

Sprites Primary Academy

Stonechat Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0SA

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils do not make sufficient progress by the time they leave the school.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and raise their achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations are often too low. The most able pupils are rarely set work that is challenging enough, so they do not make as much progress as they could. The least able pupils are not provided with appropriate tasks that will move them on quickly.
- Subject leaders do not use assessment information to strengthen provision and steer improvements in pupils' progress.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils, particularly in Year 6.
- Too many pupils do not complete their work or take a pride in it.
- Teaching does not consistently sustain pupils' attention and this causes pupils to lose interest and become noisy. Behaviour in lessons is not managed consistently well by teachers.
- Too many pupils are absent from school, or have been excluded.
- More rigorous accountability procedures have led to a period of turbulence in staffing, particularly in middle leadership. There has been insufficient time for these changes to have an impact on the quality of teaching.
- Challenge from the governing body and the REAch2 Academy Trust to improve achievement and the quality of teaching has not had a successful impact on pupils' outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, supported by the governing body and the trust, knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and is clear about how the school can improve.
- The Nursery and Reception classes are well led. Children make a good progress in early years.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and checking that they are provided with work that is suitably challenging
 - making sure that work stretches, enthuses and engages pupils
 - sharing good practice so that pupils make strong progress in all subject areas
 - ensuring that pupils complete their work and take pride in the way it is presented.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - implementing effective strategies to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make better progress
 - placing high priority on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teachers plan learning activities that challenge the most able pupils and the least able pupils
 - improving pupils' reading skills, including phonics, and their writing and numeracy skills, particularly in key stage 1.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that pupils' attendance improves, especially for those who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities
 - reducing the number of pupils who are excluded from school
 - insisting that all staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
 - the systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have an impact on pupils' outcomes
 - middle leaders analyse the performance of key groups of pupils to determine the accuracy of the information and arrange appropriate interventions to prevent pupils from falling behind
 - the curriculum is enriched and meets the needs and aspirations of pupils in every year group, particularly Year 6.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not done enough to improve provision over the past two years. Training courses that have been taken by teachers and learning support assistants have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching. There are not enough opportunities for good practice to be shared within the school. School leaders are now redressing these weaknesses.
- During this academic year, the school has undergone significant changes in senior and middle leadership. The new headteacher has quickly evaluated the school's shortcomings. Supported by the local governing body and the trust, she is implementing the appropriate systems required to run an effective school.
- Pupils' assessment information is analysed by senior leaders, and regular meetings are held with class teachers to discuss pupils' achievement. However, the information is not a true reflection of pupils' performance because it is not accurate.
- Leaders have not evaluated the use and impact of the additional funding to support disadvantaged children rigorously enough. The funds are not having a sufficient impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The school uses its curriculum to widen the range of learning opportunities for pupils and provide an international dimension. This curriculum is not as well established in Year 6, where the focus is mainly on English and mathematics. Curriculum coverage in all year groups is not secure.
- Extra-curricular provision is limited and is mainly focused on sporting activities. Pupils say that they would welcome a wider range of activities.
- The school gives high priority to sporting activities and makes good use of the additional funding for physical education and sport to benefit pupils' health and well-being. Funding is used appropriately to employ specialist coaches, to provide professional development for teachers and learning support assistants, and to purchase new sports equipment. Pupils regularly take part in competitive sports.
- The school develops pupils' moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are encouraged to sing and play musical instruments. They take part in charitable activities to support more vulnerable people in the United Kingdom and abroad. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through their learning in assemblies and during lessons.
- The spiritual development of pupils is not strong. Pupils' understanding about the major faiths in the United Kingdom is very limited.
- Leaders are improving provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but this is not having a sufficient impact on the achievement of the pupils, particularly in key stage 2. The school addresses their social, emotional and behavioural challenges more successfully. The nurture room and the 'forest garden' both have a positive impact on the behaviour and well-being of the most vulnerable pupils.
- The performance of leaders and teachers is now managed more robustly. Pay awards are linked to positive impact on improving pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching

is also checked more regularly, and where weaknesses are identified, support is provided and improvement is expected. It is recommended that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

- School leaders work hard to engage parents and carers in the life of the school and their children's learning. Parents are invited to school assemblies and 'family fun' afternoons. Close links are forged with families when further support is required for their children or when attendance becomes an issue.
- The majority of parents interviewed by inspectors and those who contacted inspectors through Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the progress that their children were making and the changes that the new headteacher has made. They were not as positive about pupils' behaviour or the effectiveness of communication systems.

