

Runcton Holme Church of England Primary School

School Road, Runcton Holme, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0EL

Inspection dates

4 to 5 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- Due to disrupted or weak teaching in the past, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Better teaching is helping them to close these gaps. However, some pupils do not attain the standards of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not routinely demand enough of pupils who are capable of being high achievers. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- The curriculum in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is not as logically ordered or taught as it needs to be. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in the foundation subjects.
- Children in the early years have not made the progress of which they are capable. Aspects of the curriculum are not as well developed as they should be. Adults do not make consistently good use of their knowledge of phonics and how to teach it.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and other leaders are bringing about the necessary changes in this improving school.
- The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust's (the trust) support has been instrumental in many of the improvements made.
- Runcton Holme is a happy school. Pupils are safe and well cared for. Their attendance is good, and they are enthusiastic learners.
- Pupils behave well. They typically act kindly and look out for each other's well-being.
- Through leaders' skilful use of additional funding, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided for effectively.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in many aspects of school life.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that teachers have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve in foundation subjects
 - equipping teachers with the necessary strategies so that they routinely demand more of pupils who are capable of reaching greater depth and higher standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - making sure that pupils close gaps in their knowledge and understanding more quickly
 - increasing the number of pupils who are working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by reviewing and making appropriate amendments to the curriculum in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the early years by:
 - increasing the proportion of children who make at least good progress from their individual starting points
 - making sure that all adults make effective use of their knowledge of phonics and how to teach it
 - ensuring that the curriculum for each area of learning is coherently planned and delivered.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher is unwavering in her commitment to improve the quality of education. With enthusiastic support from staff, she is making the necessary changes to many aspects of the school's work. During a period of considerable change, staff have preserved the school's caring, happy atmosphere. Consequently, Runcton Holme is an improving school in which pupils are looked after well and develop confidence in their learning and play.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have an accurate grasp of what works well and what needs to be done better. They use this information to set the right priorities for improvement and they check the progress towards these priorities thoroughly. As a result, pupils are making better, but not yet good, progress in each key stage.
- Through her clarity of expectations and the right balance of monitoring, support and challenge, the headteacher has eradicated inadequate teaching practices. With good-quality support from the trust, and despite recent instability in staffing, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. Teaching is stronger in reading, writing and mathematics. However, more work needs to be done for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be consistently good.
- Middle leadership is increasingly effective. Leaders of English, mathematics, the early years and SEND are playing an important role in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility. They rightly take stock of what needs to be done and take the correct actions to bring about improvement. Leaders make use of good-quality training, often provided by the trust, to support staff to develop their practice. This is evident, for example, in the improvements made to the teaching of reading and writing.
- Leaders make good use of the funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Adults know pupils' barriers to learning and help them to overcome these barriers. For example, through carefully chosen support, disadvantaged pupils have developed their literacy knowledge and skills considerably. This is helping pupils to have access to the rest of the curriculum more easily and make bigger strides in their learning.
- Pupils with SEND are effectively provided for. Adults identify pupils' needs quickly and make sure that they are given the right help. Leaders carefully check the progress that pupils with SEND make and, where appropriate, adjust the support that they receive. Parents are important partners in this decision-making process. They explained how much their children had grown in confidence due to the care and guidance of adults in the school.
- In addition to offering skilful support for pupils who need it, teaching assistants play a central role in many aspects of school life. In a year in which there has been staffing instability, they have been an important factor in the maintenance of the school's caring, positive ethos. Teaching assistants also make a wholehearted contribution to the school's enrichment programme.
- Staff are justifiably proud of the range of enrichment activities that pupils have access

