

Weeting Church of England Primary School

Main Road, Weeting, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0QQ

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The pace of improvement since the previous inspection has been too slow. This is because of turbulence in leadership.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies. At times, pupils make strong progress. However, this is not consistent across the whole school.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often not high enough. This means not enough pupils make good progress over time, especially the most able pupils.
- Some parents have lost faith in the school because of the instability in leadership.
- Parents also have concerns that bullying and poor behaviour are not dealt with well enough. However, inspection evidence does not confirm these views.
- Leaders are now taking the correct action to bring about improvement. However, it is too early for the full impact to be seen, partly because the roles of middle leaders are underdeveloped.

The school has the following strengths

- The consultant headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has set about improving the school with great determination.
- The early years provision is good. Children thrive in the Reception class because they receive high-quality teaching in a nurturing environment.
- The trust has taken swift and decisive action to halt the decline in standards.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. They are friendly, polite and get along with each other.
- Phonics is taught well in key stage 1. Pupils develop a secure understanding and can apply their knowledge in their reading and writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - bringing the practice of all teachers up to that of the best
 - continuing to develop middle leaders so they drive improvement in their areas of responsibility and are able to check accurately the impact of their action on pupils' progress
 - further developing communication with parents to help them understand the policies and practices of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations as to what pupils should be achieving, especially the most able
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan sequences of lessons so pupils can build upon their prior knowledge.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils leave the school with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be well prepared for secondary school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been considerable instability in the leadership of the school. Parents, quite rightly, have concerns that the school has not been well led and managed in the past. Leadership of the school is now stable.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have taken swift and decisive action in response to the weak outcomes in the past. The impact of these changes has been less than leaders would have liked due to high levels of unforeseen turbulence in leadership between September 2018 and February 2019.
- The new consultant headteacher has reinvigorated the whole school community. She has quickly gained an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Working alongside the school improvement director from the trust, she is now in a position to quicken the pace of improvement. Leaders are taking the right actions, but it is too early to fully see the positive difference these actions are making.
- Changes to the teaching of mathematics and writing across the school are resulting in improvement. The newly introduced mathematics curriculum makes sure that pupils have more opportunities to develop and refine their reasoning skills. Improvements in the teaching of writing means that lessons are well sequenced to help pupils build on their prior knowledge. Although these actions have resulted in stronger progress in some year groups, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a secure understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are identified early, and clear plans are in place to provide well-tailored support, especially for pupils with social and emotional needs. As a result, most pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Leaders spend extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. This is because they have correctly identified the barriers faced by these pupils and have in place strategies to overcome them.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Pupils have a good understanding of different religions, along with opportunities to take part in musical and sporting events and competitions.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils speak positively about the range of subjects they learn. Regular visitors to the school, along with school trips, enhance the curriculum further, for example trips to the National Gallery in London, an Anglo-Saxon museum and Duxford air museum. Pupils fund many of these by organising bake sales to raise money.
- The trust has provided well-tailored support for the school during the period of leadership instability.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors had not challenged school leaders well enough.
- This is now not the case. The new – and highly experienced – chair of the governing body has brought about swift improvement in governance. Governors are now much better placed to continue to bring about improvement across the school. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and now provide greater challenge to leaders.
- Governors are reflective and constantly seeking to improve. The recently undertaken skills audit has identified strengths, along with gaps in knowledge, within the governing body. Where there are gaps, the governing body actively recruits new governors with these missing skills.
- Governors now make regular visits to the school to monitor their areas of responsibility. They undertake monitoring days, which all governors attend.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of vigilance. Adults are trained to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Adults record any concerns they have in great detail and report them to the designated safeguarding lead without delay.
- School leaders are meticulous in carrying out checks when recruiting new staff. They keep detailed records of these checks and fulfil all statutory duties.
- The designated safeguarding leads are well trained and carry out their roles meticulously. They know how to get help for pupils when they need it.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they are taught how to stay safe through regular personal, social and health education lessons, along with visits from police officers and the fire service.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is inconsistent. In some classes, pupils make strong progress. However, aspects of some teaching are less effective because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. This means that work is not challenging enough, especially for most-able pupils, and they do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to plan activities that ensure that new learning builds upon what pupils already know. For example, following a sequence of lessons on fractions, the inspector asked a pupil what she knew about fractions, to which she replied, 'not much'. This was typical of many of the children in this class because the teacher had failed to recognise that there were too many pupils who had not understood previous learning.

