

Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5PJ

Inspection dates

11–12 June 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	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to address the priorities identified for improvement. All aspects of the school are now good and improving.
- Wetheringsett Primary School is a happy school. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy talking about what they are learning.
- From the moment they enter the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported through a range of interventions to meet their individual needs.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong. Staff provide pupils with many extra-curricular clubs and activities, including 'forest school' and a day trip to France to practise French.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils' attendance has been above the national average for the past three years.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that helps pupils understand the world around them. However, opportunities are missed to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- New approaches to the teaching of mathematics are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes but are not yet fully embedded.
- While subject leaders are enthusiastic, their roles are not sufficiently developed to have a significant impact on improving teaching and learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to stay fit and healthy and take part in a wide range of sporting activities, including 'the daily mile' before school.
- Children get off to a strong start in the early years. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff and governors receive appropriate, up-to-date training that provides them with the knowledge and skills to keep pupils safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders' skills develop, so they can support others to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise pupils' attainment, by ensuring that the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics are fully embedded.
- Improve the school's curriculum by ensuring that sequences of learning are well thought out to develop and deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The previous headteacher did not waste any time in bringing about improvements. The current headteacher, who started in January 2019, has a crystal-clear vision and high expectations that are shared by the senior teacher, staff and governors. Leaders have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils now make good progress from their starting points, across the curriculum.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has galvanised the old and new staff into a united team. The school is a happy place for staff to come to work and for pupils to learn. Staff value the support that leaders provide to improve their knowledge and skills. They feel valued and are proud to work at the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to others. Many of those who spoke to the inspector were delighted with how the school is improving. As one parent commented: 'We love the family feel the school provides the children. The staff genuinely care for and want the best for each and every child attending the school and my children always feel safe and happy.'
- Leaders have reviewed and improved the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced. While the national curriculum is being taught, there are regular missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects and are taking on more responsibilities across the school. They are developing their skills in monitoring teaching and learning in their curriculum areas, but are not yet fully effective.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport is spent well. A sports coach works alongside staff to provide additional expertise within lessons. Pupils also have access to a broader range of sports. Pupils have had opportunities to represent the school, such as in local athletics and hockey competitions.

