

Earsham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road, Earsham, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2TF

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Arrangements to safeguard children are effective and staff constantly keep a watchful eye on pupils' well-being.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body led the school through a significant period of change successfully.
- The staff and the governing body are very ambitious for pupils to do well and they have an accurate picture of the things that need to improve for teaching and pupils' performance.
- Staff, parents and pupils are very positive about the school's work.
- Assessments are used well to plan teaching for the next steps for pupils' learning and to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well throughout the curriculum, which strongly reflects the school's religious character.
- Children in the early years work collaboratively and care a lot about one another.
- The headteacher is very well-respected throughout the school community for her communication and support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress are not consistently high across all subjects and year groups.
- Action plans, monitoring and evaluations of pupils' performance are not sharply focused on pupils' achievements.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are sometimes helped too much by adults.
- Teaching does not provide high-quality opportunities consistently for pupils to apply their learning.
- Not all curriculum subjects or pupils' personal development are tracked thoroughly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress by making sure that new learning is planned and taught explicitly, and that pupils apply their learning routinely in practical ways.
- Provide frequent opportunities for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to show what they know and can do without too much adult support, and to do so by working alongside their friends.
- Make sure that leaders and managers provide high-quality strategic leadership and management so that:
 - all plans, monitoring and evaluations are based firmly on measuring pupils' good progress
 - subject leaders play a full part in school improvement
 - all curriculum subjects and pupils' personal development are routinely tracked and assessed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Parents are highly appreciative of the time that the headteacher gives to listen to their concerns or queries, and that she knows a lot about how well their children are doing.
- Significant changes in staffing at all levels of responsibility, governance, the curriculum and assessment have been managed well since the previous inspection. The headteacher has, quite rightly, focused on making sure that pupils are not adversely affected by so many changes. As a result, although some aspects of strategic leadership have slipped, pupils continue to achieve well and confidence is high among staff and parents.
- The implementation of the new National Curriculum and new assessments has gone well. Staff have wasted no time in deciding on the approach to take, putting things in place and reflecting on how well the new systems are working.
- The headteacher's leadership of teaching means that new and inexperienced staff have hit the ground running and are very motivated to do well, as are the more-established staff. Staff's performance is managed well. There are frequent opportunities for training and visiting other schools.
- The influence of the school's religious character is evident throughout the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' preparation as citizens of modern Britain:
 - memorable educational visits and good-quality contributions from visitors mean that pupils grow to appreciate their responsibilities to the local and wider community
 - pupils have a thoughtful appreciation of people's differences and rights
 - faiths and traditions other than Christianity are taught systematically and pupils remember some details but lack first-hand experiences of different religions and traditions.
- The pupil premium is used appropriately and makes a positive difference to pupils' well-being and achievement. For example, funding is used to support eligible pupils in the nurture class and for small-group work, including those in the early years.
- The use of the sports grant is not sufficiently monitored or evaluated to establish the difference that the funding makes to pupils' physical well-being.
- Although the headteacher and the governing body sensibly seek external checks on their work, the content of some of the reports that they receive is not challenging or accurate enough. The governing body has been over-reliant on these reports and consequently has an over-optimistic view of the quality of the school's work.
- Pupils' progress is not always explicitly or formally acknowledged in leaders' and managers' strategic work. As a result, it is not easy to see what are the most important whole-school priorities. For example:
 - observations of teaching carried out jointly with colleagues from other schools is helpful in questioning the quality of teaching but the subsequent notes made by the headteacher often focus on what teachers do rather than on what the pupils achieve
 - action plans and evaluations focus too much on actions taken or on the achievements of individual pupils and not enough on the strategic overview of the quality of pupils' outcomes and provision
 - although assessment information is used well to identify individual pupils who fall behind and to provide extra support, the information is not pulled together to identify the whole-school picture of performance of subjects, classes or groups
 - the report on the use of the pupil premium funding shows the difference that the funding makes to pupils' performance but the report on the use of the sports premium funding does not.
- Leadership of literacy and mathematics is developing and leaders of these subjects need more support to make sure that they focus smartly on the most important things that need to improve.
- Not all National Curriculum subjects are tracked as frequently or thoroughly as reading, writing and mathematics. Personal development is not tracked formally other than for children in the early years.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are frequent and welcome visitors to the school. They monitor the actions listed in the action plan systematically and collect a sufficient and relevant range of first-hand information.
 - Weaknesses in the school action plan mean that the focus on pupils' performance is not always prioritised in governors' monitoring.

