves.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Require improvement

- Leaders recognise that pupils' progress has been, and remains, inconsistent across classes, reflecting the inconsistent quality of teaching.
- In Year 6, pupils' attainment and progress has varied over time. The progress of pupils currently in Year 6 is not rapid enough in writing and mathematics. This is because some teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough, and they do not clearly understand what the expected national standard is in these subjects. Leaders acknowledge that some of these pupils made too little progress in key stage 1 and that prior assessments over-stated their achievements. Given this, they recognise that these pupils now need to make faster progress to make up for lost ground.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than that found nationally because leaders acknowledge that teaching in this year group was not of a high enough standard. Evidence seen in pupils' books, and school assessment information, demonstrates that pupils currently in Year 2 are making better progress.
- The most able pupils across the school are not making the rapid progress they are capable of making because teachers do not always provide them with sufficient challenge in lessons.
- Pupils are making better progress in reading, particularly in key stage 1, than was previously the case. This is because leaders have put in place a more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and of reading across the school. This is having a positive impact. Following two years of low outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check, standards in reading at the end of Year 1 rose last year and the school's assessment information indicates that outcomes are set to rise even more this year.
- Pupils' spelling is not accurate enough across the school, including the spelling of the most able pupils, because there is no consistent approach to teaching this skill. This restricts the quality of pupils' written work, even where the content is good, making some writing difficult to understand.



- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in subjects such as science, history and geography. In some classes, teachers provide well-planned opportunities for learning and have high expectations, resulting in pupils making good progress. In other classes, tasks are less challenging and so the progress pupils make is not consistently good.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported because their individual needs are carefully identified and planned for well. As a result, these pupils are making good progress in school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders ensure that their needs are identified swiftly and effective support is put in place. For example, work from pupils who joined the school with very limited reading and writing skills was seen during the inspection. Because they were well supported, for example through targeted intervention sessions, and helped to develop confidence in their abilities, they made rapid progress. Resources are provided to ensure that these pupils are able to access the curriculum appropriately. The headteacher's particular expertise in this area is well used and contributes to the good progress made by these pupils.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Children in the Reception class benefit from an attractive and well-organised learning environment. Different areas for learning are laid out and resources are accessible to children, who quickly learn to use them independently.
- Adults develop children's social skills well, reminding them, for example, about how to take turns and what to do if they want to speak during carpet time. Consequently, children behave sensibly. Adults supervise children carefully and make sure that they are kept safe in the classroom and outside.
- Children in the Reception class are developing their phonic knowledge well. Many identify both initial sounds such as 'b' and 't' and more tricky sounds such as 'ng'. They apply their knowledge in their reading, sharing books cooperatively and reading to each other confidently.
- Adults support children well in their learning. They ask questions to make children think. This was evident during the inspection, for example when the teacher spoke to children who were playing with water. She asked them to count the ducks and talked about their different sizes, encouraging children to put them in order.
- Children enjoy a varied and interesting curriculum. During the inspection, they were observed learning indoors, for example reading independently in the attractive reading corner, dressing up in the role play area, and writing independently in their Christmas book. Outside they enjoy playing on bikes, negotiating a challenging trail around the garden, which develops their motor skills well. They use construction equipment and investigate scientific concepts, such as 'how long do you think it will take the ice in our water tray to melt?'
- Leaders accurately assess what pupils know and can do when starting school. They carefully watch children, talk with them and then plan activities appropriately to help

them progress further. Children's 'learning journeys' record their progress, and demonstrate that children are making good progress from their starting points and so are on their way to being well prepared for Year 1, although it is only one-third of the way through the year.

- The school has introduced electronic learning journeys, which have helped to encourage better parental participation in children's learning. Parents read about their child's achievements and some make comments about achievements at home.
- Leaders' decision to establish a single-aged class for Reception children has led to a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, those most-able children who start school with strong skills and knowledge are not always challenged as much as they should be and so do not make as much progress as they should.

## School details

Unique reference number	121129
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10002778

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Futter
Headteacher	Cor Dekker
Telephone number	01362 692 033
Website	<a href="http://www.yaxhamprimaryschool.co.uk">www.yaxhamprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@yaxham.norfolk.sch.uk">office@yaxham.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	November 2011

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2016 to report on whether the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for achievement in Year 6.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above that found nationally.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, the school's assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- The inspector spoke with some parents at the start of the school day, took account of 28 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and met with some pupils from Years 4 to 6.
- Inspectors listened to a small number of pupils read in Year 1 and Year 6.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority and with six 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.

## Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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