to. Adults run clubs based on sport, music, the arts and design. Every pupil has regularly attended at least of one of the school's clubs. Pupils also take part in enrichment activities alongside pupils from other schools in the trust.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to a curriculum that is appropriately broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to develop their creative skills, scientific knowledge, and understanding of the world around them through topics such as 'Light', the Greeks and the Vikings. Teachers, who each have responsibility for more than one subject, are working alongside the executive headteacher to make changes to what is taught in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. They are rightly seeking to ensure that the curriculum has more coherence in the foundation subjects. However, this work is at an early stage of development.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used to good effect. The PE leader models the enthusiasm she expects of pupils and staff, who respond admirably. Pupils have access to an excellent range of sporting activities, such as daily running, squash, badminton, basketball, speed-stacking and frisbee. They explained how much they enjoy taking part in these activities and do so with great enthusiasm and camaraderie.
- The trust has a detailed understanding of the quality of education and provides expert support when it is needed. The trust's support is having an increasing impact on the rate of improvement evident in the school. For example, the executive headteacher makes judicious use of the trust's school effectiveness officers (SEOs). Because of the SEOs' work, teachers are more knowledgeable and effective when teaching reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents, some of whom expressed frustration at the staffing instability this year, are warm in their praise of the changes that are being made. They spoke of their appreciation of the improved communication and also of the level of care the school affords to its pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Historically, leaders have found it difficult to recruit governors to the local governing body. To counter this, the trust has developed a shared model of governance. This helps the trust remain true to its commitment to sustaining a local voice in governing the school.
- The trust assumes responsibility for aspects of finance, human resources and estates. Members of the local governing body hold leaders to account for, among other things, safeguarding, outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The governing body reports its findings to the trust.
- Governors and members of the trust carry out regular visits to check the quality of education. Making use of the evidence gathered from these visits, they provide suitable challenge to the executive headteacher and her staff. The trust is rightly training newer members of the local governing body so that they are better placed to play their full part in this process.
- Governors maintain a clear oversight of how effectively leaders spend additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders invite external scrutiny of these arrangements and, where necessary, act on the findings.
- Pupils are safe and explained that they feel safe. Pupils say that adults are always there for them and that they 'do all they can to make sure we are safe'. Pupils explained that, if they were anxious or concerned, they would be confident to speak with an adult at the school.
- Leaders make sure that pupils have an age-appropriate awareness of how to stay safe in a variety of settings. Pupils are taught about being safe when using the internet and mobile devices. They confidently explained why it is important not to share personal details when online.
- Staff are well trained and know that safeguarding 'is all of our responsibility'. Adults are vigilant in fulfilling this responsibility. They are alert to the small changes in a pupil's behaviour that indicate that they may be vulnerable or at risk. Staff know the systems and processes for identifying and reporting concerns, including those relating to the criminal activities of gangs, known as 'county lines'.
- Leaders' carefully kept records demonstrate that they act appropriately when a pupil and their family need extra help and support. Where more specialist support may be needed, leaders seek and act on advice from external experts.
- Those responsible for governance ensure that leaders carry out the necessary checks on adults who work at, or are regular visitors to, the school. The school's record of these checks is well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. However, it still varies too much across subjects and key stages. Even though pupils are closing gaps in their knowledge and learning brought about by disrupted teaching in the past, they are not yet making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers make effective use of what they know about pupils' prior attainment to plan learning that is closely matched to different ability groups. However, teachers are not as adept at implementing and adapting these activities in lessons. As a result, some pupils complete work that is too easy or hard for them. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Teachers are not consistently using their subject knowledge of mathematics to move pupils on in their learning in a timely way. This is because teachers are still developing their confidence and effectiveness in providing pupils with appropriately timed opportunities to practise their reasoning skills. Teachers do not routinely demand enough of potentially high achieving pupils.
- Evidence from lesson visits, discussions with staff and a scrutiny of pupils' books demonstrates that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is too uneven. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can

achieve and how they present their work are not consistently high enough.

