

Great Whelnetham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Stanningfield Road, Great Whelnetham, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 0UA

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not maintained the school's standard of education since the previous inspection. They have been too slow to address the decline in pupils' achievement. Pupils' progress is inadequate, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Weak governance in the recent past has failed to challenge leaders about the school's poor performance. Newly appointed governors know what needs to improve, but have not yet had sufficient time to make an impact.
- The skills of subject leaders are underdeveloped. The monitoring that is carried out has not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Leaders do not make effective use of the school's assessment system to check pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not made effective use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The progress the pupils make is inadequate.
- The teaching of writing is particularly weak. Pupils do not apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. The activities they plan are not well matched to meet the needs of pupils, especially the most able pupils.
- The curriculum is weak. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Teaching in the early years is ineffective. Children do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and enjoy coming to school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

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?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders develop effective systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - assessment systems are securely embedded and understood, so that leaders and teachers make effective use of information about pupils' achievement
 - the school's use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, is planned for, monitored and ensures that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make good progress from their starting points
 - subject leaders are supported to develop the skills they need to be effective in their roles
 - the curriculum supports the development of a range of skills across different subjects
 - governors provide challenge and hold leaders to account so that the school improves rapidly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - accurately assessing pupils' learning so that work is matched well to their abilities, especially for the most able pupils
 - more effectively checking what pupils understand during lessons
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils should know and can achieve, particularly the most able pupils.
- Raise pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to the teaching of pupils' writing skills
 - giving pupils frequent opportunities to write across a range of subjects
 - ensuring that teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills in problem-solving and reasoning.
- Improve the quality of the provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - adults have higher expectations of what children can achieve

- assessment of children’s development is accurate and is used to plan activities to help them to make strong gains from their starting points
- opportunities for children to work independently, including outdoors, are suitably challenging and purposeful.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, including governors, have not responded quickly enough to tackle the decline in the school's performance. Leaders' actions to address weaknesses have had limited impact. Published data shows that pupils' outcomes have been weak, and pupils' underachievement continues.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding about how to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders do not evaluate the information they collect to identify what needs to improve and how teaching is developed. This means that leaders have not addressed the weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders do not provide teachers with precise guidance about how to improve the quality of their work. The feedback they provide is brief and systems for checking whether teaching has improved are not embedded. This means that the quality of teaching has not improved quickly enough.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Some subjects have no assigned leaders so there is not an accurate understanding of how well pupils achieve across the curriculum.
- The school's assessment system is not used effectively to check whether targeted actions improve pupils' progress. Procedures have focused upon pupils' attainment, rather than the progress they make. Consequently, pupils do not make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- Pupils with SEND are not making sufficient progress from their starting points. The checks made by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) are not well established. Targets set for the pupils are not precise enough. For example, they do not specify for how long the additional provision is being made or how to measure the success of the support. This means that pupils are not able to catch up quickly with their peers.
- Leaders do not have a strategy for addressing the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. Pupils do not receive any specific help to support their progress. There have been no checks made by governors on the use of the pupil premium funding. A new leader has recently been appointed but has not yet had any impact. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders have not produced a plan for the sport premium. This means that they are unclear about how to evaluate the impact of this funding. However, pupils have access to a wide range of sporting activities and clubs. Sports coaches are employed to provide opportunities for pupils to experience different games and activities, including at lunchtimes.
- The curriculum is weak. Leaders do not check how well teachers are effectively delivering the wider curriculum. This means that pupils do not develop their skills at the depth expected for their age in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through the school's values. Pupils talk about values such as friendship, compassion and courage

and how they are reflected through life at school. They learn about different faiths and cultures in lessons and daily assemblies. Pupils develop a good sense of responsibility through different roles they undertake, such as school council members, team leaders and junior road safety officers. This means that pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain.

