

# Red Oak Primary School

Southwell Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0RZ

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

| 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 | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Red Oak Primary is a good and improving school.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully led improvements to pupils' achievements since the last inspection of the predecessor school.
- The leadership team has ensured sustained improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation of teaching is focused and effective. As a result, leaders provide rigorous challenge and pertinent training to teachers.
- Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in 21st-century Britain. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and knowledge of democracy, personal liberty and freedom of speech. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils study the role of Parliament in British society.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Most pupils are polite and kind to each other. They support each other, both within the classroom and in the playground.
- Safeguarding is highly effective in the school. Leaders ensure that the emotional and physical well-being of all pupils is of the utmost priority. As a result, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils in all year groups and key stages develop a good understanding of the importance of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils have good opportunities to enrich their understanding of a range of subjects through the breadth of extra-curricular activities and clubs provided by staff. For example, many pupils learn Spanish, Italian and building with plastic bricks, in addition to the mainstream curriculum.
- Senior leaders and governors make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively. They regularly measure the impact of this expenditure. As a result, throughout the curriculum, most disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils nationally.
- Senior leaders recognise that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not make accelerated progress in all areas of the curriculum. They are ensuring additional challenge in the teaching and learning of some subjects.
- Leaders are addressing the need to develop pupils' skills in every area of the curriculum such as history, geography and science.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve the teaching, learning and assessment of reading and writing by ensuring that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, as well as their knowledge, in foundation subjects such as history, geography and science.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have high expectations for staff and pupils. They have created a vibrant culture where success and hard work are celebrated. Subsequently, standards have improved and pupils' outcomes are good.
- The current headteacher has established a robust senior leadership team. Through rigorous monitoring, moderation and evaluation, the team has a very secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in the school. It refines and personalises training and support for staff to ensure that the school continues to improve. For example, senior leaders are aware that further training is required to embed increased challenge in the teaching of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. This has been appropriately identified in the school development plan.
- The curriculum, including extra-curricular activities and clubs, is broad and balanced. Pupils develop key analytical skills through many subjects. For example, inspectors noted the perceptive written responses of some Year 6 pupils to the importance of religious freedom in 21st-century Britain. However, in some subjects, the balance of coverage is too weighted towards the acquisition of knowledge rather than the development of skills. The leadership team has already identified further improvements to these subject areas. Most pupils also engage in the rich provision of extra-curricular activities, such as boxing for fitness, girls' friendship club and the Shakespearian drama club.
- Leaders, governors and teachers work collegiately to track the progress of every pupil from Nursery to Year 6. They swiftly identify those who are not making sufficient progress and provide additional, targeted support. Additional resources, such as funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are deployed effectively, ensuring that pupils' needs are met. The impact of specific strategies is reviewed regularly to ensure that these are making a difference.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very effective. Pupils develop resilience in their approaches to learning. For example, a Year 2 pupil told an inspector that, 'it is normal to fail sometimes because that is how you improve'. Pupils also develop empathic responses to injustice and oppression through the study of texts that deal with issues such as apartheid in South Africa.
- The leadership team has ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Differences between these pupils' rate of progress and those of others nationally have subsequently reduced markedly. Pupils receive additional one-to-one support within school if required, alongside access to a range of culturally enriching experiences. For example, pupils recently visited the Tower of London.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used exceptionally well. Through the enthusiastic and expert leadership of the PE lead, pupils learn about the importance of healthy living. Pupils have access to an extremely wide range of sporting activities and many pupils engage in inter-school competitions and tournaments. In September 2016, the school was one of very few schools in Suffolk to be recognised for improved participation in sporting activities, and 66% of pupils attend after-school sports clubs. Teachers measure all pupils' fitness regularly and provide additional support to ensure that their fitness levels improve. For example, a 'boxing for fitness' club was set up to improve these pupils' fitness. The funding has also been used to ensure that pupils have equality of sporting opportunity. For example, a girls' football academy runs alongside the boys' academy.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection of the predecessor school, the governing body has reviewed its structure to make the best use of governors' skills. Each governor has a clear set of responsibilities such as for finance and resources. The governing body, led by a very experienced chair of governors, has a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body has been critical in supporting senior leaders in improving the school.
- Senior leaders provide governors with detailed information about the quality of education provided. Through school visits and meetings with senior and middle leaders, governors are able to verify the accuracy of this information. Governors hold the leadership team to account and set challenging targets, while also providing necessary support.
- The governors are dedicated to supporting the pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding of the wider world.
- The Active Learning Trust provides effective performance management of the headteacher. It asks challenging questions to ensure that she maintains a steadfast focus on improvement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils. They follow statutory guidelines and work hard to ensure that all staff follow the internal referral system. They act swiftly and appropriately if there are any concerns. As a result, many pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and protected at the school.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and apply their training to make sure that pupils are safe.
- Checks of the statutory requirements and procedures for the safe recruitment of staff by the school's safeguarding lead are rigorous.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved due to the cycle of monitoring and evaluation. As a result, leaders establish personalised support for teachers to ensure that pupils receive consistently effective teaching.
- The teaching of reading skills is highly effective. As a result, pupils learn to read quickly and enjoy reading. Many pupils use the library and enjoy the range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils also read regularly to adults throughout the day, focusing on both their decoding skills and their understanding of language.
- Pupils in all year groups, including children in Reception, enjoy learning mathematics. Teachers use a wide range of resources to support the learning of mathematics and pupils respond well. An inspector observed a Year 1 class using a variety of scales and objects to calculate weight distribution. Many of the pupils were absorbed in developing their understanding and knowledge, and made tangible progress throughout the lesson. This is typical of the standard of teaching and learning at the school.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective, tailored support to a range of pupils. For example, some pupils who experience difficulties with reading receive additional one-to-one support until they reach the expected standard.
- The teaching of writing has improved at all key stages. Pupils enjoy writing for a variety of audiences and texts. Teachers provide appropriate examples and develop pupils' understanding of how language choices can create different meanings. Some pupils create an impressively written school newsletter with minimal adult support.
- Teachers of all subjects introduce subject-specific vocabulary in every lesson. However, leaders are aware that the strategies to support pupils' language development are currently inconsistently applied. Additional training is planned to support teachers in their use of effective language strategies to broaden pupils' use of vocabulary and grammar.
- Although pupils are enthusiastic about studying a range of subjects such as history and geography, they are not currently challenged in their thinking. The focus in many foundation subjects lies in coverage of content rather than on the development of skills. Leaders are aware of this and have identified it in the school development plan as the next stage in the school's improvement journey.
- Teachers assess pupils regularly to establish their rates of progress and to inform the next steps in their teaching. To ensure accuracy in their assessments, teachers attend regular external and internal moderation meetings. However, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not receive challenging feedback to accelerate their progress in all areas of the curriculum.

