

Watlington Community Primary School

Rectory Lane, Watlington, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0HU

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have shown great resilience and strength in dealing with issues of racism in the local community.
- Leaders and governors have tackled weaknesses in teaching and recruitment issues so that the school now has an effective teaching team.
- Pupils are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in mathematics and phonics are improving particularly strongly.
- The school has an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum so that it has a greater impact on improving standards.
- Overall, pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They are polite, friendly and confident.
- Leaders have ensured that strong safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, have been below the national average over recent years.
- Pupils are not making strong enough progress in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for boys, by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils that make very strong progress
 - consolidating the improvements made, particularly in mathematics and phonics
 - ensuring that the school's approach to teaching reading comprehension is followed closely throughout the school
 - encouraging pupils to develop a love of reading.
- Ensure that pupils make strong progress in a wide range of subjects other than English and mathematics, by:
 - continuing the current review of the curriculum so that it meets pupils' needs fully
 - developing assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Continue to improve the positive behaviour and attitudes to learning of the small number of pupils who do not yet display these attributes sufficiently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Inspectors were aware, during this inspection, of racism in the local community and the impact that this has had on school staff. Inspectors were also made aware of an act of vandalism on the school site. This is currently being investigated by the police and is being treated as a hate crime.
- These matters have taken up a great deal of leaders' time and emotional energy. Despite leaders' best efforts, these issues have had an impact on the school and on pupils' outcomes. Leaders and governors are taking appropriate action in response to these issues. They are utterly committed to ensuring that the fundamental British values of equality and tolerance are upheld at the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is still needed. Leaders were candid and open with inspectors, making no attempt to offer excuses for the weaknesses in outcomes over time. Leaders are ambitious for the school and determined that it will be the best it can be.
- The school's records show that the quality of teaching fell following the previous inspection. This was for a variety of reasons, not related to leadership. This is, in part, responsible for the weaknesses in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 over the previous three years.
- Leaders have focused well on improving the quality of teaching in the school. For a variety of legitimate reasons, there has been an enormous turnover of teaching staff since the previous inspection. Despite difficulties in the recruitment of staff, leaders have maintained their focus on ensuring that the quality of teaching is good.
- Leaders have not shied away from tackling weaker teaching, where necessary. Leaders have a very good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. They have made their high expectations clear to staff. As a result, although there is still work to do, the quality of teaching in the school is now good and is continuing to improve.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a suitably broad and balanced education. However, leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum in order to improve it further, so that it has a greater impact on standards. Leaders are working on developing a curriculum that meets the specific needs of the local area more fully.
- Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities both within their classrooms and outside of lessons. Throughout the school, pupils go on educational visits to places of interest to enhance their learning about particular topics. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs are offered to pupils, during lunchtimes and after school.
- Subject leadership is developing well, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders know their subjects well. They have taken appropriate actions to improve outcomes and the impact of these actions is clear. Leaders have a good understanding of how to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The sport premium is spent effectively. The approach to spending the grant is well coordinated and well thought through. For example, the funding has been used to

increase the number and range of sports clubs available to pupils, and the sports taught during physical education lessons.

- The pupil premium grant is being spent increasingly effectively. A review of the pupil premium spending has been carried out, at the request of the school, and leaders are acting on its recommendations. For example, leaders are now focusing more closely on the impact of the actions taken.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well led, and additional funding is spent increasingly effectively. Leaders know pupils well and ensure that appropriate support is provided for them. Two external reviews of SEND provision have been carried out, at the school's request, and leaders have acted on the recommendations from them. For example, leaders have made changes to the way that pupils with SEND are assessed. This has enabled more precise actions to be taken, leading to better progress.
- Most parents and carers who expressed a view said that their children are happy and safe at school. Many parents chose to leave additional comments in support of the school, such as: 'My child always comes home happy and loves telling me about her day and tells me about all that she has learned.'
- Some parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school, particularly around bullying, behaviour and leadership and management. Inspectors found that inspection evidence does not uphold their views.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that outcomes are at least good in English, mathematics and a wide range of subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's current position. They recognise the weaknesses in outcomes over time and are increasingly effective in ensuring that outcomes improve. Governors are ambitious for the school, its staff and its pupils.
- Governors balance their dual roles of support and challenge well. They are open-minded and thorough, investigating any issues that are brought to their attention fairly. Governors are aware of the issues with racism in the local community and support leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. Strong systems are in place to ensure that only suitable people are allowed to work with pupils.
- Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are kept up to date with current safeguarding guidance. As a result, staff are alert and vigilant, reporting potential child protection concerns promptly.
- The school's designated safeguarding leads have a very good understanding of their roles. They receive regular and appropriate training. Records of child protection

