

Fressingfield CofE VC Primary School

School Lane, Fressingfield, Eye IP21 5RU

Inspection dates	29–30 June 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher have been effective in improving the school since the previous inspection. They have been well supported by the governors and staff. They have all been committed and effective in improving teaching, learning and achievement.
- Governors regularly and thoroughly review the work of leaders and check pupils' progress. They use this information to challenge school leaders to secure the best outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders provide a high-quality curriculum. It is enriched by exciting visits, and focused days and weeks that bring alive subjects like science, art, history, geography and PSHE.
- Pupils practise and improve their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills in a range of subjects.
- Actions taken since the previous inspection have improved the early years. Children make good progress, often from starting points that are lower than typical for their age. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, are punctual and attend regularly. Attendance was in line with national averages in 2015, and has risen even higher this year.
- Pupils' positive 'can do' learning attitudes are a major strength. Learning time is used productively and fully by all.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very strong. Pupils are always courteous and respectful and this means they listen and respond well to teachers' explanations and guidance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While the progress of the most able pupils has improved since the last inspection, occasionally teachers do not plan work that is sufficiently challenging to make sure they always move on rapidly in their learning.
- Middle leaders are not always sharp enough in their use of the new assessment processes when making judgements on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils in some of the curriculum subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by providing more regular activities which enthuse and challenge the most able pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Sharpen and improve the work of some middle leaders in their analyses of teaching, learning and assessment in their respective curriculum subject areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher and governors, has been committed to raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve since the previous inspection. Leaders have successfully improved all aspects of the school's work, particularly in the quality of teaching, the accuracy of teachers' assessment and planning, and in pupils' progress across the school.
- The headteacher and governors have secured better educational outcomes for pupils despite a high staff turnover. They correctly identified the need to increase leadership responsibility to ensure they influence improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and outcomes for pupils, throughout the curriculum. They have procured high-quality leadership and staffing. Currently, English and mathematics are led effectively and this is evident in the improved achievement across the whole school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Other subject leaders are not yet using the school's monitoring and assessment systems fully and precisely enough to ensure that a difference is made to pupil outcomes in other curriculum areas such as history, geography, music and art.
- Leaders welcome external 'critical' review so that they can continue to improve the school. The local authority provides effective challenge to leaders. Its evaluation of the school's work is accurate and the areas recommended for improvement are acted on effectively.
- The headteacher has also greatly valued the support of a link headteacher from the North Suffolk and South Norfolk Teaching Alliance. The agenda for this work has been directed by the school to best address the priorities they are focusing on. It has been particularly helpful in verifying judgements about the quality of the school's work, and enabling the school to learn from best practice.
- This provision, along with support from other local primary school leaders, has also provided an external check on the accuracy of the pupil assessment procedures that the school has developed.
- Rigorous and secure arrangements for managing teachers' performance are in place. Teachers have appropriately challenging targets and are clear about how they will be held to account for pupils' progress. Teachers are well supported within the school. They receive appropriate professional development opportunities and, where needed, are mentored effectively to carry out their roles successfully. There is a common sense of teamwork, felt by staff and governors. Teachers welcome the support and targeted training they receive and are keen to improve their practice to benefit the pupils.
- There has been a focus on improving the quality of marking and feedback. This has led to a marked improvement in the consistent application of the school's reviewed marking and feedback policy.
- A culture of trust, care and respect permeates throughout the school. This contributes to the development of pupils' good behaviour and personal qualities, and to their admirable spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The broad curriculum, exciting visits out of school, the interesting topics pupils study and the range of fund-raising work that they undertake promote these positive aspects further.
- The school's Christian ethos, along with the content of the curriculum, ensures pupils are well prepared for life beyond school and that they embrace the values at the heart of British society. The election of school councillors and class 'ambassadors' enhances pupils' understanding of values such as community, democracy, respect for others' views and the rule of law.
- Leaders make good use of the additional government funding available. Well-thought-out and carefully planned use of the pupil premium funding for the small number of disadvantaged pupils has led to good improvement in these pupils' progress over time.
- The school sport funding is used well. The use of a specialist sports apprentice has increased the range of activities available to pupils, while also developing teachers' skills in physical education. Pupils have access to more structured physical activities and a greater range of sports and competitive fixtures. Together with more staff training in how to plan effective learning opportunities, pupils' awareness of and participation in sport and fitness have been raised. Pupils thrive on the activities available, participating fully in them and achieving well.
- Parents are supportive of the school and express every confidence in the leadership and the staff. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment: 'Fressingfield is a great school with an individual child-focused approach encompassing high pastoral care. We are impressed with the strong CofE values it places emphasis on as well as teaching our children to respect and value others.' Another parent reported that: 'the school strikes an excellent balance between challenging children academically and looking after their pastoral needs. The school has developed brilliantly over the past few years ... home/school communication has also improved considerably.'