- Parents who spoke with the inspector all agreed that leaders provide a safe and nurturing environment. However, many of these parents expressed concerns about their children's progress in learning and how well leaders communicated with them.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been too slow to respond to the decline in the school's performance. In 2017, a review of governance was carried out and a pre-warning notice was issued by the local authority. However, governors did not address the recommendations with rigour or urgency.
- Many governors are now new to their roles and have only just begun to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- Governors do not receive sufficient information from school leaders to help support their monitoring of the school's effectiveness. Recent requests have been made for more information, but this is too soon to evaluate the impact of school leaders' actions.
- Governors have ensured that the school's procedures for keeping children safe are in place. Regular visits have been made to ensure that the required checks are carried out for the adults who work with children. Governors have received relevant child protection training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. Staff are trained well and understand how to recognise and refer any concerns, no matter how slight. Their understanding of keeping pupils safe is reinforced through regular checks made by the leaders. Posters around the school and on a staffroom display board remind adults that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Three members of staff are trained as designated leaders of child protection. They meet regularly to discuss concerns. Checks on pupils' welfare are monitored frequently.
- The school's single central record meets statutory requirements. It is well maintained and checked regularly to ensure that all the information is up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Too few pupils make the progress they should by the end of Year 6, particularly in writing and mathematics.

- Teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. Learning does not build on what pupils know. Pupils work diligently, but the tasks they are given do not challenge their thinking well enough. When they finish their work, additional tasks are like those pupils have already completed. This means that they do not have enough opportunities to apply their understanding to more challenging work. This limits the progress they make, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not make effective use of assessment to ensure that activities are well planned to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, in topics such as science and history, pupils are not stretched by the work set. This impedes pupils' progress and provides insufficient challenge for the most able pupils to progress.
- Teachers focus too much on the work that pupils will do rather than on the understanding and skills they need to develop. This results in pupils not understanding how to apply what they have learned.
- The questions teachers ask do not probe pupils' understanding well enough. The responses pupils provide are not used to ensure that they are extended in their learning and their thinking is deepened.
- Teaching assistants are not deployed well enough. Frequently, during whole-class explanations, support staff are not provided with tasks to support and to help pupils understand their learning. The subject knowledge of teaching assistants is often not secure enough to develop the skills of pupils they help, especially pupils with SEND.
- The teaching of writing is poorly planned. Where it is weakest, teachers do not have a sound understanding of how to develop pupils' writing skills. Teachers do not provide frequent opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills.
- Teachers do not have a coherent grasp of how to use the school's chosen approaches for teaching mathematics. The use of reasoning is not well planned. Pupils' books show that there are too few occasions to apply their knowledge to develop problem-solving skills. Where misconceptions are not addressed, pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. Teachers do not model effectively how pupils should segment the sounds in words and blend them together to read. Therefore, those pupils who struggle to read are not helped to read fluently. Progress is limited, especially for the lower-ability pupils.
- Recent changes to the teaching of reading in upper key stage 2 are having a positive impact upon pupils' progress. Classes read a high-quality text together. Teachers effectively promote the development of pupils' inference and retrieval skills. As a result, pupils are making stronger progress in reading in these classes.
- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is too inconsistent in quality. Where subjects have lacked leadership, teachers do not plan activities that deepen pupils' understanding. In science, pupils lack opportunities to develop enquiry skills through investigation and experimentation. However, teaching is better in art, where leaders check that pupils develop skills that are appropriately planned for their age.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships are positive and caring between adults and pupils. Staff know pupils as individuals. They are vigilant to ensure that pupils' pastoral needs are met and that they are happy in school. Pupils' confidence is developed well, and they are willing to take on any task or responsibility.
- Pupils enjoy being part of a small school and understand the importance of developing friendships. Opportunities to understand about belonging to a community are promoted through local church activities, participating in Remembrance Day events and singing at community venues such as the senior citizens' home. One pupil summed this up well, telling the inspector, 'Our school is homely.'
- Pupils are proud to hold positions of responsibility, for example working on litter picking patrol or serving as dinnertime monitors. Pupils throw themselves enthusiastically into their school council roles. They listen and discuss different ideas to help make the school playground and environment a better place. Pupils have a good understanding of how democracy works and a healthy respect for one another.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. The school's programme for developing pupils' social and emotional development is well taught. Older pupils in key stage 2 consider that they are especially well prepared for their next stage of education because they discuss relevant topics about keeping safe.
- Pupils understand about the different forms bullying can take but consider this is something that is rare in their school. If they had concerns they would discuss these with an adult, should the need arise. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how they stay safe using the internet. For example, they would never disclose any personal information when they are online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because staff use consistent approaches and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and use time well to work hard in their lessons. Pupils concentrate on their activities, even when learning is not well matched to meet their needs. During lessons they listen respectfully to each other's ideas and work sensibly together to talk about their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their work, which is evident in the displays around the school.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They conduct themselves well throughout the day. At playtimes, they share their team games and older pupils ensure that younger pupils are safe while outside.
- Leaders have introduced new systems, which have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. The number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour has reduced rapidly

over a short period. Records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour.