- The teaching of reading is improving in both key stages. Adults follow the school's clearly organised approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils know how to decode words and sound out words that are unfamiliar to them. They do so, not only in English lessons, but also when reading for pleasure. Teachers use questions well and encourage pupils to think more deeply and demonstrate their understanding of the texts that they are studying. Inspection evidence supports parents' views that pupils develop a love of, and greater confidence in, reading.
- Because of the training that they have received, teachers are more confident and skilled in teaching writing. For example, they provide pupils with precise targets that they need to meet in each piece of work. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and they are making better progress in their writing.
- Teaching assistants play their full role in helping pupils who need additional support. Through adults' sometimes subtle, and sometimes more direct, support, pupils gain in confidence and self-discipline in their learning.
- Relationships in lessons are respectful and good humoured. Adults have created an environment in which pupils are happy to learn, have a go and make mistakes. Where teachers offer precise guidance on pupils' work, in line with the school's accepted practice, pupils make improvements to their work.
- Reflecting the focus of leaders' improvement work, the quality of teaching is better. Where practice is strongest, teachers have: high expectations; make good use of their detailed subject knowledge; provide pupils with stimulating and challenging activities; make skilful use of questioning; and move pupils on in their learning in a timely way.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults use their detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs and capabilities to ensure that their well-being is very effectively provided for. Pupils, including those in need of extra help, become more self-assured when working with their classmates and adults. Over the course of the inspection, several parents voiced their appreciation for the quality of care provided by staff.
- Through the school's improvement group, many pupils contribute to decision-making processes about how to develop the school environment. Pupils also have opportunities to assume positions of responsibility, such as school council members and lunchtime leaders. Consequently, pupils develop their knowledge of democracy and confidence in working with others. This is helping to prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and are aware of its upsetting consequences. They were adamant that little bullying takes place in their school and, if it did happen, adults would sort it out quickly and successfully.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is provided for well through the curriculum, assemblies and the enrichment programme. One pupil

aptly summarised his school friends' understanding of why it is important to learn about different faiths and cultures in saying, 'It is important so that we can respect people for who they are.'

- Leaders place particular emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles, including mental health and well-being and diet. For example, pupils enthusiastically explained the benefits of the healthy meal they were preparing in the well-attended after-school cooking club.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know and understand the rules and that they are there to protect pupils and make school an orderly and happy place.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons. They are enthusiastic learners who more often than not respond in a swift, good-natured way to adults' instructions. Pupils are cooperative and work collaboratively together. They are not afraid to have a go and make mistakes in their learning. One pupil summed up the sentiments of others in the comment, 'We know that it is ok to get things wrong as teachers help us put them right.'
- Lunch in the school hall is a sociable time. Pupils play kindly together at breaktime and lunchtime. They mix well across the age groups and with adults.
- Pupils who find it hard to make the correct choices are effectively supported and have made considerable improvements in their behaviour and social interactions.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with that found nationally. Very few pupils are persistently absent. No groups are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- In lessons where learning is not as accurately pitched to their needs and interests, some pupils' attention wavers and they become distracted.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupil numbers are very small. Therefore, the performance of each cohort cannot be reported without identifying individuals.
- Pupils did not make the individual progress they were capable of in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2 in 2018. Because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is better, pupils are making stronger progress and achieving higher standards. However, despite these improvements, some pupils, including those with the potential to be high achievers, have not fully made up gaps in their learning. Therefore, outcomes for pupils requires improvement.
- The progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 1 has not been as strong as it should have been over the past 18 months. Pupils' progress is improving quickly across this key stage. However, such are the gaps in some pupils' knowledge, they are not yet working at the standard expected for their age and ability.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening test over the past two years has been in line with that found nationally.

