

Downham Feoffees Primary School

Main Street, Little Downham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2ST

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors and school leaders have not ensured that arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Systems for following up concerns about pupils are not robust and staff training is not up to date.
- Leaders and governors have not prevented a decline in standards. They have failed to sustain the good progress pupils were making at the last inspection; progress is now too slow. They have not implemented the necessary changes to the primary curriculum.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is too generous. Governors have accepted information provided by senior leaders on how well pupils are doing and have not held them to account with sufficient rigour.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading and writing in key stage 1. In 2016, no pupils achieved greater depth in writing or mathematics.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not making sufficient progress because senior leaders and teachers have not ensured that they are challenged to make all the progress they should.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is weak. For example, leaders have not ensured that teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is adequate to teach the demands of the mathematics curriculum.
- Children's starting points in the early years are not assessed effectively and so their individual needs are not met.
- School leaders could not provide reliable information on the progress current pupils are making. Teachers do not understand the new assessment system introduced by senior leaders and so do not assess pupils' progress accurately.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have correctly identified some of the areas that need to improve.
- Pupils come to school regularly and most enjoy learning. They are happy at school and feel safe. Most parents agree.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quickly improve safeguarding arrangements by:
 - improving record-keeping and paperwork for safeguarding and child protection and ensuring that concerns are followed up rigorously
 - ensuring that all new staff follow an induction programme that includes safeguarding and 'Prevent' training
 - including support staff in regular ongoing safeguarding training
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - undertaking a regular and accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and using this information to create a clear plan for improvement that is rigorously followed through
 - evaluating the impact of the use of the pupil premium funding and the primary sport premium
 - ensuring that governors provide greater challenge for leaders and hold them to account more robustly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the whole school by ensuring that teachers:
 - accurately identify what pupils currently know and what they need to learn
 - have a good understanding of mathematical concepts before they teach them
 - understand how to use the school's system of assessment.
- Improve outcomes so that pupils make good progress throughout the school and attain at least in line with national standards by the end of key stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - the school's mathematics curriculum fulfils the expectations of the national curriculum
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress
 - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are sufficiently stretched and challenged.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not done enough to sustain and improve pupils' progress and ensure their safety and welfare. Pupils' progress in mathematics was identified for improvement in the previous inspection in 2013. Since then, standards have fallen further because leaders have failed until recently to implement changes to the national curriculum for primary schools.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous. The school development plan correctly identifies the areas that need to improve but the actions included are not sharp enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders recently introduced a new assessment system to help track how well pupils are progressing towards the national expectations for each year group. However, the information the school provided on how many pupils are currently meeting these expectations did not match the standard of work inspectors saw in books or in lessons. This means that leaders do not have accurate information on how well current pupils are doing.
- Senior leaders have not carefully evaluated whether the pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They have not identified the barriers that slow the learning of these pupils so they do not implement the most effective strategies to help them make good progress.
- Small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that year-on-year comparisons of their progress are not always helpful. However, in 2016, these pupils made better progress at key stage 2 than at key stage 1. This prompted leaders to review the support provided for each pupil and put in place regular meetings with class teachers to check on its impact. Parents of children at the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities feel that the needs of their children are well understood and are pleased with the progress they make.
- The school does have a current plan for the use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. This year it is being used to provide more opportunities for competitive sport as well as supporting lunchtime sports activities. There has been no clear analysis of whether the funding has improved pupils' skills and access to a wider range of sports in recent years.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values through a suitable personal, health and social education programme. Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to study beliefs and cultures different to their own and to explore some of the morals that underpin our society.
- The design of the curriculum ensures that literacy and numeracy have a sufficiently high profile. It is balanced with time for French, science, music, design technology, physical education and art, as well as a range of extra-curricular activities which increase pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils told inspectors that they found the variety of lessons stimulating.
- Most parents say that their children enjoy school and are well cared for. Parents commented on how approachable senior leaders are, but a significant minority felt

that they did not have enough information from the school on how well their children are doing.

