

William Marshall Church of England Primary School, Welney

Main Street, Welney, Wisbech, PE14 9RB

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There are a small number of pupils who are not making the progress expected of them. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is lower than that found in other schools.
- Work is not always matched closely enough to the stage that pupils have reached. Sometimes the work set for potentially higher-attaining pupils is not hard enough.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to improve their work. Some pupils rely too much on direct support from adults.
- There are times when learning is interrupted by inappropriate behaviour.
- Some parents are unhappy with the quality of education provided for their children.
- The work of the governing body does not always focus closely enough on measuring the effect of initiatives designed to bring about improvements in pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of pupils making expected progress and those exceeding expected progress is higher than in previous years.
- Pupils find lessons enjoyable and the development of their speaking and listening skills is good.
- Behaviour is improving. The majority of pupils contribute well to the life of the school.
- Leaders are working effectively to bring about improvements in teaching and achievement. The governing body is having a positive impact on improvements. It is supportive, better informed, and provides much appreciated help around the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 11 lessons. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during five of the observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher and assistant headteacher, pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also spoke with parents.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed it with them. He also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspector also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) to trigger an analysis. However, the inspector considered the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views and six responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational need is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave part way through their primary education is very high.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes; one containing children from the Reception Year who are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, and another in which pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all taught together.
- The school's headteacher is shared with Upwell Primary School. In this partnership, he usually spends about one day each week at William Marshall. An assistant headteacher is based at William Marshall full time.
- There are not enough pupils on roll to make a valid judgement on whether the government's current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress are met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching enables all pupils to make at least the progress expected, and raise the proportion of pupils making more-than-expected progress, by:
 - matching the next steps in pupils' learning precisely to their abilities and to the stage of learning they have reached
 - making certain that work set for potentially higher-attaining pupils is always hard enough
 - involving pupils more in knowing what they need to do to improve their work
 - enabling pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to work without being overly reliant on direct help from adults
 - sustaining the pattern of improving behaviour so that pupils are able to learn consistently well during lessons.
- Fully embed and build on the recently introduced activities to involve parents more in the life of the school, which help them to support their children's learning.
- Ensure that when governors visit to check on the work of the school, they focus closely on the effect that initiatives to bring about improvements in pupils' progress are having so they can better hold leaders to account for pupils' performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Across the school pupils' attainment and progress have varied significantly from year to year. Attainment measures are often affected markedly by the very small numbers of pupils in each year and the high proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their primary education. For example, in 2012, of the seven pupils in Year 6 who took the national tests, five had joined midway through Key Stage 2, including two who joined during the summer of 2012.
- Analysis of the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress and the work in pupils' books show that those who start at the school tend to do better than those who join at a later time. The longer pupils stay at the school the better they do.
- Children start in the Reception Year with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding that vary considerably, but with an underlying pattern that is well below the levels typical for their age.
- Children in the Reception Year make good progress. By the time they join Year 1, their attainment is broadly average.
- From 2011 to 2012, attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics improved from below average to broadly average. This pattern of improvement is being sustained in 2013 with pupils on course to attain above-average standards in reading and broadly average standards in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy reading and standards are rising because they acquire a good knowledge of words from the sounds made by letters. Teachers and teaching assistants make a good job of teaching this important aspect of pupils' learning.
- In 2011 and 2012, standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics were well-below average. In both these years, a number of pupils failed to make expected progress. In 2013, standards have improved. While standards are still below average the proportion of pupils making or exceeding the expected rates of progress is much better than in previous years. Although small in number, pupils currently in Year 6 who joined the school in the Reception Year and who do not have special educational needs are attaining standards that are above average.
- Progress across Key Stage 2, including for the current Year 6, is close to that expected. There remains a small number of pupils who are not making expected progress. These are mainly pupils who are relatively new to the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the expected progress.
- There were not enough Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 to comment on their attainment. Across the school, eligible pupils sometimes make better progress than other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Sometimes teachers do not give sufficient consideration to ensuring the work they set is

matched closely enough to the stage and level that pupils have reached. Consequently, there are occasions when pupils find work too easy and other times when it is too hard. The work set for the potentially higher-attaining pupils is sometimes too easy. When this happens, the pace at which they progress slows down.

- Assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate. Marking is helpful. It recognises what pupils have done well and provides lots of encouragement. What pupils are expected to learn and what they have achieved are set out clearly in their books. Even so, pupils are not as aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve further as they should be. Pupils are not involved as much as they ought to be in discussing and gaining an understanding of how well they are progressing.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for lower-attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils benefit greatly from being taught in small groups, especially when the focus is on learning to read and for younger pupils building up their knowledge of letters and sounds. However, many of these pupils find it a struggle to work on their own and are overly reliant on the help they receive from adults.
- Pupils say they find lessons enjoyable, especially when teachers create opportunities for them to engage in discussions and to use the recently purchased 'netbooks' (computers). The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and their ability to use information and communication technology are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, assemblies, religious education lessons and personal and social education lessons provide well for pupils' personal development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils and staff say that behaviour has improved considerably. Occasions when lessons are interrupted by unacceptable behaviour are far fewer than in the past. This is because school leaders and staff have promoted a concerted focus on how behaviour is managed.
- Leaders have involved pupils in formulating the school's behaviour policy and in developing the 'Wow Awards' that celebrate hard work and good behaviour. Pupils value these awards. Even so, there are still occasions when learning is interrupted by the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority of pupils.
- A significant number of parents who responded to the school's survey of their views and those spoken to during the inspection are concerned that behaviour is not as good as it should be. However, these concerns were not born out by the behaviour that was seen during the inspection or by the school's records of behaviour incidents.
- The majority of pupils contribute well to many aspects of school life. They are willing to take responsibility. For example, they are proud to be part of the school's pupil council and the collective-worship team.
- Pupils are very aware of how to keep safe and understand the potential hazards posed by misuse of the internet or mobile communication devices.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying in its various forms. They say that bullying was prevalent in the past, but that this is no longer the case. Pupils are adamant that

bullying is rare, which is affirmed by the school's records. They are also confident that should bullying occur they can rely on the support of adults in reaching an amicable outcome. Pupils say that adults give them all the help they need in supporting their academic development and in listening to any personal problems they might have.

- Attendance is below average. However, with such small numbers the poor attendance of even one pupil means the level falls below average. Last year attendance fell when some pupils were cut off from the school by flooding, although parents did all they could to help their children get to school. The school keeps meticulous attendance records for each pupil and can provide telling examples of how the attendance of previously persistent absentees has improved significantly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There is a united will among school leaders, staff and the governing body to ensure that all pupils are treated equally, are not the subject of any form of discrimination and are able to learn to the best of their ability.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. The school improvement plan is clear in its priorities and identifies precisely what should be done to maintain the current pattern of improvements. Staff and governors are positive about the future and collectively subscribe to the will to provide the best for each pupil.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher regularly observe lessons to check on the quality of teaching. Arrangements for the management of staff performance are suitably linked to the required national teaching standards and reflect the priorities for improvements in pupils' progress. Continued professional development has brought improvements in teaching to the extent that there is no longer any inadequate teaching, providing a pointer towards the school's capacity to sustain improvements in the future.
- The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and makes early contact should any problems arise. However, a significant proportion of parents express negative views about aspects of the school's work. These are mainly to do with behaviour, bullying and leadership. The majority are happy with their children's progress and with the quality of teaching. Recent innovations, such as regular and attractive newsletters the opening of the new school library and reading cafés in which parents join their children in the library, are starting to win hearts and minds and are creating increasingly positive views of the school in the community, but have further to go to be fully effective.
- The range of subjects and additional activities meet pupils' learning and personal needs appropriately. Children in the Reception Year settle in quickly and get off to a good start. The mixed-age classes are structured carefully so that pupils of different ages, but of similar ability, can work together. Basic skills are taught to increasingly good effect, particularly speaking and listening and information and communication technology. The specialist skills of staff are used to good effect; for example, there is staff expertise in physical education and pupils benefit from the enthusiasm and expertise provided.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They are well informed about and show respect for people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own. Pupils greatly appreciate the available additional activities, such as the gardening club, educational visits to places, such as Ely Cathedral and Wicken Fen, and participating in school productions.

- The local authority has provided helpful support to the school in formulating its self-evaluation and identifying potential areas for improvement. The role of the headteacher, who is also the head of Upwell Primary School, is providing beneficial opportunities for staff from the two schools to share training events and to work together.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive and increasingly well informed about all aspects of the school's work, including teaching quality. They have received training to help them to check on the school's performance and are regular visitors. However, visits do not focus closely enough on checking on the effect that areas for improvement, especially those designed to bring about better progress, are having, so governors are not able to hold leaders fully to account for pupils' performance. The individual help that governors provide – for example, in running the gardening club and listening to pupils' reading – is effective and greatly appreciated by the pupils. Governors fulfil their legal duties well. They are involved fully in the management of the headteacher's performance and the application of the teaching standards so that teachers are rewarded for the impact of their work on pupils' achievement. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current requirements. With regard to safeguarding, staff are well qualified and training for all is up to date. Governors are meticulous in checking that the school's finances are in order and that money is spent wisely. They are fully aware of the positive impact that pupil premium funding is having. They have observed at first hand the impact that the recently purchased 'netbooks' are having on pupils' enthusiasm to learn.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121075
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	402000

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Dobson
Headteacher	James McBurney
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2010
Telephone number	01354 610212
Fax number	01354 610212
Email address	office@williammarshall.norfolk.sch.uk;

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