■ The governance of the school

- Governance has been reviewed and strengthened since the previous inspection and is now effective. New governors have added strength to the expertise and efficiency of the governing body. A precise strategic plan is in place that focuses on the areas that the school needs to improve. Governors are using this well to ensure that their work is targeting the aspects that will make a difference to the outcomes for pupils.
 - Governors visit the school regularly, complete focused learning walks, spend time in classrooms, and talk to staff and pupils. This gives them the knowledge, along with a secure understanding of the school's performance, to challenge leaders and hold them to account.
 - Governors are aware of how the primary sport funding and the pupil premium funding are used and ensure they are targeted well enough to meet the specific needs of pupils. They have a good understanding of the difference this funding has made to pupils' achievement.
 - The governors have been successful in addressing previous concerns with the budget. They have rightly used their personal skills-set to deploy governors with financial expertise to work closely with the school. Shrewd and sensible planning has resulted in the school being in a much more viable position than before.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The rigorous and diligent work of the office administrator in keeping records and ensuring the safer recruitment of staff to the school, is exemplary. Staff and governors are well trained in all aspects of child protection. They have a good understanding of risks to pupils' safety and are vigilant in reporting concerns of any kind. Recruitment procedures for staff are thorough, as are risk assessments for in-school activities and the many visits pupils make out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Previous weaknesses in teaching, identified at the last inspection, have been managed well. Now teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are much higher. Training, both in-house and from North Suffolk and South Norfolk Teaching Alliance, alongside visits to good schools and the sharing of high-quality practice in school, has contributed to these higher expectations and to the improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They want to do well and work hard. As a result, pupils take risks with their learning, try things out for themselves and express their opinions. They know their views and efforts are valued and are confident that if they do not understand something, teachers will always take the time to explain and give further support. Exemplary relationships between adults and pupils contribute to all pupils wanting to do the best they can.
- Effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in the early years and key stage 1 enables pupils to secure the key skills they need to read and write purposefully from an early age. Older pupils consolidate their comprehension skills during daily guided-reading sessions. Pupils' books show that this is leading to the pupils being able to access more complex reading skills and being able to make informed inferences from texts.
- The teaching of writing is now more effective and is supporting pupils to improve their application of spelling, punctuation and grammar, leading to better sentence construction. Teachers' feedback shows that these aspects are non-negotiable and are expectations of all pupils when they write. Pupils in all classes have regular opportunities for extended writing in English and across other subject areas. This gives them the chance to rehearse their skills independently. As a result, achievement for all pupils in writing is improving, and they are making good progress.
- The school has focused on mental mathematics and on pupils being able to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to explain their reasoning. There is a coherent approach to using calculations, and pupils are able to use jottings effectively to show their thinking. This was seen in a Year 1 class when pupils were investigating fact families using number bonds. Pupils were able to accurately explain the inverse operation. Pupils' books provide clear evidence that pupils have regular opportunities to solve mathematical problems applying their learning in real-life contexts and investigations.
- The teaching of the most able pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Across the school, teachers provide them with activities that frequently challenge their thinking and ensure they are taking more responsibility for their learning. For example, levels of challenge in activities are posed in all lessons so that pupils have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and use the skills they have learned. However, in some cases, teachers do not adapt activities sufficiently in lessons for pupils' differing needs. As a result, pupils sometimes find the work too easy, covering aspects that they are already proficient in, and not being made to think deeply. When this happens, their progress slows.