Governance of the school

- Governors are dedicated and passionate. They are knowledgeable about the school. The chair and vice-chair of governors were appointed by the trust. They are highly experienced and have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and its weaknesses.
- Minutes of local governing body meetings and monitoring visits by governors demonstrate a generally high level of challenge to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. However, governors have not challenged leaders sufficiently over the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Monitoring reviews undertaken by the trust during the academic year mirror governors' priorities.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, both the local governing body and the trust have worked diligently on the strategic direction of the school. The headteacher has been provided with a high level of support and expertise.
- During this term, governors have strengthened the leadership team by appointing a new senior leader in addition to new phase leaders.
- The systems used for the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress enable governors to evaluate the performance of the school more rigorously. However, the information entered by the teachers on pupils' achievement is not consistently reliable.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures have been tightened since the appointment of the new headteacher. The single central record of checks, made when appointing new staff to work with children, is fully maintained and up to date.
- The designated safeguarding lead knows the pupils very well and is tenacious in ensuring their well-being.
- All staff and governors receive regular training in line with government guidance. This includes training on the government's 'Prevent' duty to support pupils who are vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

- The school works closely with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their parents.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Pupils understand how to keep safe on the internet. There are regular assemblies on road safety and the school takes part in the Junior Road Safety scheme run by Suffolk County Council.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 is inadequate because teachers' expectations are not high enough. They are conscientious, and willing to develop their practice, but many do not understand how to plan learning well.
- Teachers do not meet the needs of their pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, or those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The most able pupils are rarely set learning tasks that help them to deepen their understanding. This results in learning activities that are often too superficial or easy. Pupils consequently make inadequate progress.
- A significant number of teachers do not tackle gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils are not motivated and their concentration is limited.
- Teachers do not deal effectively with low-level disruption. They often do not notice when pupils are chatting too much about matters that are not part of the learning.
- Teachers, particularly in key stage 1, do not routinely pick up on poor care and presentation in pupils' books. Basic literacy errors are often overlooked. This means that spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes recur. Work is often not completed.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 does not ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of how words are formed. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well in reading.
- Where teaching is strongest in key stage 2, teachers are developing pupils' writing, numeracy and investigative skills. For example, a few teachers give pupils relevant and interesting opportunities to write at length, particularly within the wider curriculum. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve complex problems related to real-life situations. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed calculating the cost of holidays by analysing information on the cheapest flights and hotels. Pupils in Year 5 were totally absorbed in making parachutes to investigate the weight and mass of objects.
- The impact of learning support assistants varies too much. In some lessons, they work well with small groups of pupils and support them in their learning. On other occasions, learning support assistants are not deployed effectively.
- The school's new marking and feedback policy is beginning to have a positive impact but not yet securely. Pupils say that they like this new system.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The headteacher has worked hard to improve the learning environment in corridors and classrooms. Pupils do not always care for the environment as well as they should and litter is evident in a few classrooms.
- The nurture room provides a safe haven for vulnerable pupils who need additional care and support. Experienced staff are able to identify pupils' emotional and social needs and provide the support they need to engage fully in the life of the school. Parents interviewed were particularly positive about the care and support provided for vulnerable pupils.
- Outdoor learning is encouraged, particularly for vulnerable pupils, and the 'forest garden' provides a peaceful refuge.
- Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as prefects, school councillors, librarians and 'maths champions.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is too much absence and persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The headteacher has implemented a reward system as an incentive for good attendance. Attendance is monitored carefully and more rigorous procedures have been employed to follow up absenteeism. Consequently, all Year 6 pupils attended the recent external tests.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions for poor behaviour has reduced significantly this academic year but remains above average. The school works closely with outside support agencies and has developed more effective working relationships with families.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is usually calm and orderly. Pupils show respect for adults. They are polite and help visitors find their way around the school.
- Pupils are usually well behaved in lessons unless they lose interest. When this occurs, the low-level disruption caused by a minority of pupils hampers the learning of others.
- Pupils generally enjoy learning and have positive attitudes towards school. However, too many do not take sufficient pride in their work and do not complete tasks in lessons as well as they should.
- Pupils are typically friendly, polite and courteous. They gain in confidence as they progress up the school. Pupils are given regular opportunities to perform in assemblies and they do this well.
- The school has clear codes of conduct to support good behaviour. A few pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, but staff work hard to support and help these pupils. Behavioural incidents are recorded in a central log, and the sanctions that have been

applied are described in full, but there is little evaluation of their impact.

