

Stutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Holbrook Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2RY

Inspection dates	8–9 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors and the headteacher have not ensured that the monitoring of the work of the school is rigorous enough to ensure that teaching improves and pupils make all the progress they can.
- Too much of the headteacher’s time is spent teaching; as a result, some key aspects of her leadership role are not fulfilled. For example, improvement planning lacks the detail it needs to be sharply effective.
- The quality of teaching differs across subjects. In some lessons pupils are not challenged or supported at the right level.
- Because teaching is not consistently good, pupils make variable progress. Their current work does not always match the assessments recorded. As a result, leaders’ analysis of the work of the school is sometimes overgenerous.
- Pupils’ attitudes to learning also vary. At times, because expectations are not made clear, they are not purposeful and do not try hard to succeed. On these occasions, they spend too much time distracted by irrelevant discussions and minor off-task behaviour.
- Although pupils say they feel safe at school and staff care for them, they also say that their concerns over the behaviour of others are not always acted on promptly.
- Pupils’ behaviour as they move around the school, for example when they prepare for assembly, is not managed well enough to instil a sense of discipline and concentration.
- Planning and intervention to support the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not sufficiently focused on the next steps in their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- In some lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge well to engage pupils in activities that enable them to make rapid progress and develop a deep understanding in their learning.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 use their knowledge of phonics to read and write at levels above those expected for their age.
- Pupils are given a wide range of exciting opportunities to learn well in subjects such as physical education, music and art.
- Modern foreign language teaching is a strength of the school. Many pupils achieve high standards in this work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide pupils with feedback about their progress in lessons, and in their books, that enables them to understand how well they are doing and quickly make the next steps in their learning
 - plan activities that are well matched to the needs of different pupils, particularly those with special educational needs
 - assess pupils' work frequently and keep a record of what the assessment is based on
 - match the extra support and intervention planned for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs appropriately to their needs, and make links to the learning in their lessons
 - expect pupils to work hard and to stop and listen immediately when asked.
- Improve the rigour and impact of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening improvement planning by adding clear measures for success and timescales by which they will be achieved so that governors and staff can be sure that the school is on track to meet its improvement objectives
 - increasing the time available to the headteacher and other leaders so that the work of the school is rigorously monitored and staff are given clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - implementing a schedule for this monitoring, and a plan for the professional development of staff which draws on the priorities identified.
- Improve pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school by:
 - raising expectations of pupils' behaviour and making these clear to all staff and pupils so there are no opportunities for any less than good behaviour to go unchecked at any point in the school day.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- The high expectations for pupils' behaviour and outcomes, set by governors and leaders, are not being met. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher managed a significant teaching commitment which has led to systems for monitoring the work of the school being weakened. In the time that has been available, leaders have not focused specifically enough on the aspects of the school's work that most require improvement.
- Some of this lack of focus derives from insufficient rigour in improvement planning. Analysis of the school's work is not specific enough to ensure that leaders take well-targeted action, or to make sure that staff receive the training and support they should have to improve their work.
- All staff carry a number of key responsibilities; the management of their performance identifies these in detail so expectations are clear. However, because actions are not prioritised and lack target dates and measures, they are not completely effective in holding staff to account for the priorities they are expected to achieve.
- Much of the headteacher's analysis takes place in lessons as she is team teaching with other staff. While this supports some developments, it does not allow a rigorous focus to be given to identifying the key aspects of practice that need to be improved.
- Leaders are implementing new systems for tracking and analysing pupils' progress, but these are not embedded and the ongoing assessment of pupils' learning is not maintained often enough to ensure that the overview held of the progress of all pupils is accurate.
- The extra funding the school uses to improve pupils' physical education is managed well to enhance the range of sports they can experience as well as increasing teachers' expertise. A good example of the use of this funding is the trip pupils made to Pipers Vale gymnastics centre. This inspired many pupils to develop their skills further.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils' experiences take them beyond the confines of a small school. Pupils enjoy a good range of opportunities to participate in sporting, arts and cultural activities. They achieve significant successes in these projects and say they benefit from taking part. The school has recently been awarded the bronze Suffolk Linguamarque for the quality of modern foreign language teaching. The leader of this is also supporting other local schools to develop their practice.
- There are special moments in lessons where pupils experience awe and wonder. In a Year 3 and 4 class, pupils watched with rapt attention as their peer opened a window in a large advent calendar made by a pupil and her family. Total calm and quiet pervaded the group as the inscribed Bible verse was read to them. This was a special, spine-tingling moment within the busy life of the school.
- Leaders use the pupil premium (extra government funding for disadvantaged pupils) to enhance the staff to pupil ratio and increase the level of teaching assistant support in school. This enables identified pupils to receive the extra support and tuition they need.
- In common with other areas of leadership that are under pressure, the leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs lacks the necessary attention to detail. Plans are in place to support each pupil and time is allocated for this. These plans, however, do not have sufficiently specific targets and timescales by which pupils' progress will be measured. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain whether they are making the progress they are capable of and which actions are the most effective.
- Leaders have implemented a policy which ensures that staff are aware of the risks pupils may be exposed to. The personal welfare of pupils is a priority for the school and its Christian ethos is evident in all its work to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Although pupils build an understanding of the wider world through relationships with a school in Ghana, the teaching of tolerance, democracy and respect necessary to prepare them for life in modern Britain is not fully evident in the curriculum.
- Parents have differing views of the school. The majority are confident that their children's needs are met well, that they are kept safe and that they are well informed about school events. A small minority have raised concerns about behaviour. The inspector found that some pupils feel that staff do not always immediately act on their concerns about the behaviour of others. Leaders are implementing changes to how they report to parents about their children's progress, so that it is more regular and parents have more opportunity to understand how well their children are doing.

