

# Wetheringsett CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5PJ

## Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2017

<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>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have not been successful in securing enough good or better teaching, across the school, to ensure that pupils achieve well at the end of key stage 2. Although teaching is improving there has been too much inconsistency in the recent past, which has limited the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils do not achieve well in reading, particularly across key stage 2. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was well below the national average.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing across key stage 2. They do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English lessons or in other subjects.
- Pupils do not learn well enough in science, history or geography. Leadership of these subjects is weak and teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Children in the early years do not make enough progress. Assessment is not used well enough to provide activities which challenge pupils to learn as well as they can.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have a clear understanding of the school's current weaknesses and have good plans in place to address them.
- Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe, behave well and attend regularly.
- Recent improvements have been made to the teaching of mathematics and pupils are beginning to make good progress in this subject.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to learn effectively across the wider curriculum
  - developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas.
- Improve achievement in writing by ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in English and other subjects across the curriculum.
- Improve achievement in reading by:
  - making better use of assessment, in key stage 2, to provide pupils of all abilities with greater levels of challenge
  - encouraging pupils to read widely and often.
- Improve provision in the early years foundation stage by:
  - using assessments of what pupils can do to provide learning opportunities which are engaging and challenging for children
  - improving the learning environment, both indoors and outside, so that children have better and more regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- During a period of significant change to the teaching staff, leaders have successfully maintained the school's caring and nurturing ethos. However, they have not been able to secure enough good teaching to improve standards in reading, writing or mathematics. Difficulties in recruiting staff during this period have reduced the capacity of the leadership team.
- School leaders recognise the weaknesses in provision which have led to the decline in achievement. They have put good plans in place to address these weaknesses and their actions are already having a positive impact. For example, a strong and effective focus on mathematics has led to significant improvements in this area of teaching and learning. Teachers have been provided with good training and support and have improved their practice, which is helping pupils to make better progress in mathematics. However, leaders recognise that further work is required to improve teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well across all subjects.
- Too many responsibilities currently fall to the headteacher. Recent changes to staffing have resulted in the headteacher having to teach regularly and have restricted the capacity of the leadership team to improve teaching and raise standards. Although the headteacher has started to develop subject leadership within the school, this is not yet having an impact on standards in the wider curriculum.
- Leaders and governors use appraisal effectively to monitor the quality of teaching. The headteacher makes regular checks on teaching, and its impact on learning, through lesson observations and reviews of assessment information. Weak practice has been challenged effectively and teachers value the training opportunities provided by the school.
- School leaders have not ensured that the curriculum provides a sufficiently wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn. There was little sign of challenge in the wider curriculum in many of the pupils' books. The quality of work in science, geography and history did not reflect the standards seen in pupils' English and mathematics books. By the end of Year 6 pupils are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of education in science, geography and history as they have not developed the requisite knowledge and skills.
- All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. They said that the school was well led and that they feel well supported by school leaders. They also said that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.
- Leaders ensure that British values are promoted well. Pupils are taught to respect other people's views and value differences. They develop an understanding about democracy, through the school council, and learn about major world religions. Older pupils are taught about the concept of human rights and stereotypes.
- There is a strong and effective focus on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. However, weaknesses in the school's wider curriculum mean that their understanding of cultural differences is limited.

- Leaders ensure that the additional funding, provided through the pupil premium, supports the learning and achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils effectively. In many instances these pupils are making better progress than their peers and narrowing the gap in attainment.
- The primary sport premium is used to fund a part-time specialist teacher who provides support in physical education lessons alongside class teachers. The funding has also been used to provide clubs and increase pupils' participation in competitive sport with local schools.
- The local authority has provided a high level of support and challenge to the school. Training has been provided for governors and teaching staff and the headteacher has received regular visits to support her leadership. However, this support has not been effective in preventing the decline in standards since the previous inspection.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have high expectations of the headteacher. They provide good levels of support and challenge. They recognise the impact that recruitment difficulties have on the school's effectiveness but do not use this as an excuse to accept low standards. Instead they have been proactive in seeking solutions to this problem by arranging meetings with local schools with a view to setting up networks or federations to share resources and expertise.
- Minutes from governors' meetings show that the headteacher provides comprehensive information regarding the school and key aspects of its performance. Governors challenge the headteacher where appropriate in order to fully understand the context in which the school is operating and the quality of provision being provided.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account effectively for all aspects of the school's work. They have a clear understanding of the link between pay and performance and ensure that decisions about pay awards are clearly linked to pupils' outcomes. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require improvement.
- Governors ensure that they remain fully aware of their responsibilities by attending relevant training and, where possible, visiting the school to see for themselves how the school operates.