- Where teaching is stronger, assessment information is used to make sure sequences of lessons are well planned. For example, pupils produce high-quality writing in Year 6 because each lesson helps pupils to build upon what they already know and can do.
- Additional adults are used well to support pupils with SEND. They ask questions to promote independence in pupils but are also there to provide support when needed. This means that pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Pupils receive high-quality phonics teaching in key stage 1. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and they use assessment well to make sure activities match the needs of pupils. Pupils are given many opportunities to apply their newly gained phonetic knowledge in their own writing. The teaching of early reading is good.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the wider curriculum. Work in pupils' books shows that, over time, some teachers' expectations of pupils are too low, especially the most able pupils.
- The consultant headteacher has tackled weaker teaching since she arrived at the school. It is clear from pupils' work that the actions she has taken is making a positive difference and, although still not good, where teaching is weaker it is improving swiftly.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They try hard in lessons and apply themselves to the task in hand.
- Specialist teachers are used well to teach subjects such as French, music and physical education (PE). Their specialist subject knowledge ensures that pupils do well in these subjects. For example, in a PE lesson the coach was able to adapt an activity quickly to make it harder for pupils who were clearly very able in throwing and receiving a ball. This meant they were challenged to refine their skills further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Some parents expressed concern that bullying is not dealt with well enough. Evidence gathered during the inspection does not support this view.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. If it does happen, one Year 6 pupil told the inspector, 'Adults will quickly sort it out.' He went on to say: 'The school approaches bullying in a sensible way – they sort it out with a new programme. Most times it's not bullying, it's friends falling out with each other.'
- Pupils are clear on the different types of bullying and what to do should it happen to them. They are taught how to stay safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is given a high priority. Pupils who need additional support to manage their behaviour are extremely well supported through the school's specialist provision.

- The school council provides pupils with many opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. The voices of all pupils are heard in decision-making. Not only does this teach pupils about democracy, it ensures that changes can be made to benefit all pupils. For example, the school council recently worked in partnership with the Friends of Weeting to refurbish the school library. This is now a vibrant and pleasant area for pupils to work in.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly environment, where pupils are friendly and polite. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils behave well at lunchtime. Pupils of all ages play together and there is a friendly atmosphere in the playground. Adults regularly interact with pupils.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, there are still a small number who miss too much school. As a result of new systems introduced by the consultant headteacher, attendance of these pupils is improving.
- In a small number of lessons where teaching is not well matched to the needs of some pupils, they lose concentration. This results in low-level disturbance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the past few years, the progress made by pupils in key stage 2 has not been good enough. Not enough pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with the knowledge, skills and understanding they should have.
- Progress is now stronger for many current pupils, particularly those in Years 1, 2 and 6. However, because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in other year groups is variable.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make strong progress in reading. This is because phonics is well taught. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have risen sharply over the past two years and were above the national average in 2018.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make good progress in most classes. This is because the needs of these pupils are clearly identified, and they are provided with well-planned appropriate activities. However, where teaching is weaker these groups of pupils do not make enough progress.
- Evidence seen in a range of books shows that pupils across the school make inconsistent progress across the wider curriculum. Again, where teaching is strong pupils develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding in subjects such as history and geography. However, this is not consistent and too few pupils make strong progress in these subjects.
- Standards in art and French, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, are particularly strong. Pupils' spoken and written French in Year 6 is of a high standard.

Early years provision

Good

- Children typically enter the early years with knowledge and skills slightly below those typically expected for children of their age. During their time in the Reception class, they make strong progress and are well prepared for their transition to Year 1. This is because teaching in Reception is consistently good.
- Adults know the needs of each individual child extremely well. Assessment is accurate and this means adults plan exciting and interesting activities to help children develop further and thrive. Adults have extremely high expectations of the children and evidence seen during the inspection shows that children rise to meet them.
- The early years leader is highly experienced and brings great knowledge to her role. She has a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is constantly striving to improve further.
- Adults are highly effective at promoting children's language development. Children communicate confidently with adults, visitors and each other. For example, one pupil talked with great clarity about the 'volcano' he made in the sand pit. He told the inspector, 'If it was a real volcano there would be boiling hot lava running down the side by now.'
- Children behave extremely well. They share resources with one another and take great care to keep their classroom and the highly stimulating outdoor area safe and tidy.
- Parental engagement has improved this year. There is now a well-planned transition programme when children start school. One parent told the inspector, 'The early years team are absolutely amazing, and I couldn't ask for a better academic start for my youngest daughter.'
- Children with SEND, along with those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress. This is because their needs are well met by adults.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. Children can apply their growing knowledge both when working with an adult and when working independently.

School details

Unique reference number	140681
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10088681

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jacqueline McCamphill
Headteacher	Rebecca Ireland-Curtis (consultant headteacher)
Telephone number	01842 810587
Website	www.trinitypartnership.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	head@weeting.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-academy Trust and also works in collaboration with two local schools as the Trinity Partnership. The board of trustees has overall responsibility for the school. They delegate responsibilities to the local governing body.
- The school is smaller than average, and pupils are taught in five classes. Some of these classes are mixed-age classes.
- There are currently no teachers in the school who worked in the school at the time of previous inspection.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds
- A new executive headteacher was appointed in September 2018. He left the school in the spring term 2019 and was replaced by the executive deputy headteacher as an

interim measure. The executive deputy headteacher was not present during the inspection.

- The school is currently led by an experienced consultant headteacher, working alongside the school improvement director of the trust and he will take up the substantive executive headteacher post from September 2019.
- The school's previous section 48 inspection of religious education was last carried out in July 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes to observe the quality of teaching alongside the headteacher or the school improvement director.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders; leaders of mathematics, English, SEND and early years; the school council; three different groups of pupils and three members of the governing body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspector also heard pupils read.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including safeguarding and child protection procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning and records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. He also scrutinised records of the governing body's work.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books in lessons and more formally alongside leaders. He considered 24 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, along with 16 free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to a number of parents in the playground.
- The inspector considered five responses from the staff questionnaire. The pupil questionnaire was not used on this inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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