- The school's website does not meet guidelines for what schools should publish. Some information is missing, such as an evaluation of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and PE and sport funding. Up-to-date information on the school's curriculum is too general to be helpful to parents. These deficiencies in the school's website reflect parents' concerns about communication.
- The local authority has provided support for the school following the 2016 results. Analysis of the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 assessment information, work scrutinies and observations of teaching carried out jointly with school leaders have identified key issues which are now being addressed. The mathematics leader has worked, with local authority support, to address some of the issues that caused the decline in key stage 2 mathematics outcomes in 2016. The impact of this work is beginning to be evident in classrooms. Nevertheless this support has come too late and has yet to address the decline in outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Governance is inadequate. Overall, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently and do not question what they are told. The governing body is aware of the key areas that the school needs to improve following the 2016 outcomes but has been too accepting of the headteacher's explanation for this weakness. Governors have also accepted the headteacher's overgenerous evaluation of the school, although they told inspectors that they felt it was not accurate.
- The chair of the governing body is new to the role and there has been a high turnover of governors since the previous inspection.
- Governors have not held school leaders to account for the way the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is used to support their progress. They have not ensured that leaders evaluate the impact of this funding, or of the sport premium, and so do not know what strategies have been most effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is a high enough priority. Staff are not trained promptly when they join the school and support staff are not routinely reminded about their duty to protect children. This includes training in the government's 'Prevent' duty to counter the threat of radicalisation.
- Governors have not made sufficient checks on the arrangements to safeguard the school's most vulnerable pupils. Child protection records have not been kept in a timely way. Comprehensive records have not been kept to show what leaders and managers have done to support more vulnerable pupils at the school. Not all concerns raised by staff have been followed up effectively.

- Governors have focused on ensuring that the single central record of staff recruitment checks is correctly maintained. More recent appointments demonstrate that current recruitment practice is sound but some historical gaps exist regarding identity checks and references which have not been followed up.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers do not consistently ensure that work is matched well enough to the differing needs of pupils to promote their rapid progress.
- Teachers make overly optimistic judgements of pupils' current attainment because they do not have a secure enough understanding of the expectations of the new national curriculum.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers have a secure knowledge of the primary mathematics curriculum. Consequently, some teachers do not explain new learning clearly and some pupils become confused and make limited progress. Teachers have responded positively to recent support from the local authority and have implemented necessary changes, but it is too early to identify a marked impact on the outcomes in mathematics.
- Work shows that, in too many lessons, pupils of all abilities are given the same activity to complete. The most able pupils are not challenged and spend time completing similar tasks to other pupils before they can move on.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about books and the many opportunities they have in class to read. The headteacher has raised the profile of reading for pleasure by developing a vibrant new library area and independent reading has been added to the 'golden time' activities that pupils choose from on a Friday morning. Pupils read to inspectors with confidence and enjoyment.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support both in classrooms and when working with individual pupils. They check that pupils understand tasks and use skilful questioning to secure pupils' learning.
- There is a positive climate for learning in most classrooms, and teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Classrooms are bright, lively places where pupils' work is celebrated on wall displays and hanging on washing lines across the room. Learning walls encourage pupils to use knowledge they already have to solve problems or improve their work.
- Pupils use the time when they first arrive at school to complete short activities provided by their teachers that help them review their learning from the previous day. This gives all pupils a calm and focused start to the day. When teachers and teaching assistants use this time to work with particular individuals or groups, they are able to make sure that pupils' understanding is secure before learning moves on.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress when they are enthused and challenged. This was particularly evident in Year 5 and 6 pupils' English books. Teachers give pupils regular feedback about their work, which is increasingly effective in helping them to make progress.

- Pupils told inspectors that they particularly enjoy their science and art lessons because they study interesting topics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is inadequate. The school's leaders and governors have not ensured that systems to safeguard pupils are rigorous. The inspection identified areas of concern around child protection records and the robustness of staff training. However, other areas of the school's work to promote the welfare of pupils are stronger.
- A few pupils, mainly boys, do not show enough regard for the safety of others when they are out playing in the playground. Staff do not intervene quickly enough when play becomes too boisterous.
- The results of the school's drive to help pupils to be more resilient learners who accept failure as part of learning are only just beginning to be seen in some classes. This is clearly more evident at key stage 2. Some younger pupils quickly resort to asking for help rather than trying to work things out for themselves when they find activities challenging.
- Pupils are confident, polite and welcoming to visitors and are keen to talk about their school and their learning. They feel that their school is a safe and friendly place in which to learn.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their school council. Two pupils from each class are elected to the school council after giving a short presentation in front of their peers. This helps them to develop an understanding of democracy and tolerance of ideas that may differ from their own.
- The council members are very positive about their teachers and their school and told inspectors how they had run a competition to decide where to put the school garden. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities such as being playtime buddies for younger pupils. They also support younger pupils by listening to them read so that they develop their reading skills more quickly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and could explain to inspectors the importance of using safety settings when online and reporting anything that worries them to an adult. They also talked of learning about road safety and the dangers of electricity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils try their best in lessons when teachers have high expectations and provide them with interesting activities. Too often, when pupils begin to lose their focus on learning, teachers do not act quickly or effectively to tackle this. Some classrooms were very

noisy and pupils told inspectors that at times they find it difficult to concentrate, which slows their progress.