- Pupils attend school well. Over the past three years, attendance rates have been above the national averages. The current information shows that pupils continue to attend school regularly and no group is disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress from their starting points, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been in the lowest 20% of schools for the past two years.
- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was below the national average. This means that too many pupils were not well prepared for their next stage in education.
- Work in books shows that pupils are not making sufficient progress in writing. Progress is particularly weak for lower-attaining pupils because they are not provided with the guidance to help them develop their writing skills. At times, they are given too much support from adults and cannot then apply their skills independently. Teachers have not challenged the most able pupils well enough in writing.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is improving at key stage 2. Pupils read widely and for enjoyment. A consistent approach to teaching ensures that pupils are developing the skills to read well. However, at key stage 1 pupils' progress is limited where books are not well matched to their reading abilities.
- Pupils do not apply their skills in different subjects, where often the quality of work is poor. Pupils are not developing strategies to support their spelling. Misconceptions are not addressed, and similar errors are made repeatedly through their work.
- In mathematics, pupils' basic skills are weak, leading to gaps in their knowledge. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to problem-solving activities. Work provided for the most able pupils does not challenge them to think harder. Consequently, too few pupils achieve the higher standards by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils with SEND do not achieve well. They do not receive the specific support they require to make good progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are particularly poor. In 2018, they made significantly less progress than other pupils nationally. There is no clear strategy to support their progress. This means that the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils is not diminishing.
- In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. Lower-attaining pupils are not provided with good phonics teaching to help them catch up quickly. As a result, they are not able to apply their phonic skills successfully and read fluently.
- At key stage 1 in 2018, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing were similar to the national averages, and above average in mathematics. However, work seen in books for pupils who have started key stage 2

shows that progress has not been sustained from these starting points.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Children start the early years with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. From their starting points, children make inadequate progress. This is because adults do not provide activities that sufficiently challenge children's development across all areas of learning.
- In 2018, the proportions of children achieving the good level of development was just above the national average. However, a local authority check of the assessments found that too little evidence was gathered to support the judgements. Therefore, it could not agree that the assessments were accurate.
- Assessment of children's development is not accurate enough. Insufficient evidence is gathered to develop a clear understanding of what pupils already know and where there are gaps in their learning. This means that activities planned by the teacher are not well matched to children's development needs, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Teaching is not ensuring that children develop a good understanding of how to form letters correctly. Too few opportunities are provided in the provision for children to practise and apply their early writing skills.
- Adults are not deployed well enough in purposeful activity. For example, during whole-class work adults were given no role, which meant children were not as well supported and engaged in the activity.
- There are insufficient opportunities to gather the views of parents. While parents do receive some electronic information regarding children's success, little information is used by staff in return. This means that leaders do not have a complete picture of a child's development.
- The use of the outdoors is not effective in promoting children's development. Activities often lack purpose and adults do not ensure that children are learning well during their chosen activities. Questioning is not used effectively to encourage children to think about their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Children's social and emotional development is good. Relationships between adults and children are positive. Clear routines and expectations for children's behaviour ensure that they settle to tasks quickly. Children sustain their concentration, even where the activity may not be challenging.
- Leaders have ensured that all aspects of the early years welfare requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124700 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10085476 |

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.

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| Type of school | All-through Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 131 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kim Palmer |
| Headteacher | Kath Parkin |
| Telephone number | 01284 386203 |
| Website | www.greatwhelnetham.suffolk.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@greatwhelnetham.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 December 2007 |

Information about this school

- Great Whelnetham is smaller than an average-sized primary school. There are seven classes: one class for each year group.
- There is pre-school provision on site called Cygnets. The provision has its own Ofsted registration and is inspected separately.
- An external review of governance was carried out in July 2017. There is a paid chair of the governing body, who started in October 2018.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all classes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the newly appointed leader of the pupil and sport premium, the SENCo, the early years leader and subject leaders. The inspector had discussions with two governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with a representative from the local authority and the school's diocesan adviser.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' books in English, mathematics and foundation subjects in key stages 1 and 2 and learning journals in Reception.
- A formal discussion was held with a group of pupils as well as speaking to pupils informally in the classrooms.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school self-evaluation document, the school development plan, the school's own assessment information, procedures for safeguarding children, behaviour and racial incident records, and attendance records.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the school gate.
- The inspector had a discussion with all the school staff.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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