- The minutes of meetings are a good record of governors' appropriate levels of challenge and knowledge.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Relationships between staff and pupils are good and create a supportive and productive learning environment.
- Lessons start promptly and purposefully.
- Pupils are keen to learn, take their work very seriously and are very proud of their work.
- Pupils of all ages are confident learners and take responsibility for their own learning. They know that it is okay to make mistakes. They answer questions readily, and ask for clarification when they don't understand.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in helping pupils develop efficient strategies for reading and spelling. Pupils like to read aloud across a range of subjects during the week. Reading records often provide parents with a good understanding of how well their child is reading and how to help them at home.
- When pupils set out work in books, the work is often a good record of what they have learned and how they have worked things out for themselves.
- When pupils have to work through lists of examples or instructions, particularly if this means working through a worksheet or an activity that has no apparent practical application, it is not clear what the new learning is or the purpose of the activity. Similarly, teachers' plans are not always clear about what will be taught and what will be practised.
- Sometimes the support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs stops them from focusing on what the teacher is saying or from showing what they can do without intensive guidance. As a result, it is not clear what they can do by themselves or how confident and resilient they are.
- Teachers check pupils' work according to the marking policy but the purpose of the marking is not always clear to pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The curriculum, daily assemblies and good role modelling from staff contribute well to pupils' respectfulness and sense of responsibility, for example:
 - pupils are very clear about how to stay safe on the internet, when crossing the road and when playing on the playground, and that staying safe includes taking decisive action against bullying
 - pupils know that bullying is wrong and that bullies need help too
 - pupils understand prejudice-based bullying, the forms it can take and that people are picked on because of jealousy or because they are different in some way
 - pupils know that children grow up in different types of families and that everybody is equal
 - the promotion of values for life is a key part of the school's ethos and the values are well-understood.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- When referrals have to be made to the appropriate authorities for child protection, staff act quickly and thoroughly.
- Staff are very sensitive to pupils' emotional well-being and have effective strategies to build confidence and to keep a check on how well they are doing.
- The safeguarding policy is about to be reviewed. Currently it does not reflect the most up-to-date government guidance but staff are aware of the new documents and are appropriately trained for child protection.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Lessons and playtimes proceed in a relaxed and respectful manner.
- Pupils look out for one another and are quick to help those who need it.

- Occasionally, when work is not stimulating, there is low-level disruption and concentration wanders.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Most pupils make at least the progress expected for their age across a range of subjects.
- Attainment is at least in-line with national averages in most subjects, although the proportions reaching the higher levels are sometimes low.
- There are no large gaps in the progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.
- Although making good progress from their individual starting points, pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 do not attain as highly as those in other year groups. This was true also for pupils in Year 6 during the last academic year. This is because of some previous weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum. Pupils are now moving through the school in a stronger position.
- For the past two years, pupils reaching the end of Year 6 achieved significantly below the national average for grammar, punctuation and spelling. A programme is in place to remedy this.
- Pupils transfer to the high schools successfully because, although many are often worried about the change, pupils are well prepared socially and emotionally. Parents are very appreciative of this.

Early years provision

is good

- From average starting points, children often exceed age-related goals by the end of the Reception Year.
- Careful planning, based on good quality, daily assessments and centred around children's interests mean that:
 - when they choose their own learning, children stick at the activities for extended periods because they know what the activity entails and they are interested in what is on offer
 - when learning is led by the teacher, children persevere and are keen to show what they know and can do.
- There is a calm, warm atmosphere, where children are taught to respect and care for one another, for example:
 - they know that sometimes they get things wrong
 - they work well with one another
 - they know where everything is and are confident to adapt activities to suit their interests
 - they do most things for themselves confidently.
- Led by the headteacher, the curriculum and teaching has changed significantly since the previous inspection and now ensures that children make quick gains in their achievements. As a result, pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 were well-prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents feel involved and well-informed.

School details

Unique reference number	121114
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10005543

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Sue Cramp
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Armstrong
Telephone number	01986 892557
Website	www.earsham.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@earsham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 June 2011

Information about this school

- In September 2012, the school changed from a first school to a primary school.
- There is a class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a Key Stage 1 class and two classes for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- A nurture class supports pupils across the school each afternoon.
- The proportion of pupils identified by the school as being disabled or having a special educational need is higher than the national average.
- Approximately 20% of pupils are known to be entitled to the pupil premium, which is below the national average. (Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- At the time of the previous inspection, the current headteacher was the acting headteacher.
- All teachers are new since the previous inspection and there are new governors.
- Pupils' performance meets the current government floor standard, which sets a minimum standard that pupils should achieve by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Norfolk Better to Best programme, which supports school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection started as a short inspection and converted to a full inspection so that the inspector could gather more evidence about the quality of the school's work. The school was notified of the inspection on the afternoon before the inspection started.
- The inspector observed lessons with the headteacher or the senior teacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher, the leader of Key Stage 2, the Chair of the Governing Body with two other governors, teachers and pupils.
- There was a telephone discussion with a representative from Norfolk local authority.
- The inspector spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspector scrutinised documents regarding:
 - pupils' achievements
 - the monitoring of teaching
 - the curriculum
 - the school's self-evaluation and action plan
 - the governing body's questionnaire to parents in November 2015
 - safeguarding arrangements and the single central record of checks for staff's suitability to work with children
 - reports from external partners
 - documents on the governor hub.
- Forty-six parents responded to the Parent View online questionnaire and nine responses included written comments. One parent wrote to the inspector.
- Nine members of staff and 34 pupils responded to the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Heather Yaxley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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