- Once pupils are recognised as at risk of falling behind, support programmes are quickly put in place. These activities are carefully targeted towards what the pupils need to do to catch up. Leaders accurately identify pupils' starting- and end-points to make sure they are making the required difference to pupils' progress. As a result, all pupils are receiving the additional support they require to ensure any gaps in their knowledge and understanding are successfully reduced.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide effective support, in particular for those pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Teaching assistants access high-quality training from leaders and have a secure knowledge of the specific needs of the pupils. Consequently, teaching assistants are competent in adapting teachers' plans to meet the specific identified needs of pupils. As a result of this bespoke provision, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities regularly meet their individual targets. Inspection evidence shows they make good progress from their starting points.
- Homework is used effectively to reinforce the learning in the classroom. Pupils participate in homework willingly. They talked positively about it helping them to improve; as one pupil said: 'We have to do a set task, but I always do more as I enjoy it and it helps me remember what I have done in class so I can prove to the teacher I can do it.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' good spiritual and cultural development is achieved through the way the school teaches the principles of the Christian faith linked to the 'values for life' that the school promotes and encourages. A value is focused upon every half term in assemblies, and pupils consider and apply this in their day-to-day life. This is further enhanced through the older pupils planning and leading whole-school assemblies, using their knowledge of the values to share with the rest of the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. They talk about this being demonstrated through their creation of various experiences in the classroom of Islam and the journey to Mecca, a Sikh day focusing on Naam Koran, the baby naming ceremony, and a focused 'culture day' whereby pupils learn about South American dance. The high-quality support given by the school chaplain to help guide pupils through what are sometimes difficult family circumstances is caring and discreet. Pupils are confident to question, discuss and live in a multi-faith society with respect for the various backgrounds and cultures in modern Britain.
- All pupils are encouraged to take an active role in school life. Older pupils support younger pupils at break and lunchtimes. Pupils are developing their skills in taking on responsibility and accountability that contribute towards them being well prepared for adult life. They run the school library and lead a school nutrition action group ('SNAG') that promotes making the right choices for healthy living. They also take good care for and look after the school's pet guinea pigs.
- Parents report in the school's own recent survey that they know how to keep their children safe online and when using any form of mobile technology. This is confirmed by pupils of all ages who say they are confident that they personally know how to stay safe online. The school's increased work, following the previous inspection, delivering e-safety training, and the new interactive internet learning site, has been effective in ensuring this is the case.
- Attendance in 2015 was at the same level as the national average and has since improved even more. There are systems in place to ensure that any absences are quickly followed up and, where appropriate, support is provided or action is taken to make sure pupils attend school regularly. Pupils are very punctual to school. This guarantees that pupils do not miss the beginning of the school day, giving them the best possible start for their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They work very well together and are kind and considerate towards pupils of their own age group as well as towards younger or older pupils. They listen to each other and are very patient when someone is slower to explain. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 class pupils waited tolerantly and listened intently to others trying hard to detail their thought process for a business idea. They costed their plan, and everyone supported them by giving prompts when something had been forgotten.
- Pupils are confident that staff listen to, and act on, any concerns or worries they may have. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe inside and outside of school. Thorough logs and records of behavioural incidents are kept. These build up a chronology and profile any pupils who may

require any additional support to manage their behaviour. The school's records rigorously detail the school's actions to support pupils, and any completed follow-ups. As a result, pupils feel safe and are well cared for.

- The school's behaviour system works effectively. All pupils understand how the behaviour 'rocket' works and what the rewards and consequences are for behaviour. Pupils consider that the school's systems are fair and that they get the opportunity to 'tell their side of the story' on the rare occasions that there are any incidents.
- By the time pupils reach Year 5 and 6 they have adopted good behaviour habits. For example, when the older pupils were asked what an effective working team was their responses were 'to be able to listen', 'to work together', 'let others have a view even if you do not agree with it – listen' and 'work with someone who will help you achieve'. These behaviours give pupils life skills that prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good. Improvements in teaching are resulting in good rates of progress by pupils across all year groups. This is confirmed by the school's own regular monitoring and the precise assessment system. It is further substantiated by the good progress seen in pupils' books. All elements of the school's work have been externally validated to ensure that they are assessing in line with other schools in the region.
- Children now make good progress in the early years in relation to their starting points. Although many children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, leaders are working rigorously to close the gaps. The school's current information, along with inspection evidence, shows that already more children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of this school year.
- Achievement in phonics is good. Pupils achieve well in Year 1 as a result of effective teaching and well-planned activities that successfully engage pupils. Consequently, pupils in Year 1 consistently attain above the expected level in the national phonics screening check.
- Current progress in key stages 1 and 2 is good. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills. As a result, the vast majority of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are on track to achieve age-related expectations or above by the end of this academic year. Historically, there has been a gap between the achievements of boys in the different key stages. This gap has reduced in reading and mathematics year-on-year, and more recently in writing, so that boys are now making progress more in line with the girls in their class. In the early years, this gap has reduced so that younger pupils are better prepared for their next steps in learning.
- Attainment in writing has rapidly improved. This is because pupils are encouraged to plan and apply their learned skills. They have regular opportunities to write at length, and across different subject areas. Teachers help to widen pupils' vocabulary, enhance their accuracy in the use of grammar, and develop their confidence in sequencing their ideas using various types of sentences and well-structured paragraphs.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved at national expectations in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2015 from their various starting points. Gaps between themselves and their classmates closed rapidly. Owing to the small and varying numbers of disadvantaged pupils that attend the school each year, leaders monitor pupils' progress intensely, and provide early support for those pupils who require additional support to catch up with their peers. Current school information, work scrutinies, and evidence seen on inspection, show that the support pupils are given is individual to their needs, well planned and regularly reviewed. Consequently, pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils who have special needs or disabilities make as much progress as their classmates from their various starting points. This is because of the careful attention teachers pay to their individual needs in lessons, and the additional targeted care and support they receive when they require more guidance or help. Pupils' individual learning needs are identified quickly when they start school and the bespoke support is effective for their identified needs. The range of provision available removes the barriers to learning for many pupils. As they move through the school, this provision is reviewed and amended to meet their changing learning profiles. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities are making good progress from their individual starting points.
- The most able pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. In 2015, a larger proportion of pupils exceeded the expected levels of progress than in previous years, and current school information and evidence in books indicates this will continue. More pupils are on track to attain standards that are above those typical for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.