- Pupils in need of additional support are making similar or better progress to that of their classmates, often from very low starting points. This is because they are provided for well.
- The progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics is too patchy. This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too uneven.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children have not made the progress that they should have over the past two years. As the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving current children are making better, but not consistently good, progress. Children are increasingly well prepared for Year 1. They are making better strides in developing their reading, writing and number skills.
- The early years is enthusiastically and effectively led. The leader is fiercely ambitious for all children in her care. She knows the changes that need to be made so that children have access to a good quality of education. Making use of support from the trust, the leader is taking decisive action to bring about necessary improvements. However, much of this work is in its infancy and has not had time to have its full impact on the quality of education.
- The leader considers that 'being involved in stories is the gateway to understanding our world'. In the short time that she has been in post, she has made sure that the development of early reading and storytelling are central in children's learning. Children respond enthusiastically. They are becoming inquisitive and confident early readers. Children are given plentiful opportunities to use a range of phonics. However, adults' use of their knowledge of phonics and how to teach it is uneven.
- There have been considerable improvements made to the early years learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. Both are well organised and provide children with appropriate independent access to resources that capture their imagination and successfully develop their learning and behaviour routines.
- The leader is rightly adjusting the curriculum and choosing activities that ignite children's passion for learning. The impact of these decisions is evident in the excitement with which children explained what they have learned about mermaids and pirates. School leaders accurately judge that there remains work to be done to ensure that the curriculum across each area of learning is coherently planned and delivered.
- In keeping with the leader's expectations, teaching focuses on encouraging children's investigation and enquiry skills. Children are encouraged to ask questions of the world around them. Adults are making better use of assessment. They are watchful and take note of what children can and cannot do in their learning and play. Adults then make appropriate amendments to the activities that children undertake.
- Children follow the clearly understood learning and behaviour routines. They are considerate of their classmates' feelings, listen to each other's views and patiently take turns in learning and play. This makes for a cheerful atmosphere in which children are happy to take risks in their learning.
- Parents are warm in their praise of the changes that are taking place. They value the leader's clarity of expectation and frequency of communication. The leader has credible

plans to involve parents further in their children's learning, in particular phonics and early reading.

- Children are safe and well cared for. All statutory requirements for keeping children safe are met.

School details

Unique reference number	141228
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10084065

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	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Andrew Read
Headteacher	Emma Zeil
Telephone number	01553 810 394
Website	www.holycrossfederation.org.uk
Email address	head@runctonholme.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 to 12 October 2017

Information about this school

- When Runcton Holme Primary School was inspected in October 2017, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on one occasion. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.
- The school is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is one of two schools in the Holy Cross Federation. The executive headteacher works across both schools. There is one local governing body across both schools. Staff from each school share the responsibility for leading and managing some areas of the schools' work, such as provision for SEND.
- Both schools are part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. The local governing body reports to the trust.

- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that typically found in primary schools.
- The school educates higher proportions of pupils with SEND than the average primary school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in each classroom on more than one occasion. In total, the inspector visited 10 lessons. The executive headteacher accompanied the inspector in each of these visits. Together, the executive headteacher and inspector scrutinised the large majority of pupils' work in each key stage. The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' work with the lead teacher for English and also with the lead teacher for SEND.
- The inspector heard a group of pupils read.
- The inspector observed and spoke with pupils at playtime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with: two separate groups of pupils; the executive headteacher; all teachers and teaching assistants; the office manager; two governors; the lead teacher for SEND and one teaching assistant; the lead teacher for English; and a representative of the trust.
- The inspector also held a phone conversation with the chair of the governor body.
- The inspector scrutinised several documents. These included the school's self-evaluation document, Ofsted action plan (improvement plan), pupil premium reports, PE and sport premium reports, safeguarding records, information about pupils' attendance, achievement and behaviour, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of the findings of an external review of the school's safeguarding arrangements, governors' visits to the school and the trust's review of the school's effectiveness.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to be analysed. This inspector considered the views expressed by parents spoken with at the start of the inspection, and those of the two parents who asked to speak with the inspector over the course of the inspection.
- Parent, pupil and staff surveys were not used during this inspection. The inspector analysed the findings from the school's own surveys of pupils' and parents' opinions.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019