

Bedfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Bedfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 7EA

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that the outstanding quality of education identified at the last inspection has been maintained. Governors have been slow to respond to the decline in standards.
- Leaders and teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to check rigorously that pupils are making strong progress.
- Until recently, the acting headteacher has had too little time to bring about all of the required improvements that she and governors have identified.
- Leaders' improvement plans lack focus, and their evaluations of the school's performance are overly optimistic.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has been inconsistent. Learning activities do not consistently take into account what pupils already know and understand to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of the depth, accuracy and presentation of pupils' writing are inconsistent.
- Although the teaching of mathematics is improving, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Children in the early years do not make enough progress, especially in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics. Leaders do not check carefully the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum in the early years.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. She understands the actions required to improve the school further and she now has the capacity to bring about these changes.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils enjoy a broad and balanced range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - monitor and evaluate the school’s effectiveness more robustly, including in the early years
 - develop plans that focus sharply on the school’s most important priorities and contain clear and measurable outcomes that enable them to review the impact of individual initiatives more effectively
 - raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school, through precise monitoring and training
 - review all pupils’ progress from their starting points more rigorously, so that pupils make strong progress over time, especially in literacy and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in early years, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment well to raise expectations about what pupils can achieve
 - question larger groups of pupils more effectively
 - ensure that learning builds more closely upon what pupils already know and understand
 - expect higher standards of presentation and handwriting from pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that the outstanding quality of education identified at the last inspection has been maintained.
- Following the resignation of the previous headteacher, governors appointed the current acting headteacher on a temporary basis. The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. However, until recently, she has not had sufficient capacity to address them effectively. Governors have now provided the acting headteacher with additional time to undertake leadership duties. While this is beginning to have a positive impact, this unsettled time has slowed down the pace of school improvement.
- Leaders' priorities to improve the school lack focus. Leaders have not been realistic in establishing what they want to achieve each year. Consequently, their plans contain an unmanageable number of actions for such a small team. In addition, the expected outcomes of their planned actions are not always clear enough. This limits the extent to which leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their work.
- Monitoring and evaluation by leaders have not been robust or routine enough. Leaders are overly optimistic about some areas of the school's effectiveness. Until recently, leaders' capacity to undertake monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment has been limited. Consequently, leaders have not been able to eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders do not focus closely enough on ensuring that pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Leaders routinely check the quality of pupils' work but concentrate more on pupils' attainment. Consequently, pupils' rates of progress are often too slow.
- Additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used to provide a wide range of additional appropriate support. However, until recently, the special needs coordinator has not had the capacity to monitor and evaluate fully the impact of pupils' support, in relation to their achievement, within and outside of the classroom.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that the study of English and mathematics is supplemented by study of a wide range of subjects, such as geography, history and art. Although pupils value and enjoy these subjects, teachers' expectations vary between subjects.
- Parents and carers who spoke with the inspector and those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are very supportive of the school. Parents said that the staff are friendly and welcoming, and that their children are looked after well at Bedford.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils play a key part in developing school and class expectations, while the school's strengths in art and music support pupils' cultural development. The school's strong values are used well to enable pupils to develop important characteristics, such as

compassion, forgiveness and understanding. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. Pupils benefit from a wide range of sporting clubs, tuition and new equipment. Participation in clubs and competitions is high and increasing.
- The pupil premium grant is used well to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional support, access to extra-curricular activities and educational equipment. Leaders monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress closely and modify the support offered to individual pupils as and when necessary. This group of pupils makes positive overall progress.

Governance of the school

- Although governors provide challenge and support to leaders, they have been too slow to ensure that the acting headteacher has sufficient time to implement her vision fully. This has slowed the pace of improvement.
- Governors accurately identify the issues and challenges they face currently. They are ambitious for the school and have an honest and reflective view about where the school needs to be better.
- Governors ensure that their legal duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met. The link safeguarding governor checks safeguarding arrangements, including the record of pre-employment checks, routinely. Governors also undertake routine safeguarding audits. Governors receive valuable training that helps them to understand their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive routine safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand and follow leaders' clear procedures for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are logged appropriately and that child-protection referrals are dealt with effectively. The maintenance of child-protection files is effective, and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies to ensure that pupils quickly get the support they need.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is too variable to be good.
- Teaching does not consistently take pupils' starting points into account. Consequently, activities do not always build upon pupils' previous learning or provide pupils with an

appropriate level of challenge. When this happens, pupils either struggle to complete tasks, because they do not fully understand them, or complete them quickly because they find them too easy.