## 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 self-assured in their learning and play. They know who to speak to if they have concerns and are confident that the concerns will be dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils are kind and courteous to each other and to adults. For example, many pupils apply to become anti-bullying ambassadors to protect the well-being of their fellow pupils. However, since there is very little bullying, the ambassadors have focused on promoting the importance of friendship and are currently creating a pupil-friendly booklet.
- Pupils are taught how to develop healthy lifestyles through an intense focus on exercise and healthy eating. The PE lead has been instrumental in transforming pupils' attitudes towards healthy living. He has used sport to accelerate pupils' leadership and decision-making skills, alongside improving their physical and mental well-being.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The school has promoted e-safety awareness highly effectively in lessons and assemblies. For example, an inspector observed pupils in Year 3 explaining how they would inform an adult immediately if a stranger tried to contact them online.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards learning. They are keen to engage in the tasks provided by their teachers and work hard to achieve the goals set.
- Pupils gain a clear understanding of bullying and its consequences, through a programme of lessons and assemblies. Pupils explain that there is little bullying and, were it to occur, adults and anti-bullying ambassadors would deal with it effectively.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and responsive to teachers' instructions. They talk very effectively to support each other's learning in a range of lessons.
- Attendance is above the national average. The rate of attendance has improved through the development of strong relationships with parents and pupils.
- Leaders work effectively to support pupils who make poor behaviour choices. For example, pupils discuss the concerns that underpin their poor behaviour with staff. The rate of internal exclusions has reduced significantly.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Children make good progress in the early years. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who reach a good level of development is consistently high.
- The number of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected level in the phonics screening check was above the national average in 2015 and 2016. The progress of current Year 1 pupils and the quality of teaching indicate good outcomes in 2017. This is because teachers use their good subject knowledge of phonics to plan learning that is well matched to the needs of the pupils.

- Key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils are currently making good progress in reading and writing. Leaders and teachers have addressed the factors that contributed to a dip in standards in 2016. A cycle of training has informed teachers' understanding of how to improve pupils' reading for meaning and their writing skills. However, leaders are also addressing the need to embed greater challenge in the teaching of reading and writing for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and the difference between the standards they reach, compared with the standards reached by other pupils nationally, is diminishing in most subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Teachers extend pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts well.
- The quality of pupils' work in foundation subjects is inconsistent between year groups and key stages. Leaders are addressing this inconsistency by assessing the curriculum to ensure that it meets the academic needs of all pupils.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The firm links between the Nursery and Reception classes ensure that teachers have a consistently clear focus on how children develop emotionally, physically and academically. The staff work closely together to plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate each child's learning. As a result, children in Reception make rapid progress.
- Leaders have worked hard to ensure that children's progress is sustained. Children begin Reception at starting points that are typically below those expected for their age and make accelerated progress. Leaders regularly scrutinise children's work and observe lessons to inform their understanding of children's progress.
- Activities are carefully structured to develop children's gross and fine motor skills, alongside emerging knowledge and understanding of mathematics, communication, reading and writing. Children maintain robust levels of concentration and, with adult support, have developed impressive understanding of phonics.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment. Children are kind and friendly to each other. For example, they take turns and share their toys and resources without adult intervention.
- Any gaps between the attainment of groups, including those for whom the school may receive additional funding, are diminished by the time children start key stage 1.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 140573   |
| Local authority         | Suffolk  |
| Inspection number       | 10020385 |

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

|                                     |                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school                      | Primary                                                                          |
| School category                     | Academy sponsored                                                                |
| Age range of pupils                 | 3 to 11                                                                          |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed                                                                            |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 428                                                                              |
| Appropriate authority               | The Active Learning Trust                                                        |
| Chair                               | Philip O'Hear                                                                    |
| Headteacher                         | Heather Madsen                                                                   |
| Telephone number                    | 01502 573509                                                                     |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.redoakprimaryschool.co.uk">www.redoakprimaryschool.co.uk</a> |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@redoakprimary.org">office@redoakprimary.org</a>           |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected                                                         |

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is part of The Active Learning Trust.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below average.



- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons, including lessons in Nursery, Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Meetings were held with: the headteacher; deputy headteacher; the leaders of mathematics, English, science, history, geography, PE, early years and special educational needs and/or disabilities; the pupil premium lead and the leader of the curriculum; six governors; a representative of The Active Learning Trust; and pupils and teachers.
- Pupils' books and records of their progress were scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading experiences with them.
- Account was taken of the 45 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also talked informally to parents at the start of the school day.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's development plan and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding policies and records, and records made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

## Inspection team

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Susan Aykin, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Ashley Best-White           | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Nick Asker                  | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Kay Tims                    | Ofsted Inspector        |

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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