- The after-school club provides a range of activities for a small group of pupils each day after school. Its leaders are checked for safeguarding purposes and the headteacher maintains an overview of the provision to ensure that it matches the quality expected by the school.
- Until recently, the local authority had judged the school to be effective and not to require any improvement support. This term an experienced new adviser has been allocated; it is already evident that she is identifying priorities with leaders and providing increased challenge. A teacher said advice to help develop approaches to providing feedback to pupils about their learning is already improving this aspect of her work. Too little support has been given to the school to help staff to manage the high level of needs of some pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors take their responsibilities very seriously. They have a good understanding of the school developed through frequent visits. Some of these give them detailed information about how well pupils are progressing because they join staff in scrutinising pupils’ books and spend time in lessons. In many respects, these aspects of their work demonstrate effective monitoring of some aspects of the school’s work.
 - Despite this, they have not ensured that the information they receive is sufficient to secure their accurate understanding of the work of the school. In part, this is because the external view of the school, on which they have relied, has been overly positive. In other respects, the decision to maintain three classes which, due to budgetary limitations, meant that the headteacher took on an almost full-time teaching commitment, has been detrimental to the capacity to sustain improvement.
 - Governors monitor the school’s finances rigorously. Their meetings are recorded in detail and these demonstrate that they ask challenging questions of leaders but also that they provide high levels of support. They take advice on the performance management of the headteacher and assure themselves that her decisions about rewarding staff for their performance are similarly advised.
 - Some aspects of the school’s work are not monitored as rigorously, for example the omissions in the safeguarding record referred to below had not been identified by governors.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. During the inspection the recording of information about agency staff identity checks was questioned. It emerged that this information was available but not held in the required place. The school has taken action to rectify this. Child protection procedures are well established; the school’s records show that staff safeguarding training is up to date, and checks on files show that certificates are copied and kept as evidence. Site security checks are up to date, fire drills have been practised and a new company has been employed to ensure that all these procedures are fit for purpose.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the quality of it varies across subjects and classes. The small class sizes are used flexibly to meet the needs of pupils by moving them to work in different groups, for example to receive extra challenge in mathematics. However, despite this, the work set in some instances does not meet the needs of pupils well enough to ensure that they make all the progress they can.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils stay on task well enough in lessons. At some points in the course of a lesson, when the teacher is occupied with other pupils, those who are not supervised spend time off task. These pupils engage in discussions not related to their work, or other minor distracted behaviour.
- There are also points in lessons when pupils who require extra support spend time waiting for help instead of showing increasing resilience by getting on and tackling some of their work which they later demonstrate they can do independently.
- Work that pupils do in intervention groups is not always matched well enough to the learning they are expected to achieve in lessons. In some instances, pupils work on simple concepts in their intervention groups but the level of challenge in lessons requires a much more advanced understanding. As a result, some pupils with special educational needs do not make progress in their learning.