- Teachers' checking of pupils' understanding during lessons is not routinely effective. When teachers lead discussions with groups of pupils, they do not always use questioning rigorously enough to check the extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding before moving on to new tasks.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are too variable. At times, it is not made clear enough to pupils exactly how they should be improving their writing. Teachers do not consistently challenge poor presentation, and pupils are not routinely supported to improve the accuracy of their spellings. Teachers do not consistently embed leaders' expectations that older pupils' handwriting should be joined.
- Teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics (foundation subjects) allows pupils to study a wide range of new topics. Pupils enjoy the activities that their teachers devise for them. However, learning activities do not consistently build on what pupils already know and can do so that they make enough progress and deepen their understanding.
- Teaching assistants' support to improve pupils' learning is variable. On some occasions, additional adults offer effective support that challenges pupils' thinking and deepens their knowledge, skills and understanding. On other occasions, they are too slow to identify that pupils are struggling and that they need help.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Teachers establish clear routines and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respect their teachers and have positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils are keen to get involved in activities and they are not afraid to take risks and make mistakes.
- Recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are having a positive impact. In key stage 2, pupils enjoyed working with a range of practical resources that challenged them to construct and classify different shapes. They worked methodically and effectively through increasingly complex activities.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is effective, although it is weaker in the early years. Sessions include activities that encourage pupils to be confident, take risks and enjoy their language development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils say that they are safe at the school. They say that bullying is very rare and that they know who to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils say that staff deal with any concerns quickly.

- Pupils are taught to stay safe, for example through lessons and visiting speakers. Topics covered include bullying, internet safety, road safety and relationships.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the strong relationships that they develop with other pupils of all ages. Pupils of different ages are supported to work collaboratively and respectfully together in their mixed-age classes, at breaktimes and when taking part in sporting activities.
- Pupils' self-confidence and personal development are supported by the many different positions of responsibility that they hold. These include being librarians, sports captains and buddies for younger pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to most aspects of their learning, but they do not take enough pride in their written work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is positive. They are friendly, polite and well-mannered. They follow their teachers' instructions.
- Pupils behave well at lunch and breaktimes and are well supervised. Pupils enjoy socialising or playing sensibly in the outside areas.
- Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, good behaviour is the norm. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, and there have been no fixed-period exclusions in recent years.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy school and very few are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils typically enter Year 1 having reached a good level of development at the end of Reception.
- Pupils' overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been inconsistent in recent years, although published data needs to be treated with caution in schools with such small cohorts of pupils.
- Current pupils' progress in writing is mixed. Where progress is stronger, pupils write fluently, accurately and with varied vocabulary. They can write for different purposes equally effectively, and their spelling and use of grammar are accurate. However, pupils' overall progress in writing is not strong enough. Pupils' writing often lacks depth and accuracy. They do not take enough care over the presentation of written work and their handwriting.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving. New approaches to the teaching of mathematics have been successfully introduced, and pupils now enjoy more regular opportunities to develop their reasoning skills and to solve problems. Pupils are making better progress when these activities build on what they know and understand.

However, many pupils still have too many gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, pupils' overall progress is not yet strong enough.

- Reading has a high profile in the school, and many pupils read fluently. Pupils get off to a good start to their early reading in Year 1, where the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check is typically average.
- Pupils' make strong progress in some of the foundation subjects. For example, they demonstrate high levels of skill in art and design. However, progress in the foundation subjects is variable. In subjects such as geography and history, pupils do not develop their subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding consistently enough.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress where support is most effective. In these cases, teachers and other adults target support specifically at pupils' areas of need and are effective at helping them to improve the quality of their work. However, the overall progress of pupils with SEND is too variable, because the overall quality of teaching is not consistently strong enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils make positive overall progress. Their funding is well targeted and removes many of their barriers to learning.
- Leaders organise a variety of transition activities, so that that pupils are well prepared for their transition to secondary school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because the quality of teaching and children's progress are not consistently strong enough.
- Children are not well enough supported to make good progress across all areas of their learning. Adults plan varied activities, but these do not always sufficiently deepen or extend children's learning.
- Children are not routinely supported to develop as learners over time. Adults do not consistently intervene in a timely manner to support and guide their learning.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of early years provision is not sufficiently rigorous. Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the provision.
- Adults ensure that children behave well and that they are safe. Children collaborate well and they support each other effectively. They are confident, friendly and resilient.
- Adults' work to support children as they join the provision is effective. They work closely with families and pre-school providers to ensure that children make a smooth start to their education.
- The environment is safe, and adults are well trained to care for and protect the children. Safeguarding arrangements are secure.

School details

Unique reference number	124720
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10088736

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	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Mobbs
Acting headteacher	Martine Sills
Telephone number	01728 628306
Website	www.bedfieldschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@bedfield.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school with small numbers in each year group, including the early years. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND support is above average.
- The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, who speak English as an additional language, or who have an education, health and care plan are below average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. It belongs to the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Its most recent section 48 inspection for Anglican and Methodist schools was in October 2014.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially scheduled as a one-day inspection, following concerns about the school's performance. The inspection converted to a full inspection and was completed by the lead inspector.
- The inspector held meetings with the acting headteacher, leaders, teachers and governors. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes, jointly with the acting headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspector throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- The inspector heard pupils read and discuss their reading habits.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. The inspector also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their behaviour, safeguarding and attendance records.
- The inspector spoke to parents before the school day and also considered the 28 responses made by parents to the Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Gee, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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