

Inspection of Freeman Community Primary School

Church Road, Stowupland, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4BQ

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school at Freeman Community Primary. They are safe, attend well and have positive attitudes to learning. Staff expect pupils to behave well and to look after one another. At the school's breakfast club, older pupils help younger ones with their food and show them how to clear up. Pupils are polite and show respect to each other in class. They play happily together in the playground and make sure that no one gets left out of games.

Pupils we spoke to said that bullying was rare in the school but, on the few occasions it did happen, teachers dealt with it well.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to visit local museums and the trip to a nearby castle in Year 1 to learn more about the Battle of Hastings. Pupils say that they enjoy learning. Teachers plan lessons that motivate pupils and make them think. In many subjects, however, including religious education (RE) and history, pupils do not remember much of the work they have covered. This is because teachers make very few links between each topic.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children get off to a great start in the early years. The well-thought-out curriculum is exciting and it has been carefully adjusted to build on children's interests. Children quickly gain the confidence and knowledge they need to thrive. Teachers work hard to develop children's early language skills and a love of books. Phonics is taught effectively in the early years. Teachers help pupils who have fallen behind in their early reading to catch up.

Pupils make less progress in reading at key stage 2. There are plans to ensure that there is a common understanding of what pupils need to know in every year group and to make sure that pupils have access to a range of good-quality reading books. This approach has only been taken up by two year groups, so the teaching of reading at key stage 2 is inconsistent.

Too often, curriculum plans do not show what pupils need to have learned before moving on to the next topic. For example, in history, pupils know some key facts. However, pupils do not build up a body of knowledge of historical events to connect these facts as they move through the school. As a result, they have a weak understanding of why events are important in shaping history.

Some teachers do not have the specific knowledge they need to teach all subjects well.

Where curriculum plans are clear and implemented well, teachers use these to ensure that pupils know more and remember more over time. This is the case in mathematics, where pupils are accessing the curriculum effectively. Pupils respond to well-chosen learning activities and are enthusiastic about their work.

Teachers, supported by leaders, adapt plans to meet the academic needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adults are effective in helping pupils to develop their social skills and in supporting those who have mental health needs.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of different experiences to support their personal development. Clubs are popular. These activities contribute well to developing pupils' understanding of how to be fit and healthy. There is a strong sense of belonging and being a good citizen across the school.

The headteacher and his leaders know that pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Plans to improve the way that pupils learn mathematics are leading to improvement. In other subjects, including reading, the curriculum is not well mapped out and so pupils are not gaining a good enough grasp of important knowledge and concepts.

Leaders have built positive relationships with staff and are realistic about the pressures on them. Teachers spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that they feel well supported.

All parents and carers who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were supportive of the school's work.

Governors have a broad range of knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles. They support and challenge leaders but recognise that more needs to be done to develop the school's curriculum and improve standards in reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils told us they feel safe. Leaders make sure that pupils are equipped with the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe from the risks they may face. For example, pupils are taught about the dangers posed on the internet.

Leaders make sure that staff receive proper safeguarding training. Adults are alert to any sign that a pupil may be vulnerable and in need of additional help. Staff report concerns promptly.

Leaders make sure that pupils get the help that they need. Leaders seek and act on expert advice quickly when it is needed.

Governors ensure that leaders carry out the necessary checks on adults who work at or are regular visitors to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum plans are not well thought out. In too many subjects, including history, curriculum plans do not show an order to the sequencing of lessons so that pupils acquire the intended knowledge and skills well enough. Leaders need to identify the most useful content that they want pupils to know and consider how it is ordered in each subject so that pupils know more and remember more over time.
- Teachers do not have a secure knowledge of all the subjects they teach. Teachers need to be confident with the subject knowledge they are teaching. Leaders also need to monitor how well staff are providing well-sequenced learning opportunities for pupils that build on what they already know and can do.
- Leaders must ensure that teachers develop their knowledge and understanding of how to deliver the school's new reading curriculum at key stage 2.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	124612
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10088730
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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Hayter
Headteacher	Daniel Pettitt
Website	www.freeman.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2010

Information about this school

- Freeman Community Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has grown to include the full primary age range.
- The school has a breakfast club that is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years and the special educational needs coordinator. We held discussions with members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- During this inspection, we carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, history and RE. This included discussions with leaders of the subject, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers about the subject, scrutiny of pupils' class books in the subject and discussions with pupils about the subject. We also spoke to the curriculum leads for music, computing, geography and science.

- We examined a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including that relating to attendance and behaviour, the single central record and records of staff training. We spoke about safeguarding with the designated leaders of safeguarding, other school leaders and teachers.
- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. We considered 17 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents.
- We considered 66 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Jane Edwards, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

James Richards Ofsted Inspector

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