concerns are detailed and kept securely. They show clearly that prompt action is taken to protect pupils, where necessary.

- The good relationships between staff and pupils help to keep pupils safe. Pupils know that they can speak with any member of staff if they are concerned about something, whether at the school or at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- As a result of the actions taken by leaders, the school now has a stable and effective teaching team. Teachers have been provided with suitable opportunities for their continuing professional development. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching. For example, training in the school's approach to teaching writing has resulted in improvements in this key area of development in English.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics. This enables them to plan lessons, and series of lessons, effectively and to answer pupils' questions fully, deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers also have good science subject knowledge, enabling them to teach the subject effectively. For example, regular investigations and experiments help to capture pupils' interest. As a result, pupils are starting to make better progress in science.
- Relationships between teaching staff and pupils are strong. Staff take the time to get to know pupils well as individuals. As a result, classrooms are happy places with positive atmospheres for learning. Staff encourage pupils to feel more confident so that they are willing to 'have a go' at things that they find difficult.
- Teaching assistants work with pupils individually and in small groups, particularly pupils with SEND. They know pupils well and work with teachers to plan the best ways to support pupils so that pupils make better progress from their starting points than they otherwise would.
- Teaching of phonics has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants have been provided with the training needed to enable them to teach the subject effectively. As a result, pupils learn to break words into sounds in order to spell, and blend sounds together in order to read.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and is continuing to do so. The school benefits from the skills and knowledge of teachers who have qualified as specialist mathematics teachers. This expertise has helped to improve both what is taught and how it is taught.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to tackling pupils' errors and misconceptions promptly. As part of the school's approach to improving mathematics, teachers identify very quickly the areas where pupils need help. They put measures in place, such as a brief individual teaching session, to address weaker areas promptly, often later on the same day. This has had a notable impact on improving the progress pupils make.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers plan imaginative tasks and activities that capture pupils' interest very well. Pupils say that teachers make lessons enjoyable. One pupil told the lead inspector: 'Our teacher tries to make subjects fun', echoing the views of many.

- Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching reading comprehension skills. Teachers are using this approach throughout the school, although there is some inconsistency in how it is used. Where the approach is used best, pupils are making stronger progress in reading, and are developing a greater love of reading as a result. There remains work to do to ensure all teachers use leaders' approach to teaching reading comprehension equally well.

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 polite, friendly and well mannered. Pupils were keen to speak with inspectors, and to tell them about their school and their learning. Pupils talk with confidence about matters that interest them.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Leaders take account of local risks in deciding the issues that pupils should be taught about. For example, the school is close to dykes and to a level crossing. As a result, pupils are taught about rail safety and water safety.
- Some parents expressed concerns about bullying in the school and how bullying is dealt with. Inspectors did not find evidence to uphold these concerns. Pupils told inspectors that there is little bullying and that, when it does happen, it is sorted out quickly by staff. The school's records about incidents of bullying confirm this.
- Some parents also expressed concerns about how pupils are cared for at the school. Again, inspectors found that evidence does not support these concerns. Staff know the pupils very well and care for them greatly. Pupils know that they can speak with any of the adults in the school if they are worried about something. One pupil expressed the views of many when describing teachers by saying: 'They're fantastic.'
- Pupils are given opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and they respond well to these. For example, Year 5 pupils act as 'buddies' to children as they join the Reception Year. Other pupils act as sports leaders, helping and encouraging others to join in with sporting activities at lunchtimes.
- A small proportion of boys do not show the strong attitudes to learning that would enable them to make the best progress that they are capable of. However, on the whole, pupils have good attitudes to learning. They take an interest in and show enthusiasm for the subjects that they learn about.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well at the school. They listen to adults carefully and follow instructions quickly. Inspectors found classrooms and communal areas to be calm and orderly places. Conversations with pupils and staff indicate that this is typical over time.