### **Safeguarding**

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements, and that the records are detailed and accurate. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work in the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and fully understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. The school's policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet current requirements.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Teachers have established good working relationships with pupils. They have been successful in encouraging pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they apply themselves, even when they are struggling with their work or not finding it sufficiently challenging.
- Teachers give pupils feedback in line with the school's marking policy in English and in mathematics. This helps pupils to learn from their mistakes and move on in their learning. However, in other subjects teaching is not as effective, as teachers do not regularly assess the progress that pupils are making, and the work that they set often lacks challenge.
- Improvements have been made to the teaching of mathematics. Planning now focuses clearly on the concept being taught, rather than the planned activities. This has resulted in more effective teaching and improvements in pupils' knowledge and understanding of key mathematical concepts. During a lesson on fractions, pupils in Year 3 showed an excellent understanding of vulgar fractions and were able to calculate halves and quarters of other fractions mentally. Practical equipment is also used well in mathematics, particularly with those pupils who sometimes find learning difficult.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write for different purposes or for a range of different audiences. Much of the work seen in pupils' books took the form of short exercises, limiting the opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their skills to lengthier pieces of work. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is slower than it should be as they move through the school.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. This helps younger pupils to quickly develop key early reading skills and ensures that pupils make good progress across the early years and key stage 1. However, in key stage 2 pupils do not continue to make good progress. Too few pupils read widely and often. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' attainment and their progress in reading, but the assessments are not used well enough to set challenging work or identify where additional support is needed. Overall rates of progress in reading across key stage 2 are limited as a result.
- Teaching assistants provide good support, both within the classroom and when working with small groups or individual pupils. They liaise well with teachers and help pupils to make good progress in their learning and their personal development.
- The school uses additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. These pupils are making good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well and are respectful towards each other and the adults who teach

them. They are polite, friendly and cooperate well with each other in lessons and at playtimes.

- School leaders have been successful in improving attendance over the past three years. Attendance was above the national average in 2016 and few pupils were persistently absent.
- Although a small number of older pupils sometimes fail to live up to the school's high expectations regarding behaviour, school records show that incidents are followed up and dealt with effectively.
- Pupils enjoy attending the school's breakfast club. It is well managed and provides good opportunities for pupils to sit and chat or play with their friends while enjoying a healthy snack.
- The school environment is tidy and litter-free. Pupils take great enjoyment playing in the grounds and learning in the Forest School.

## Behaviour

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment for pupils. During discussions with the inspector pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations. They know the dangers associated with modern technologies and demonstrated a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils know about a range of bullying issues, and are secure in the knowledge that adults will listen to them and follow up any concerns. Those spoken to during this inspection said that, in the past, issues sometimes weren't resolved as quickly as they would have liked. However, they said that things had improved recently. All pupils spoken to said that they are well looked after and feel safe in school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils get off to a good start in reading, quickly developing a good knowledge of phonics. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check, at the end of Year 1, was around the national average in 2016, and was well above the average in 2014 and 2015. Good progress continues in Year 2. At the end of key stage 1, in 2016, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading was above the national average.
- Pupils do not make good enough progress in reading across key stage 2. Regular assessments are made of pupils' progress but this information is not used well enough to provide additional support where it is needed, or to challenge pupils to make rapid progress. The reading results at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were below the national average.
- Early writing skills are developed well. The percentage of pupils judged to be working at the expected level at the end of key stage 1, in 2016, was above average. However, no pupils were assessed to be working at greater depth. Progress in writing across key stage 2 is not strong. This is because pupils do not get enough opportunities to write at

length, either in English lessons or in other subjects such as history. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below the national average.

- The key stage 2 results in mathematics were well below the national average in 2016. However, the work seen in books during this inspection shows that significant improvements have been made in this area. Pupils demonstrated particularly good attitudes to this subject and enjoyed the challenges that teachers were providing in lessons. Pupils are now making good progress and most were working at or above the level expected for their age. The most able pupils were making particularly good progress in their learning.
- Pupils do not make good progress across the wider curriculum. They do not develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in science, geography or history.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve the higher standards in reading or writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. As with other pupils, the most able do not make good progress in the wider curriculum due to the lack of challenge provided.
- Pupils who join the school at other times than the start of the school year settle quickly. They are supported well and quickly made aware of the school's expectations. They generally make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are receiving support and challenge from additional adults are making good progress from their various starting points.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years is not currently good enough to ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable. There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the learning environment, particularly the outdoor area, which is not used well enough to support and develop children's learning.
- Children start at the school with skills and abilities that are generally typical for their age. The percentage of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the early years in 2016 was around the national average.
- Children behave well in the early years. They quickly learn and follow the school's well-established routines. They listen carefully to instructions and talk happily with adults and each other. Children develop confidence and enjoy their learning.
- Children happily engage with the activities prepared for them by adults. However, there are too few opportunities for children to initiate their own play. As a result, they are over-reliant on adults and do not have enough opportunities to follow their own interests or develop their independence. The learning environment, both indoors and outside, is not used well enough to support children's learning.
- Staff regularly observe children working and record their observations in children's 'learning journeys'. However, not enough of these observations are used to assess what children can do or how their learning can best be supported. As a result, the activities which are provided for children often fail to challenge or help them move on

in their learning quickly enough.

- Children make a good start in developing their early literacy skills. They learn phonics effectively and use this knowledge to develop an interest in reading and writing. By the time they move into Year 1 they have made good progress in this aspect of their learning.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by additional adults. As a result they settle into school life well and make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Child protection policies and procedures are implemented effectively and practice is regularly reviewed. Children are well looked after, feel safe and enjoy school.



## School details

Unique reference number	124746
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10000460

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	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Daubney
Headteacher	Vicky Doherty
Telephone number	01449 766215
Website	<a href="http://www.wvcpschool.com">www.wvcpschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@wvcpschool.com">office@wvcpschool.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 February 2012

## Information about this school

- Wetheringsett is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is around the national average.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at other than normal times is high.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils each morning.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading and scrutinised the work that they had completed in books.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning, and behaviour and safety.
- The inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its development plan, and a range of other school policies. He also considered documentation relating to child protection, safeguarding, and behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector analysed the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. He also met with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views of staff, through discussions held with them and analysis of the seven responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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