

Runcton Holme Church of England Primary School

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

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching varies. Teachers are not always confident in checking how well pupils are doing to make sure they set work that is always at the right level.
- Standards in English and mathematics are average by the time pupils leave, but the progress they make during their time at school is uneven.
- Pupils' use of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to help them read and spell is not consistent across the school.
- Not all teachers expect the best of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work.
- Subject leaders and governors are not fully clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not always pitched at a suitable level for such young children and they have to listen for too long.

The school has the following strengths

- The whole school community is united in supporting the new headteacher in bringing about improvement in pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Lesson observations and pupils' work show elements of good teaching although these are not consistently practised throughout the school.
- Parents and pupils are positive about the recent changes and how approachable they feel the new headteacher is.
- The school allows pupils to participate in musical and sporting events to give them rich experiences and help them develop a wider view of the world.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all the teachers in seven lessons, six of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector and the headteacher looked at pupils' books and the inspector heard several pupils read.
- The inspector met with subject leaders, the Chair of Governors and spoke to pupils in small groups.
- The inspection examined the school's work including its improvement plans, its own monitoring, information on pupils' progress and attainment as well as minutes of governor meetings.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspector met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day as well as considering 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Runcton Holme is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- In January 2012 it joined with Wormegay Primary School to form the Holy Cross Federation, part of the diocese of Ely. Both schools share a headteacher and a governing body.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- Few pupils are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (which supports looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well-below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision where pupils learn away from school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has three classes, all of which have pupils of mixed ages.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- There is an independently run pre-school on the school site which did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement is consistently good by:
 - assessing pupils' work accurately so that teachers can measure the progress pupils are making and plan work at the correct level
 - teaching phonics effectively so that all pupils can read and spell unfamiliar words
 - making sure all teachers expect the best of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work
 - making sure that marking in books and advice in lessons gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Improve leadership so that:
 - staff and governors are fully equipped with the skills to assess how well the school is doing
 - performance information is used to help everyone understand how well different groups of pupils are making progress
 - teachers have a common approach to setting individual targets for pupils to improve their learning.
- Improve children's learning in the Early years Foundation Stage by:
 - making sure that all teaching is pitched at the right level for children and that the pace of lessons is brisk enough.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of

leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Achievement requires improvement because the rates at which pupils make progress varies from year to year. This means pupils are not always achieving as well as they could by the time they leave school.
- Some pupils' presentation and handwriting is untidy because teachers have not always insisted that they take pride in their work.
- The school's own assessment information and work in books shows that some pupils make very good progress and others appear to go backwards in some years.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is more consistent, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is because they are well supported by teaching assistants who rephrase questions, prompt and guide learning, but also encourage pupils to work at their own pace.
- The progress of the very few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium varies. Some are achieving well in both English and mathematics, but for others progress in both subjects is slower than expected. This is because teachers do not check how they are doing precisely enough to target the support accurately. Consequently, gaps in attainment, while closing, are not closing as quickly as they could.
- The personal and social development of the youngest children is good, they are keen to learn and they solve problems well, particularly when playing in the outside area. Some of the children do well in reading, writing and mathematics, but some of the lower-attaining children are not well supported by effective teaching.
- Pupils are interested in reading and talk keenly about books they have chosen. However, some pupils, particularly the older ones, do not always apply their phonics skills to work out how to read unfamiliar words.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies and this means progress across year groups is uneven. Teachers are not confident in their judgements when assessing pupils' work and there is no consistent approach to this. This means that work is not always planned at the right level for pupils.
- Some teachers give pupils individual targets in either mathematics or English so that they know what level they are working at and what they need to do to move to the next level, but this is not the case in all classes.
- The quality of teachers' marking is uneven in showing pupils how to improve. The effectiveness of advice given in class also varies. Some teachers help pupils to understand why they have answered correctly or misunderstood something but others do not give pupils clear guidance about what to do next.

- The teaching of phonics for reading and spelling is inconsistent across the school. Spelling errors made by pupils are not always corrected by teachers and older pupils in particular have a limited range of approaches to use when reading unfamiliar words.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teacher's explanations are sometimes too lengthy and so children lose interest. However, learning in the outside area is well thought out and children enjoy the range of equipment provided to solve problems.
- When teaching is good, pupils are well motivated, such as responding with excitement to a 'spooky' poem that inspired them to produce some effective descriptive writing.
- Some teachers make good use of information and communication technology so that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, confidently carry out independent research. For example, pupils were finding out about Captain George Vancouver, the local explorer who had a city named after him in Canada.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that Runcton Holme is a happy friendly school. Pupils say they feel safe and can talk about who they would go to in school if they felt at risk. Parents and carers affirm their confidence in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and during lessons is good. They show an enthusiasm for learning and enjoy playing with each other. They apply themselves properly when working at their own pace and away from the direct supervision of an adult.
- Behaviour is managed well by teachers. Pupils say there is no bullying in school. They have a very good understanding of what defines bullying in its various forms. They are very aware of the risks associated with the use of the internet and mobile phones and have clear solutions for dealing with any threats they may encounter.
- Pupils respect and show a genuine interest in those from different backgrounds or cultures or who have different beliefs to their own.
- Attendance is broadly average. However, attendance statistics can be affected by the small numbers in each year group. Nevertheless very few pupils have 100% attendance and the school has started to tackle this by taking a more robust approach to persistent absence, particularly of the most vulnerable pupils.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has undergone significant changes in the last year, which have slowed the pace of improvement. All senior leaders, including the headteacher, are new to their posts, and the governing body is also newly formed with a new Chair of Governors following the federation of the two schools.
- Due to lack of experience and time in post, some leaders have yet to be fully effective in their roles. They have not analysed the school's assessment information in enough detail and taken the necessary action to improve the quality of teaching where it is weakest and address the inconsistencies between classes.

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school but it is too soon to see the impact of actions to bring about sustained improvement.
- The headteacher has set teachers more challenging targets to improve their work as well as expecting teachers to lead their areas of responsibility effectively. However, they have not had sufficient training to hone their skills and expertise.
- Since its last inspection, the school has tackled both key issues for improvement. A covered area outside now offers a space for the youngest children to be outdoors in all weathers. Pupils' standards in writing are broadly average but there remains some variation in the quality of presentation.
- Pupils enjoy a range of additional activities, including a variety of clubs and take part in musical performances at a regional and national level. There are good links with the church, which give pupils a strong sense of identity while providing an inclusive community for those from different backgrounds and cultures. This all helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The new Headteacher has been active in welcoming parents into the school. Parents talk about enjoying the coffee mornings together and helping with school events. All pupils get the chance to take part in a range of activities such as going on trips including a residential one, as well as representing the school in musical events or sports. This gives all pupils equal opportunities to enjoy memorable experiences.
- The local authority has helped the new headteacher to form an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Its representative has identified support and other schools with good practice to help tackle the areas which need to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been slow to act in checking the school's work and holding it to account because they have been preoccupied with federating two schools, appointing a new headteacher and amalgamating two governing bodies into one. Governors have made limited use of the school's assessment information to measure the impact of its spending, for example of the pupil premium, or to compare how well the school is doing with all schools nationally. Governors' knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the school has not been detailed enough to have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching, how the school rewards good teaching or deals with any underperformance. They fulfil their statutory duties in setting targets for the headteacher and for safeguarding.

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	121136
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	403455

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Read
Headteacher	Georgina Earl
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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