

Benhall St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane, Benhall, Saxmundham, IP17 1HE

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, achieving well from the wide range of starting points on entering the school.
- Teaching and learning are good with outstanding elements. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan exciting activities which ensure pupils enjoy their learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they feel safe in school. The very good quality care and guidance they receive makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good leadership from the headteacher and the governing body has ensured that the school continues to improve.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to effective teaching and the special arrangements the school makes for them.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of exciting additional activities including a wide range of visits, visitors and residential trips. Reading is a developing strength of the school.
- The headteacher has maintained a clear focus on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching by effectively evaluating what is going well and what needs to be improved.
- Despite the school going through a period of rapid change, newly appointed leaders are effectively developing their roles in driving improvement in their areas of responsibility.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The amount of outstanding teaching is increasing, but there is not yet enough to support exceptional progress.
- Subject leaders are not involved enough in checking the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed every teacher. She saw 10 lessons, including three joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils from different year groups read, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life. The inspector spoke to pupils at break and lunch times. The work in pupils' books was checked.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by staff and outcomes from the schools own consultations with parents as well as responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a village school that is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably. There are three classes, and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Significant numbers of pupils leave and join the school at times other than expected; in the current Year 6 fewer than half the class have attended the school since Reception.
- The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals or whose family are in the armed forces) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly above average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has been subject to reorganisation by the local authority, from a three-tier to a two-tier system. This is the first year that the school has had pupils in Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, new teachers have joined, including two newly qualified teachers one of whom started in January. Subject leader responsibilities have been re-allocated since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding to further raise achievement for all pupils by:
 - continuing to share and develop skills across the staff team
 - developing the roles of subject leaders in driving improvement

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the reception class with a range of skills that vary year on year but are generally below that typically expected for their age. Children of all abilities are very well supported and move into Year 1 with skills close to those expected for their age.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave vary from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group. The school rigorously tracks the progress pupils make and school data indicates that pupils achieve well from their different starting points, making good progress overall.
- The school has no national assessment results for Key Stage 2 because it did not have pupils in Year 6 in 2012. The current Year 6 pupils have made good, and in some cases exceptional, progress and are now on course to attain above average standards in reading and broadly average standards in writing and mathematics by the end of the year. The school's own monitoring and observations of learning in class show that progress across the school continues to improve.
- Reading is extremely well taught across the school and children in the Reception class quickly learn how to link letters and the sounds that they make. Pupils continue to use these skills when reading independently. They very quickly develop fluent reading and thoroughly enjoy it. In the Year 1 national check of pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) last year, results were significantly above average.
- Although numbers are small, data from national tests and from the school's own systems, show that those pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding, including those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, do as well as other pupils throughout the school. This is evidence of the school's success in giving all its pupils equality of opportunity to succeed.
- The school provides effective additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and also those who are found to be in danger of falling behind, by providing well targeted interventions. This additional support, led by teachers and skilled teaching assistants, provides work that is very well tailored to individual pupil needs. School data shows that these pupils make the same progress as others in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding, enabling pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to learn successfully during their time in school. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning through the effective support that they provide for pupils' social and emotional development as well as for their academic needs. Parents are very appreciative of the good quality teaching that their children receive.
- The well designed curriculum encourages the development of skills across the curriculum and homework supports pupils' learning well. This was seen in the high quality displays of pupils' work around the school.
- Teachers have become skilful in teaching pupils how to read. The teaching of the use of phonics (the letters and the sounds they make) to help pupils read unfamiliar words is given high

importance and reinforced throughout the whole school.