- In some lessons, teachers' strong subject knowledge is very evident. Where this is used well, pupils receive good levels of challenge and stay engaged in their work. Feedback given to pupils in these lessons, and in their books, gives pupils explicit guidance on what they need to do next. This is not always the case; some comments on pupils' work are too general and pupils do not always follow up on the guidance they are given.
- Pupils' reading and writing in Key Stage 1 show that they are taught phonics well. Most pupils use letter sounds and combinations to write and read at levels above those expected for their age. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, their spelling skills do not continue to improve at the same rate. New systems are in place to teach spelling more rigorously. However, these are at an early stage and in the lessons seen, some pupils were uncertain about which spellings and letter patterns they were learning.
- Where teaching is best, teachers link what pupils are expected to do to their previous learning. They ensure that pupils at risk of falling behind are well supported to catch up and plan tasks that are interesting. They also provide specific challenges for most-able pupils that stretch their thinking and enable them to deepen their understanding.
- Leaders have planned for teachers to use their own subject expertise so that all pupils benefit from specialist teaching. This works well and means that pupils achieve high standards in some subjects such as modern foreign languages and physical education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not demonstrate high standards of courtesy and respect at all times during the school day. At some points, in lessons and whole-school times like assembly, staff do not ensure that pupils listen and quieten when they are expected to.
- Pupils are taught some aspects of personal safety and how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know about internet safety and the dangers of talking to strangers. They do not have a well-developed understanding of the different types of bullying. They say that pupils are sometimes not kind to each other, and although they feel safe at school they are not confident that their concerns are always dealt with promptly.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently strong in all classes because they are not always held to account when their work is poorly presented or they are not paying attention to the adults working with them.
- Pupils are lively and inquisitive. They were keen to talk about the annual charity 'reindeer run' taking place during the inspection and are engaged in a good range of fund-raising activities. In some lessons, individual pupils demonstrate confidence, are articulate when they talk about their learning and model their thinking to their peers.
- Pupils learn about other countries and religions so build an understanding of difference. Links with Ghana have been used to help them understand other cultures that are very different from their own. Their understanding of the essential elements of democracy and tolerance necessary for life in modern Britain is less well developed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Leaders are distracted by the many responsibilities they hold; as a result, pupils are not held quickly to account when their behaviour does not meet expectations.
- The school's behaviour policy has explicit rewards (credits) and sanctions. Pupils know what the different colour zones they are moved to on the 'traffic lights' mean, although they say teachers use them differently. Some pupils feel the credits they receive are not enough of an incentive to secure the very best behaviour.
- The school has the required procedures in place to manage challenging behaviour. However, information gathered over time is not used as well as it could be to identify the triggers for less than good behaviour and to de-escalate it quickly.