Governance of the school

- Governors are clear about their ambitious vision for the school, which has 'building skills for life' at its heart. Working closely with the headteacher, they evaluate the school accurately, and develop improvement strategies that address the school's needs.
- The governing body is well informed about pupils' progress because the headteacher provides them with timely and accurate information. Governors hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance, but are keen to express their support and admiration for what both headteachers have achieved since the previous inspection.
- Some individual governors have specific responsibilities, and they take these seriously. For example, a governor makes regular checks on the school's safeguarding systems, while other governors ensure that leaders spend the money the school receives effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- In her role as designated safeguarding lead, the headteacher ensures that all staff receive safeguarding training. As a consequence, staff are able to describe what they would do if they were worried about a child.
- The school keeps accurate and up-to-date records of any safeguarding concerns. These records are held securely, but can be readily accessed by the designated safeguarding lead when necessary.
- The school works closely with the local authority and is familiar with how to access its support when necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good. Teachers foster positive relationships with pupils. Pupils are encouraged to do well across a range of subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and more regularly promote deeper thinking.
- There has been a strong focus on improving standards in mathematics. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Pupils are developing great confidence in explaining the calculations that they carry out. Mathematics books show good progress. While the new approaches are clearly showing a positive impact on outcomes, these approaches are not yet fully embedded across the school.
- The teaching of reading is strong. Teachers and leaders encourage a love of reading across the school. A parent said: 'Over the last two years my eldest child has changed from a child who was not that interested in reading to a child I quite often have to remind to stop and sleep. The school has helped to nurture this new found love of books with weekly recommendations in assemblies, as I often struggle to know what to suggest.'
- The teaching of writing is improving. Changes to the way in which writing is taught are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Some high-quality written work was seen in pupils' books. The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling across the school is good. However, some pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or for different purposes or audiences in subjects other than English.
- In the wider curriculum subjects, such as geography, history and science, skills and knowledge are being taught effectively. In some classes pupils are given time to extend and challenge thinking with 'big questions' like 'I wonder', but this is not consistent across the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants share a strong sense of corporate responsibility for the progress that pupils make.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. A parent commented, 'Staff have taught and nurtured my children like they were their own.'
- Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other, valuing their classmates' opinions and working cooperatively in lessons. All adults work hard to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff work closely with pupils and families in a supportive and sensitive manner.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is strong. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and the rule of law. Pupils who spoke with the inspector recalled confidently what they spoke about with the local Member of Parliament who visited the school.
- The school's ethos is reflected in its Christian values. Pupils can talk with confidence about how these values influence their actions in daily life.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in the real and virtual world.
- Pupils reflected on their own and others' conduct and observed that there has been a marked improvement in behaviour. There are clear systems to deal with any behaviour that falls short of expectations. Pupils told the inspector that bullying is rare and has not happened this year. They trust staff to resolve any issues quickly, should they arise.
- Older pupils enjoy acting as a 'buddy' to younger pupils and support them when needed in assembly and at breaktimes. With so few pupils, they say that the school is like a big family.
- There are a wide range of clubs on offer to the pupils, including for sport, art, 'forest school' and cooking.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners, holding doors open for adults and visitors. Playtimes are well organised and happy occasions, where pupils interact with each other confidently and with respect.
- The relationships pupils have with adults and with each other are warm and trusting. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their attendance, which is above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly addressed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' records on the progress of current cohorts of pupils show that the strategies in place to improve pupils' outcomes are effective. The results of assessments, as well as pupils' work in their books, provide evidence that the vast majority of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Where progress is weaker, leaders provide support to help pupils catch up rapidly.
- Pupils' progress and attainment improved in mathematics in 2018 after disappointing outcomes in 2016 and 2017. Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data show clearly that, in key stages 1 and 2, current pupils are making strong progress. Pupils' progress has improved significantly this academic year as new approaches to the teaching of mathematics have taken hold. These are not fully embedded. Pupils are unable to apply their new skills in a range of different contexts.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is too small to make meaningful comparisons with national averages for attainment and progress. However, the very small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND currently in the school make good progress from their differing starting points.
- Work in pupils' topic books shows that their knowledge and skills are developing well in a range of subjects. This is particularly the case in science and in the humanities. Pupils said how much they enjoy their 'forest school' sessions, which they consider to be of a very high quality.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. A pupil told the inspector, 'Even though our school is really small, we are ready to do well in high school.'

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is strong. Leaders explained that their core purpose is to build a love of learning.
- Staff forge positive relationships with parents and begin their accurate and thorough assessments of children on entry. The team draws on a wide range of evidence and information to build up a full picture of how each child is achieving.
- Children's acquisition of language and communication skills is a high priority in Reception. This was seen when the children were motivated to learn about and plant seeds. They organised labels and signs for selling, and the adult skilfully asked questions so that a child was able to identify that they needed hot and cold water to make warm water to soak the seeds in. The inspector saw staff modelling language as they spoke with children. Questioning was used expertly to encourage and extend children's vocabulary.
- Staff have developed stimulating and safe indoor and outdoor learning environments which provide a range of interesting learning activities and experiences. Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities and are keen learners. They listen carefully to adults and to each other.
- Children with SEND are carefully identified and their needs are met. Over time, children

with SEND make good progress.

- All the statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	124746
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10088664

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Bensley
Headteacher	Annie Hookway
Telephone number	01449 766 215
Website	www.wvcpschool.com
Email address	office@wvcpschool.com
Date of previous inspection	28 February–1 March 2017

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- There has been a significant change in staffing since the previous inspection. A new headteacher and a number of new class teachers have been appointed.
- The school is designated as a Church of England primary school in the Anglican Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November, 2016.
- The school shares a building with an external nursery.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and school staff, including middle leaders, and met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised work in pupils' books and met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at social times, both on the playground and in the dining room, as well as in lessons.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation. This included assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is monitored and the school's improvement plans.
- The 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 21 free-text responses were considered. In addition, the inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Cassandra Williams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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