- Pupils play very well with each other and enjoy their breaktimes. They are provided with a wide range of activities to take part in during the lunch break. Leaders have found that this has helped to make playtimes more fun by enabling pupils to use their free time constructively.
- Attendance is monitored closely and appropriate procedures are in place to deal with absence, particularly repeated absence. As a result, attendance for the 2017/18 academic year was in line with the national average. Current attendance is on track to be just above the national average by the end of this academic year.
- The behaviour of a very small number of pupils causes concern among some parents and pupils. Inspectors found that leaders and staff deal with these issues well. This is demonstrated clearly by the dramatic reduction in the number of incidents over the previous year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, has been below the national average, sometimes well below, for the past three years. Progress has been particularly low in reading and in mathematics.
- These weaknesses in outcomes are the result of pockets of weak teaching over time. These have now been rectified and the quality of teaching is good. Pupils are making better progress and outcomes are improving. However, the improvements in outcomes have not yet caught up with the improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined has been below the national average since the previous inspection. However, this proportion has risen year on year, from a very low point in 2016, so that it is now approaching the national average.
- Similarly, although attainment in mathematics, at the end of key stage 2, remains below the national average, it has improved every year for the past three years. Pupils' progress in writing has been similar to the national average for the past three years.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved markedly since the previous inspection. From a very low starting point, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the check has been similar to the national average for the past three years.
- The work in pupils' exercise books shows that outcomes in mathematics are improving very quickly and strongly. Pupils are making steady progress in reading and writing, with some making stronger progress. However, too few pupils are making strong enough progress to enable them to raise their attainment to where it ought to be.
- Published assessment information indicates that boys do less well than girls in reading and writing. Inspectors found some evidence of this, but the picture is more complicated. Most boys make similar progress to girls. However, where boys do not have good attitudes to learning, their progress is weaker as a result.
- Disadvantaged pupils are, on the whole, making similar progress to other pupils in the school, but not to other pupils nationally. The work in pupils' exercise books shows that

disadvantaged pupils are making at least as much progress as leaders expect them to, and some are making stronger progress.

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND are improving. Their progress is tracked very precisely, from their individual starting points. Leaders use this information increasingly well to raise pupils' attainment.
- Leaders have, very sensibly, prioritised raising outcomes in English and mathematics, but they have not allowed the curriculum to become narrowed as a result. It is clear, particularly from discussions with pupils, that pupils learn about a wide range of subjects. Inspectors saw evidence of the good progress pupils are making in science. However, progress in other subjects was more limited.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is led well. Leaders know what is working well and what could be better. For example, leaders are aware that the environment is not as vibrant as it could be and actions are being taken to improve this.
- Teaching in the early years is good. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together, forming an effective team. Staff plan appropriate activities for the children, including both adult-led tasks and activities that children can choose for themselves. They have found that this balance works well.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class, from their individual starting points. For example, in 2017/18, on average, the children started school with skills and abilities a little below those typical of their age. By the end of the Reception Year, most had caught up and the proportion that achieved a good level of development was similar to the national average.
- Children behave well in the early years. They know the school's rules and they follow them. They appear happy and settled in their classroom. Children were very keen to talk to the inspectors about their activities and what they were learning about.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective and statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	120888
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10078219

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Samouelle
Headteacher	Ruth McGlone
Telephone number	01553 810468
Website	www.watlingtonprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@watlington.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2015

Information about this school

- Watlington is a small primary school, with one class in each year group from Reception Year to Year 6.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Inspectors were aware, during this inspection, of racism within the local community. At the time of this inspection, police were investigating an act of vandalism on the school's site that has been classified as a hate crime.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information. They checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, governors, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. An inspector spoke with a second representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered 57 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 51 free-text comments. Inspectors also took note of 18 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Lucas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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