- Attendance has been well below the national average. Actions taken by the headteacher are bringing about improvement so that it is moving to be more in line with that of all pupils nationally. Leaders work hard to help families whose children do not attend school regularly enough. Despite this, their attendance is only improving slowly.
- Pupils' learning behaviour varies. Because teachers do not always pitch work at the right level, in the same lesson some pupils work tirelessly with intense engagement to achieve the challenges they have been set, while others lack focus and spend too much time distracted from the task in hand.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, the outcomes achieved by Year 6 pupils showed that they had all made good and better progress during their time at the school. Almost all pupils reached the expected level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant number reached above average expectations, particularly in mathematics.
- Outcomes in grammar, punctuation and spelling improved in 2015 because of the increased focus given to these following the lower results in 2014. Pupils' current work shows that standards of spelling and handwriting are variable; not enough pupils are making good progress in developing these skills.
- Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015 were not as strong as those in Key Stage 2. The position in mathematics was reversed with no pupils reaching the higher levels, and fewer pupils attained the expected level in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' books show similar levels of variability in progress. Across the school some pupils are making very good progress, while others, because their work is not pitched at the right level, make less. Sometimes pupils redo tasks such as redrafting a piece of writing before receiving detailed feedback on their work. As a result, they make similar mistakes and their progress slows.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making good progress in their reading and writing. Their pencil grip and handwriting skills are less well developed because there is currently no agreed approach to teaching these important elements of their work. In mathematics, their work shows that they are developing an appropriate grasp of basic number concepts but are not using these extensively to solve a range of problems.
- In Key Stage 2, books show that pupils do not always build well on their previous learning. Over time, pupils are not challenged well enough to independently set out aspects of their work, show pride in how it is presented or use the skills they learn in English and mathematics lessons to explore and learn about other subjects. There is not enough evidence of pupils recording their work across subjects in a variety of different ways for different purposes.
- Most-able pupils respond well to the extra challenges they are offered and as a result generally make good progress. In some lessons, their lack of attention and effort means they do not always achieve as much as they could.
- Numbers of pupils in identified groups in each year cohort are very small. It is difficult to mention performance in year groups without identifying individual pupils. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not all make the progress they are capable of because the support they are given is not well enough matched to their needs or to the work they are doing in class.
- Reading is a strength of the school. In most instances pupils make good progress in developing reading skills. The English subject leader has identified extra support for pupils who do not enjoy reading in order to extend the range and type of books they read. Almost all the pupils spoken to could talk about authors and books they enjoy. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are proud of their reading skills and some can already read beyond the level of the texts they currently have as their school reading books.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Provision for the youngest children requires improvement because systems for assessing and monitoring their learning and progress are in transition. There is not enough evidence of the progress children are making, either recorded using the historic system of notes on post-its or on the new computerised system. As a result it is not clear how well children's learning is built on day by day. The planning seen during the inspection included analysis of children's behaviour and how it was to be addressed, but not of their learning.
- In 2015, the youngest children all achieved the expected good level of development. Children start school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age so this represents expected, and sometimes better, progress. Children's current work suggests that they are making broadly expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some key skills, for example handwriting and pencil grip, are not taught well enough. There are too few children in this cohort to analyse the achievement of different groups without identifying individuals.
- The Reception group is small and children work independently of Year 1 and 2 pupils for the first part of the day while they learn key literacy and mathematics skills. Later in the day, wider activities engage all pupils together so the youngest gain from the role modelling of their older peers.
- Children benefit from some access to outdoor provision and to their own learning space. This is an improvement since the last inspection. During the inspection, planned activities linked across subject areas well as children learned about shape through wrapping presents and then putting them in Santa's sleigh outside.
- While some activities engage and excite children, others do not sufficiently develop key characteristics of learning because they are prescriptive in what children are expected to do and use for their work. For example, there is not enough choice of different materials for art work and collages. In an activity where children were asked to show what presents they wanted for Christmas, the limited choice of magazines and stencilled stocking available for them to use curtailed the use of their imagination.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. The leader is reflective and has a good understanding of the aspects of practice that need to improve. Children's learning is enhanced through some access to outdoor activities and a growing range of appropriately linked learning tasks.
- Children are well supervised in the early years. Staff have paediatric first aid qualifications and keep a close eye on children's welfare.

School details

Unique reference number	124743
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10003686

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Amanda McIntosh
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Worley
Telephone number	01473 328531
Website	www.stutton.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	Ad.sutton.p@talk21.com
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2011

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is organised in three vertically grouped classes.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor targets which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in a mixed class with Year 1 and 2 pupils.
- There is an after-school club run by the school every weekday from the end of school to 5.30pm.
- At the time of the inspection, to sustain three classes and because of budgetary constraints, the headteacher had a very substantial teaching commitment.
- The Chair of the Governing Body has recently been elected.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or parts of lessons including a physical education lesson and two intervention groups. Some of these observations were undertaken with the headteacher. She spent time in the hall at lunchtime and observed children at playtime and the start of an assembly.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders who are also teachers, governors and a group of pupils. She spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority by phone. After the inspection, she spoke to the virtual headteacher for looked after children in Essex also by phone.
- The inspector scrutinised school documents including self-evaluation, improvement planning, analysis of the work of the school, assessment information, teachers' assessment files, attendance and behaviour information, the headteacher's monitoring, governing body meeting minutes, child protection information, safeguarding policies, performance management information and the record of recruitment checks.
- The inspector met with a group of Key Stage 2 pupils to discuss their work, behaviour and their perceptions of the school. She also heard four pupils from Key Stage 1 read and talked to them about their learning.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and their text responses to the inspection. She met with parents before the start of the school day to ascertain their views.
- The inspector observed the start of the after-school club.

Inspection team

Prue Rayner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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