- There are many strengths in the teaching. In particular, the very positive relationships between staff and pupils, and the planning of activities take into consideration the different ages and abilities found within each class. All lessons include good features, including high expectations, and well-focused questioning to challenge and extend pupils' learning and skills. Good subject knowledge informs well-planned and organised lessons
- Throughout the school pupils enjoy learning. For example, in a mixed Years 4, 5 and 6 lessons, there was a buzz of excitement as pupils carried out an investigation relating to efficient sources of energy. Pupils respect their teachers and appreciate the interesting lessons that teachers prepare for them. Pupils' books are well kept and they take pride in all they do.
- Teachers share with pupils what is to be learnt and increasingly how pupils can judge successful learning for themselves. This was very evident in a mixed Years 2, 3 and 4 drama lesson, during which the pupils were acting out a journey to Mars before they settled down to write about it later in the day. A wide range of resources stimulated much discussion which in turn generated a high level of descriptive language. All abilities and ages joined in with great enthusiasm and interest and the teacher used the on-going assessments to adjust the teaching were necessary.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because there has been some variation in pupils' progress over recent years. The newly appointed teaching team are working closely with skilled additional assistants to improve the rate of pupil progress. Nevertheless, there has not been enough time to make sure that the sharing of skills across the staff team has been used to their full effect.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. This makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make in lessons. Pupils take pride in themselves and their school which is a calm and friendly place in which to learn and play. Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils arriving mid-key stage quickly settle because of the high quality care and support provided to all pupils.
 - Behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff. Teachers encourage the sharing of ideas in lessons and pupils get on with each other very well when they work in pairs or groups.
 - Pupils feel listened to because they have a wide range of ways to make their views heard. They are confident that adults listen to their ideas and respond helpfully. Pupils make every effort to do their best by working hard to support each other in their learning.
 - Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong, responding very well to the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural guidance given both in lessons and daily assemblies. They are very aware of the safety issues with the use of modern technology. They have an excellent understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and how to prevent or report it. As a result, there are very few instances of bullying, with any concerns dealt with rapidly by both adults and pupils. The school's written records confirm this.
 - Pupils enjoy going to school. They feel safe, and find their lessons and additional activities exciting. As a result, attendance is well-above average and punctuality is very good. Pupils' attendance is very closely monitored, and any unplanned absences are followed up. There have
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been no exclusions for many years. The parents who responded to Parent View agree their children are safe and happy in school.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. The headteacher has recently established a strong team of staff and governors who work well together to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. They have a determination and ambition for the school to be as good as it can be. The very strong links with parents, the church and the local community ensure that the school is an important part of the village.
 - There are robust systems for checking pupils' attainment and progress. Results are analysed rigorously, any underachievement is quickly identified and additional support then provided to ensure pupils make improved progress.
 - Self-evaluation is accurate. The school identifies appropriate areas for improvement using the information from the checks made on teachers' work and pupils' progress. Plans for future development relate closely to the need to increase pupils' progress and are robustly implemented. This is ensuring that the school is continuing to improve.
 - The effective management of the staff's performance and their training has supported improvements to teaching. This has been particularly effective in developing pupils' skills at linking sounds and letters and there are clear and effective methods for teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - Recently appointed leaders have made a positive start and are already demonstrating an understanding of how the school needs to improve. The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator, has provided good leadership to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Nevertheless, although staff are demonstrating a rapid awareness of their key responsibilities, they have not yet had sufficient time to contribute enough to school improvement work.
 - Pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in musical and sporting activities in school and often within the wider community. There is an exciting range of visits and visitors integrated into the very effective curriculum. Through assemblies and a wealth of other activities, pupils gain a reflective appreciation of their world. Learning about other faiths and countries gives pupils respect for other cultures. This ensures that pupils are provided with outstanding opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The local authority has supported the school effectively over the years. It now provides 'light touch' support for this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body contributes well to the management of the school. Governors visit the school regularly and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use information on the school's performance to compare it with schools locally and nationally. Governors have good training to ensure that they keep up to date, and that newly appointed members are supported as they grow into their role. Governors understand that salary levels are closely linked to performance including that of their headteacher. The governing body takes safeguarding seriously and ensures that requirements
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are met. Governors keep a very close check on the school's budget and ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively for the purposes intended.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124721
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	412899

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Glennon
Headteacher	Mr Chris Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	04 November 2009
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