- Pupils feel that they are ready for the next stages in their education because the school supports them well. Thoughtful transition between key stages, visits to secondary schools, communication with parents and helpful guidance gives pupils confidence and enthusiasm for their next steps. Pupils are well prepared for the future.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Adults make effective use of assessment information to plan to meet children's interests and individual needs. As a result, the achievement of the children in early years is improving year on year. The children's 'learning journeys' encapsulate children's emerging experiences and skills well. All adults know what the children's next steps are, and appropriate learning is planned. Consequently, children in the early years make good progress.
- When the children join the school, they do so with varying starting points. Children who join the school in Reception enter with skills below those typical of their age. Leaders intervene early and ensure that appropriate support is immediately in place to help all children achieve well no matter what their starting point. Consequently, many children are working at the expected level by the time they go into Year 1.
- Current school information and inspection evidence shows that disadvantaged children achieve well in the early years. Leaders target the funding for disadvantaged children effectively to provide appropriate support to ensure that when this small number of children begin school they get off to a good start. This has led to the gap in early years between disadvantaged children and their friends closing.
- Previous weaknesses in boys' skills and the gaps between girls' and boys' achievement are now being eradicated by ensuring activities are interesting and engaging for them. This focus is leading to the closing of gaps for current pupils who are leaving Reception to go into Year 1. This was seen when a group of boys were focusing on learning their numbers, using trucks and vehicles that the boys were quite clearly very enthused about.
- More recently the Nursery and Reception have joined classes so adults and children all work together. All children know the routines well and both year groups benefit from working alongside younger and older children. This has provided the children with additional opportunities to develop reading, writing and number skills. It has also been particularly successful in enhancing pupils' personal and social skills of sharing and working well with each other.
- Children are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy the activities which take place, both indoors and outside. Teachers encourage children to explore their well-organised, stimulating and productive learning environment, and they work well with one another at all times. For example, one group of Nursery children were very keen to throw an impromptu musical performance in the 'music shed' because they had an audience, and they also shared the fun they had making magic potions in the 'mud kitchen'. When questioned, collectively, the children explained what they were putting into their potions and were letting each other speak and taking their turn politely.
- Parents are more involved with their children's learning and starting to contribute to the children's 'learning journeys'. This is leading to positive relationships between home and school that capture a complete picture of what a child is learning. For example, parents complete 'WOW vouchers' to celebrate what their child has learned at home, which are then shared with the school and celebrated as part of every child's learning journey.
- The youngest children in the school are developing a good awareness of the world around them. For example, they produced some insightful posters advising people about how to look after our planet, writing about litter, and saving energy by turning lights off and taking care of the school.
- Children's well-being and safety are a high priority for all staff. As a result, children are very happy, safe and increasingly confident and independent learners. This prepares them very well for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	124731
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10011779

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Lewis
Headteacher	Mark Taylor
Telephone number	01379 586 393
Website	www.fressingfield.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	admin@fressingfield.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school with small numbers of pupils in some year groups.
- There is a morning session Nursery class every day, and often these children join with the Reception class to create an early years unit.
- Pupils are currently taught in mixed-aged classes in key stage 2.
- Pupils who attend the school are mainly White British.
- The proportion of, and number of pupils, supported by the pupil premium is low. The pupil premium is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- A breakfast club is led by the school and provides before-school care.
- An external provider leads an after-school club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in all classes and attended a whole-school assembly. All visits to lessons were accompanied jointly with either the headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- During visits to classrooms, the inspector listened to some pupils read their work and looked at the work in their books.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons, at lunchtime while they were eating lunch, and when they were outside playing.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, acting vice-chair of governors and two other governors, the headteacher, assistant headteacher, the school's chaplain, the mathematics and English leaders, and the subject leaders for science and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The inspector met with a representative from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the school's link headteacher of the Suffolk and Norfolk Teaching Alliance.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own judgements of its strengths and weaknesses, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school records of the quality of teaching, and information about pupils' progress and attainment. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding and dealing with behaviour incidents were also reviewed.
- There were 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, that were considered, along with 37 texts from parents. The inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection as they brought their children to school.
- The inspector also took account of 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and six responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The school website was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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