- Pupils say there is very little bullying in school. The school regularly runs anti-bullying activities and pupils told inspectors about a visitor from ChildLine who came in to discuss their work. Pupils felt they could talk to their teachers if anything was worrying them and that they would be listened to and things would be 'sorted out'.
- Attendance is improving and is currently similar to the national average. The attendance of all groups of pupils is monitored regularly. It currently shows little variation.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached the national standard in mathematics was below that of other pupils nationally. Their progress placed the school among the lowest 5% of schools in the country. This was because leaders had not understood the new expectations arising from the changes to the primary mathematics curriculum in 2014.
- The most able pupils do not attain highly enough and do not make good progress. Not enough pupils who attained the higher levels at the end of key stage 1 reached the higher standard in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made less progress than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well in the school because leaders have not identified which strategies best address the barriers to their learning. This means they do not use the pupil premium funding effectively to boost their progress.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading and writing in key stage 1. In 2016, no pupils reached better than the expected standard in writing or mathematics.
- In science and reading, fewer pupils at key stage 1 reached the expected national standard. At key stage 2 this proportion was in line with other pupils nationally.
- The small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by effective teaching assistants. However, there is currently no reliable information on the rate of progress that they are making.
- For the past three years the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been at or above the national average. However, these skills are not retained as pupils move through the school and some pupils in Year 2 struggled to sound out words when reading to inspectors. Teachers do not routinely encourage pupils to continue to use phonics skills in lessons to help them progress with their learning.
- A work scrutiny of pupils' books by inspectors did not support the information provided by the school on how well current pupils are achieving. The school information is unreliable because the system of assessment is still being embedded. However, where work meets the needs of the pupil, books show that pupils are making good progress in mathematics and writing.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Procedures to assess children when they start school and as they progress are weak. The starting points of the children currently in Reception have not been accurately assessed by the early years leader. There was no evidence available to support the assertion that in 2016 children started school with levels of development below those of their peers nationally. There were also no records of the progress that the children had made towards their early learning goals.
- Information on the progress children have made this year towards their early learning goals was not available. Learning journals contain photographs of children participating in activities with notes on their attitude to learning but very few examples of work show the progress they are making in, for example, forming their letters.
- For the past three years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been in line with or above the national average. This is from starting points that are broadly in line with the national average. However, disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the same progress towards a good level of development as their peers. This means that not all groups of children are well prepared to start key stage 1. Children do not make the rapid progress they could make because their next steps are not accurately assessed.
- The early years classroom is bright, attractive and well organised. The classroom offers a broad range of resources that children are able to access independently. The new early years leader has introduced some activities such as the 'finger gym' to encourage children to develop their manipulation skills. However, sometimes activities are not sufficiently well supervised to encourage children to learn as intended. Children often simply explore the resources or activities on offer.
- On occasions staff make effective use of opportunities to turn play into learning. For example, the children were curious about some ice that had formed in the outside area. The teaching assistant responded to this immediately, showing them how it melted when she put her warm hand on it. She maintained their interest with some skilful questions about whether ice and water are the same thing.
- Staff use the outdoor area to give children the opportunity to develop their physical skills through activities such as the mud kitchen and sand tray. The area is small, which limits the range of activities that can be offered and means it sometimes becomes overcrowded.
- Relationships between adults and children are good and children are well cared for and safe. Children play together well, take turns and share toys. Although most children follow instructions quickly and sensibly, some do not meet the age-relevant expectations set for their behaviour when they are listening to the teacher or other staff.
- Children are visited at home in September by the early years leader, which parents feel helps ease their transition to school. Parents say that their children quickly settle into Reception and are happy and safe at school.

School details

Unique reference number	110799
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10023435

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Wilson
Headteacher	Camila Coulson
Telephone number	01353 699325
Website	www.downhamfeoffees.co.uk/
Email address	head@downhamfeoffees.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The senior leadership team has changed completely since the previous inspection. Four new teachers joined the school in September 2016.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about: pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2; the school's curriculum; special educational needs and/or disabilities; pupil premium funding; the primary physical education and sports funding.
- The school met the floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in every class across a range of subjects. Some of these were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books, listened to them read, and talked with different groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and the management of the school, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, as well as the views of those parents who spoke directly with inspectors. The views of staff were also considered, through the seven responses to an Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lesley Daniel, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Webb	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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