

West Row Community Primary School

Beeches Road, West Row, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 8NY

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Improvements since the previous inspection have been too slow and standards have declined. Until recently, leaders had not focused on the right areas and governors had not held them to account as well as they should.
- Many pupils carry a legacy of underachievement. High turnover of staff and weaker teaching in some year groups has left gaps in pupils' skills and in their learning.
- Although rates of progress are improving, some pupils in upper key stage 2 have not yet caught up and are working below the standards expected for their age.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Some teaching and planning lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Consequently, not enough pupils reach the higher standards.
- Progress and attainment in reading and writing are improving across the school but that in mathematics still lags behind.
- Until recently, the leadership of mathematics has not had the impact that it should in terms of driving up standards.
- The quality of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is sometimes poor. There are not enough opportunities to write about interesting things through the topic work.

The school has the following strengths

- The relatively new headteacher has accurately identified the school's strengths and areas where improvement is required.
- Stronger teaching across the school, combined with new approaches to teaching, is leading to improved rates of progress, especially for reading and writing.
- Children in the Reception classes thrive and make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Pupils are well cared for. They enjoy school and feel very safe. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and the school supports vulnerable children well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better so that achievement improves rapidly for all pupils by:
 - having high expectations of what individual pupils can do in lessons
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged to work at greater depth
 - providing high-quality teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across the school
 - providing pupils with good opportunities to write about topics that interest them.
- Provide high-quality support for the leadership of mathematics, focusing on raising pupils' standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been high staff turnover and difficulty in recruitment, which have contributed to inconsistency in the quality of teaching and leadership across the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school's current position. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Although they have taken the right actions to bring about improvement, these have not always had as much impact as they should.
- The standards that pupils reached in 2016 were below floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics). The school is identified as a coasting school.
- Many pupils in the current Year 6 are working at standards below those expected for their age. Progress in mathematics remains weaker than that in English. Standards are improving, but not quickly enough to help pupils make good progress.
- The leadership of mathematics has been inconsistent, which has hindered the implementation of plans to improve mathematics teaching. A new subject leader is in place and is new to leading mathematics. The headteacher has identified appropriate training to support the leader in fulfilling the role.
- Strong leadership of English has driven the implementation of new approaches to teaching reading and writing. A new approach to the teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 means children are well taught, and make better progress in these areas.
- The new leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved systems to identify and support the pupils. She has secured additional funding for those pupils with high needs, which is being spent wisely to secure good progress.
- The early years leader has improved provision and learning opportunities across both Reception classes. Children are taught well and make good progress.
- Staff benefit from effective training opportunities and this is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching. The local authority has provided a range of appropriate support, which has contributed to recent improvements. This includes that brokered through a nearby teaching school alliance.
- Leaders' monitoring helps teachers understand what they need to do better and to celebrate what they do well. Arrangements for the management of staff performance are rigorous.
- The use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils is now having a more positive impact on the pupils' rates of progress, targeting barriers to learning for individual pupils.
- Additional funding for school sport and physical education (PE) is spent well. Children enjoy the opportunities provided to take part in competitive sporting activities, for example, swimming galas, tag rugby, cricket and hockey. Leaders have adapted the

curriculum, purchased new equipment and trained staff, which has led to good-quality PE teaching.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides exciting opportunities to stimulate learning; for example, during the inspection Year 5 and Year 6 pupils enjoyed learning about Mayan dance as part of their topic work on Mexico. There are a range of cultural and sporting activities on offer after school to help broaden pupils' education.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities and experience democracy, for example as 'Junior Road Safety Officers' and through circle group meetings. Their understanding of what it is to be a good person in society and what life is like in modern Britain is strong.

Governance of the school

- Governors are reflective about their strengths and weaknesses. They have strengthened the effectiveness of the governing body by developing their own skills.
- The governing body commissioned a review from the local authority to help them to understand how they could work more effectively. This has enabled them to become more effective in challenging and supporting school leaders to improve pupils' progress.
- Governors now have an improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the key priorities for improvement. This means they now play a key role in setting the strategic direction for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The identification of vulnerable children is extremely rigorous. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff know how to spot early signs that pupils may be at risk and know how to act on any concerns.
- Detailed records are kept of any concerns and work with outside agencies is proactive.
- The chair of governors regularly scrutinises records and ensures that relevant checks are made on staff and others as appropriate.
- Leaders have taken appropriate actions to ensure that pupils are kept safe during the current building programme.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Historically, pupils have not made good progress in every year group. This is linked to changes in staffing, which have delayed the development of a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of the standards individual pupils can achieve in lessons and by the end of the key stage. Pupils in upper key stage 2 are still playing 'catch up' as a result. Although their rates of progress are increasing because of better teaching and effective intervention strategies, the standards for older pupils remain too low, particularly in mathematics.
- Work in books and observations show that pupils do not make the progress they should when activities lack structure or do not build appropriately on what they already know and can do. Some teachers do not plan lessons that meet the learning needs of pupils sufficiently and, as a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as positive as they should be.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers do not plan work that really challenges the most able pupils. The quality of pupils' writing and the standard of their presentation is much better in English than in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants support learning well. In particular, teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have gaps in their learning, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. The support is enabling these groups of pupils to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is improving across the school. Improvements to the approaches to teaching reading and writing are paying off. Pupils are making more rapid progress, particularly in reading. Phonics teaching is strong and, as a result, younger pupils' reading skills are improving.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show confidence when talking to adults. They are polite and courteous. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and their teachers, are warm.
- Pupils feel very safe and are well cared for. They know who to turn to for advice should they need it. Staff, pupils and parents all say that bullying is extremely rare.
- Pastoral support for pupils is excellent. Precise and timely support for vulnerable pupils helps to minimise barriers to their learning and ensures their safety and well-being. Children looked after are supported effectively, as are all children for whom there are concerns of any kind.
- Effective systems are in place to deal with any behaviour issues. There are a few pupils

who have significant issues and they are well managed and supported.

- Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They develop a good understanding of how to stay safe online. They learn about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. They enjoy the opportunities the school provides for them to participate in sporting activities after school and at lunchtime.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils often behave well, their attitudes to learning vary and depend on the quality of teaching. Pupils engage well when teachers have high expectations. Pupils lose concentration when teaching does not interest them or meet their learning needs.
- In the main, pupils conduct themselves well when moving around school and at break and lunchtime. They socialise well together outside of lessons. They are considerate and polite to each other and to adults.
- Rates of attendance are improving. The school actively encourages pupils to attend well and rewards good attendance. Persistent absence remains a problem for a few pupils but the school provides good support to parents and consequently, this is reducing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although improving, pupils in some years are not making consistently good progress over time. This is due to variability in the quality of teaching which has been exacerbated by high staff turnover.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes in the national tests at the end of key stage 2 have been variable from year to year and not enough pupils have achieved the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below national averages. The progress pupils made in both reading and mathematics was in the lowest 10% nationally. Pupils' progress in writing was average.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 have been stronger than in key stage 2, but outcomes for writing dipped in 2016.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have also been inconsistent, showing improvement in 2015 but dipping again in 2016.
- The introduction of a new approach to the teaching of phonics is showing impact. The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is now good and school information indicates that the proportion of pupils on track to meet the required standard at the end of Year 1 is much improved and likely to be in line with or above that seen nationally in 2016.
- Leaders made writing a key focus for improvement last year, and as a result, pupils' progress is better in this area. The current focus on reading and mathematics is now having an impact. School tracking information and the work in pupils' books indicate that progress is now improving in both these areas, with that in reading being strongest.

- The progress that disadvantaged pupils and most-able disadvantaged pupils have made historically has varied, like that of their peers. Leaders and governors are now using the school's pupil premium funding more precisely and this is having a more positive impact on their progress.
- The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving because of strong leadership. Interventions are carefully targeted and monitored to check they are having the right impact.
- Overall, rates of progress are increasing across the school because of better and more consistent teaching. However, the standards that many pupils are working at are still below those expected for their age, particularly in Years 4 and 6.
- Children achieve well in the early years.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to school because of good teaching in both Reception classes. Children in the current classes have made good progress from their different starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Strong leadership has brought about rapid improvement recently. The outside area has been redesigned and enhanced. The inside and outside provision ensure that children have good experiences in all areas of learning.
- The teaching of phonics in both classes is good and helps children to develop their early reading and writing skills. Children's 'squiggle books' show sustained progress in early writing, letter formation and sentence construction from the start of the year.
- At the time of the inspection, children were seen working on a range of activities which built upon a farm visit at the start of the week. These included a strong focus on writing and mathematics, for example writing sentences about their farm visit and mathematics challenges linked to the number of animals they had seen.
- Children showed sustained concentration when exploring and discussing seeds and what was required to make them grow and reflecting on the eggs they were incubating.
- Generally, children behave well, share, collaborate and show respect for each other. They are calm and focused when engaging in their chosen activities and behave well in more formal sessions. For example, they paid close attention to and were fully engaged in phonics sessions.
- Teachers and support assistants make good use of questioning to help children to deepen their understanding. This effective questioning, alongside focused observations, also helps to inform regular assessments of children's learning and helps adults to plan their next steps in learning.
- All groups of children are making good progress from their various starting points, which are often low, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders make sure that any pupil who has special educational needs and/or disabilities receives the support they need.
- Parents are positive about the provision. They appreciate the range of opportunities to be involved in their child's learning, for example through weekly letters, reading cafes,

invitations to join lessons and the key words and numbers that are sent home. Children's progress is suitably shared with parents through an online system and they can also contribute to their child's learning journey through this system. Their contributions help to give a holistic picture of their child's progress.

- Safeguarding arrangements are sound. All staff are suitably trained, including in first aid. The early years environment is secure and well maintained. There is careful supervision and leaders have ensured that arrangements for children's arrival and departure are particularly secure during the current building work programme.

School details

Unique reference number	124542
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10023378

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Greenwood
Headteacher	Mrs Karys Matthams
Telephone number	01638 715680
Website	www.westrow.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@westrow.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is increasing from having one class in each year group to two. There are two classes in the current Reception and Year 1 and it is planned that these will feed through the school.
- The school was below the floor standards in 2016. The floor standard was met in 2014 and 2015. This school is a coasting school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of staffing changes, including changes to the leadership of the school. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2015 and there is a new leader for special educational needs. There have been changes in the subject leadership of English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or

disabilities is close to that seen nationally, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Many pupils who start in the Reception Year do not complete their education at the school. A higher number of pupils than is seen nationally leave or join the school part way through the school year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups, including joint observations with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2 and scrutinised work in pupils' books in all year groups.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils about their school and spoke with them during play and lunchtimes.
- Discussions took place informally with parents when they were collecting their children from school. Inspectors took account of 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 27 free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses received to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, members of the senior leadership team, and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised. Documents included all aspects of safeguarding, the school's information about pupils' progress, school development plans and self-evaluations.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rod Warsap	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Lake	Ofsted Inspector

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