- Pupils say that bullying occurs. Physical bullying is rare but pupils are sometimes 'mean to each other'. Pupils also say that there are occasional incidents of poor behaviour during lessons, when children get upset or angry. They say that when this occurs, teachers do not always apply sanctions consistently or fairly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Too few pupils make sufficient progress in key stage 1 in reading and writing from their different starting points. The proportion of pupils making sufficient progress in mathematics is rising but continues to be low.
- Outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2017 were below the national average; too few pupils achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check.
- Current pupils do not have an adequate knowledge and understanding of phonics and many are at an early stage of learning to read. Pupils are not making sufficient progress in growing their phonic knowledge to raise their achievement significantly.
- Writing attainment in key stage 1 has been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally over the past two years. Scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed that current pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to make the progress required to meet expected standards.
- Writing in key stage 2 was generally at the expected standard in 2017, but scrutiny of pupils' books and current assessment information indicate that current progress is not as secure.
- Pupils did not make enough progress in reading in 2017 in key stage 2. The school has been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally for the past two years. Discussions with pupils revealed that they do not use the library regularly. Strategies to promote a love of reading are not applied consistently or regularly in lessons.
- Attainment in mathematics rose significantly in key stage 1 in 2017 and was above the national average. In key stage 2, attainment remained in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. The school's own assessment information suggests that the attainment of current pupils in key stage 2 has risen. A scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that progress has improved over time. The introduction of short mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson is having a positive impact on the progress of pupils in key stage 2.
- The most able pupils are not making enough progress. The proportions of pupils learning at greater depth in writing, and reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics in key stage 2, were well below national averages in 2017. Current assessment information indicates that the most able still do not make sufficient progress in most subjects and classes in key stage 2.
- Differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared with that of other pupils were too wide in 2017. The progress of current pupils varies too much. The school does not do enough to improve the progress, or prevent the underachievement, of disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slow. In key stage 2,

the gap in attainment widens between this group and their peers. In the classes observed, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were not provided with suitable learning activities, supervision or support.

- The progress of previously underachieving pupils in Year 6, in English comprehension and mathematics, has improved this year as a result of additional teaching sessions. Pupils speak highly about the progress they have made with the extra help.
- Pupils generally communicate well and with confidence. Those with speech and language difficulties, in early years and in key stage 1, have benefited from the external support and the expertise they have received.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school with a level of skill and understanding generally below that typically of children of the same age. Strong leadership, teaching and support ensure that they make good progress in Nursery and Reception.
- For the last two years, a higher than average proportion of children achieved a good level of development by the time they joined Year 1. Current assessment information indicates that this trend is continuing.
- Children do not consistently develop a good understanding of phonic sounds and have occasional misconceptions. This is because support staff lack training in supporting the learning of phonics effectively.
- The phase leader has a clear and detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She regularly evaluates the provision and has improved the resources. The outdoor and indoor environments are stimulating, vibrant and well organised.
- Safeguarding in early years is effective, as in the rest of the school. Children are kept safe and all welfare requirements are met in full.
- Children enjoy coming to school. Teachers plan learning activities jointly and work as a team. Teachers and support staff make regular assessments of pupils and track their progress well. These assessments are used to plan next steps in learning for each child.
- Work in books is mainly supported by adults. Learning activities are well structured. Teachers work hard and effectively to meet the needs of the most able children. The support provided by an on-site part-time speech and language therapist is valued by parents and has had a very positive impact on children who have communication difficulties.
- Effective care, guidance and support ensure that children develop good attitudes to learning. Children behave well. They listen carefully and follow instructions. Relationships between children and adults are warm and supportive.
- Children are attentive and can maintain their concentration. They work well cooperatively. For example, they shared cycles readily in the outdoor area and acted out family roles when playing with the dolls' house in the Nursery.
- Children develop resilience and perseverance. For example, children worked hard to complete their measuring activities in the mud kitchen, concentrated hard to create

fruit characters, and worked meticulously to decorate intricate glitter balls.

- Good relationships with parents are established through home visits and specific events to share information. Parents are also invited to information-sharing sessions on themes such as phonics, and these are usually well attended. Children are generally prepared well for their transition to Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141985
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10046611

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

Type of school	Nursery and primary school
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	431
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Colin Kreidewolf
Headteacher	Tania Devereux
Telephone number	01473 685040
Website	www.spritesprimary.org.uk
Email address	sprites.primary@sprites.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in 2015 under the REAch2 Academy Trust. This was the first section 5 inspection for the school since it opened as an academy.
- The trust operates in four regions and the school is in the East Anglia region. The trust delegates authority of governance to the executive team, regional board and the local governing body.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A small nursery is attached to the school's early years unit and has this was also inspected.
- A new headteacher joined the school in January 2018.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those with an education, health and care plan, is above average.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in every class in the school at least once. Some lessons were jointly observed with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, two delegates from the REAch2 Academy Trust, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils and governors.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information about pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding records. The monitoring records of the local governing body and the trust were also considered.
- Pupils' written work was scrutinised across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents in the playground. Account was taken of the 27 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

Jane Ladner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Pedlow	Ofsted Inspector

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