

Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Laxfield Road, Dennington, Woodbridge, IP13 8AE

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | 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

- Teaching is not always matched to pupils' needs.
- Although pupils' work is generally marked, the marking quality varies. It does not give pupils enough information on how to improve their work and pupils are not helped to make improvements.
- Across the school, the teaching of mathematics is not of a good quality. Pupils are not doing well enough and do not have enough opportunities to solve problems.
- High quality play is not yet in place in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are not making good progress in developing early reading, writing and mathematics' skills.
- Children's starting points are not measured with sufficient rigour when they start school.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor the quality of teaching sharply enough to improve teachers' performance to consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection, the development of the management structure and the work with the partner school has had a positive impact on teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' make good progress in English, especially in their reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Governors work well together. They support the work of the school, yet also ask challenging questions.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff and pupils know one another well and are proud of their school. Pupils feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed all the teachers in the school. Each class was observed, including the specialist teaching of music. Six lessons were observed, along with additional shorter observations, many jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior teacher, a number of governors including the Chair of Governors (elect), and a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils on the school council, and informally with pupils during the inspection.
- The inspector heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- A range of school documentation was considered, including procedures for safeguarding pupils, the school improvement plan, and current data showing the progress of pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers in the playground before school. Although some parents contributed to the online Parent View survey, there were not enough contributions to show these results.

Inspection team

Teresa Kiely, 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.
- The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The role of senior teacher has been developed since September 2012.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of another local small school, Charsfield Primary School. She spends equal time in each school. There is a formal partnership in place with shared subject coordination and joint training and events. The schools have separate budgets and governing bodies.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of all teaching to good or better by:
 - ensuring that teaching is pitched at the right level to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils
 - marking pupils' work precisely so that they are aware of what they need to do to improve their learning
 - giving pupils time to act on the feedback to correct mistakes when their work has been marked, and also to extend their learning.
- Raise achievement by making sure that:
 - pupils have the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through a rigorous and systematic programme that also focuses on problem solving
 - pupils have access to high quality play in the Early Years Foundation Stage that enables them to make good and better progress in early learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing a rigorous monitoring programme that enables teachers to consistently secure good and better teaching, especially in mathematics
 - making sure that the starting points of children when they start school are rigorously measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent and this slows pupils' progress. Developments in practice are not firmly secure across all the year groups. Some older pupils wait whilst work is explained to other pupils and this means that their progress is poorer. When mathematical learning is better, teachers take time to make it meaningful and make connections with pupils' own experiences.
- Achievement varies from year to year and across the key stages. The extremely low numbers in each year group mean that comparisons are fragile. Attainment is now broadly average in English, but below average in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in English because the teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils have regular opportunities to write longer pieces of work, and this enables them to further develop their writing skills.
- Pupils' starting points are not assessed with enough rigour to enable the class teacher to build on their skills. In addition, there is not enough emphasis given, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to high quality play that enables children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematics' skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Younger readers show interest and enthusiasm for books. They select their texts carefully and talk meaningfully about what they read. They are able to sound out words when they do not know them. Older children always have a book with them. They have been taught effective reading strategies. They talk excitedly about the books they are reading.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. They are supported by effective management systems. They receive targeted in-class support that enables them to learn well as individuals, or when they are working as part of a larger group.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across classes and subjects. Pupils are sometimes given work that is too challenging. When this happens their progress slows as they wait for adult support. Although some pupils are aware of their targets, and know what they need to do next to secure good progress, this is not consistent across the school. Marking does not provide feedback on the targets.
- Teachers do not always mark pupils' work well enough to enable them to make good progress. In the better lessons, adults give one-to-one feedback to individuals, and so learning speeds up. However, this is not consistent. Some work is not marked at all. Some work, although marked with care, does not contain enough helpful advice to develop pupils' learning.
- Work in books shows that pupils do not always have time to make corrections and learn from their errors and misconceptions. This was echoed in some lessons where teachers spoke too much and did not ask targeted questions to extend pupils' learning or build on their individual needs.

- Where teaching is good, teachers are skilful at asking questions. Pupils are particularly attentive to the learning and are able to work successfully with their friends to solve problems. When teaching assistants are present, they add to the quality of the learning by asking questions to individuals that help them to learn. They also offer practical support in correcting misconceptions and enabling pupils to complete the activity.
- Mathematical teaching is not yet sharply focused on problem solving. Much of the current learning is about pupils finding the right answer. Teachers rarely check pupils' understanding to find out whether they understand what they are doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and they have positive attitudes to learning. In the best example, pupils cooperate exceptionally well together as they find the answers to problems.
- When pupils find it hard to behave, they are supported by well thought-out strategies that are successfully implemented by the class teachers. When behaviour is more challenging, the school offers a higher level of support. Teaching assistants are confident in their work, and highly supportive of individuals and groups of pupils. This further supports the good behaviour.
- Parents, staff and pupils are positive about the behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that there is little bullying in the school. The school records show that bullying is rare. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying.
- The school has taken active steps to train pupils and parents in e-safety. Pupils are aware of how to use the Internet safely and say that they feel safe in the school.
- Pupils know one another well. They are proud of their school and show respect to one another and adults.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although there are systems in place to monitor teachers' performance, these are neither rigorous nor accurate enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good and better.
- Judgments about teaching, although giving strengths and areas for development, are not linked sufficiently to national standards. This means that teachers are not always clear about how to improve their practice.
- The leadership team is aware of the strengths and areas that need development in the school. The appointment of the senior teacher, and shared subject coordination in mathematics and English across both partner schools, is now beginning to have a positive impact.
- Subject leaders, although now working more effectively, have not yet firmly identified the elements of good practice across the partner schools that can be used for further professional training.

- Although the key subject area of mathematics is now better managed, the impact of targeted support has not yet been fully measured either in teaching or achievement.
- The school tracks how well pupils are doing, and the headteacher holds teachers to account through termly pupil progress meetings. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not tracked sufficiently from their starting points to ensure good progress.
- The school successfully provides for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are carefully planned to support pupils' development, and make them think about moral choices. There are planned trips and outings locally and further afield, that enable pupils to contribute to the local community and learn from the wider environment.
- The curriculum is planned over a four-year cycle, and includes trips and outings to make learning meaningful. The recent involvement with a 'forest school' is enabling Key Stage 2 pupils to make positive links between subject areas.
- The local authority is currently supporting the school to further develop the headteacher's leadership. The teaching of mathematics and its management is also part of a targeted support plan. These initiatives are working across both the partner schools. As a result, there are recent improvements in the progress of pupils in mathematics.
- The shared partnership between the school and its partner school is now beginning to have a positive impact on teaching, achievement and leadership and management.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
- Discrimination is not tolerated. When groups of pupils are identified as not doing as well as their classmates, actions are taken to improve their performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of their responsibilities in supporting and challenging the school. A new Chair of Governors will take up post next term, and is currently shadowing the present Chair. The training and development of the governing body is up to date and informed. Governors are increasingly questioning the attainment and progress of pupils through their appropriate knowledge of school data. They are aware of the quality of teaching and what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They know how teachers' performance is being managed. They also pursue activities that further develop this knowledge. They have a good grasp of the school's budget and how money is being spent from the pupil premium fund and the impact it is having. They support the link with the partner school, and have taken part in shared governor training. This is further strengthening school leadership.

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

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| Unique reference number | 124728 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 402290 |

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

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| 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 | 38 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Simon Cartmell |
| Headteacher | Val Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01728 638206 |
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