

# Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Norwich Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1RU

## 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils are making good progress across the curriculum because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Pupils' command of age-appropriate basic skills is not sufficiently strong. This is particularly the case in writing and mathematics in upper key stage 2.
- The curriculum is not systematically planned across the whole school. This sometimes makes it hard for teachers to build on what pupils already know, or to prepare them well for future learning.
- Leaders are not sufficiently diligent in sharing the best practice, and challenging weaker practice, across the school.
- Newly appointed leaders for English and mathematics are not bringing about rapid enough improvements in their subjects.
- The school's assessment system is sometimes inaccurate. This means that a small number of pupils who are working below age-related expectations do not always receive the support they need to catch up.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the standard of presentation of pupils' work.
- In the early years foundation stage, the quality of questioning and discussion sometimes does not support children to make good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has brought about rapid improvements in some important areas, such as the teaching of phonics and the management of behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because leaders are attentive to their needs.
- The proportion of pupils working at or above age-related expectations is increasing, but is not yet high enough.
- The school has a strong ethos of inclusion and compassion where pupils and staff feel valued, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are well met.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - better matching pupils' work to their abilities and starting points
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise key core skills in English and mathematics
  - continuing to develop the school's assessment system to be sure that it always identifies pupils who are falling behind
  - building on the good practice in the school so that more teaching matches the best teaching
  - ensuring that pupils take more pride in their work and that their presentation is consistently good
  - building on the strong teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 to improve pupils' spelling in key stage 2.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - building a consistent approach to curriculum content across the whole school so that teachers are better informed about what pupils are learning in other year groups
  - supporting subject leaders to monitor standards of teaching and outcomes in their subject more closely and provide challenge where necessary.
- Improve the early years foundation stage by:
  - developing staff questioning skills to enable children to make better progress
  - improving the curriculum to provide a wider and more effective range of learning opportunities for children.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a number of changes in key teaching staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2017. Supported by the governing body, the new headteacher and her team have successfully improved the standard of teaching in the school, but this improvement has not been sufficiently rapid, and its impact has not been significant enough.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and staff. She has established an ethos of compassion and inclusion in the school and is ambitious that pupils should make good progress. As a consequence, standards are rising, but the quality of teaching varies across the school. This means that standards are not rising quickly enough for all pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils have the lowest starting points.
- The school has appointed leaders for English and mathematics. They have ensured that all teachers are aware of what their pupils should be able to do to meet the expected standard for their age in each subject. Consequently, teachers have been able to support a higher proportion of pupils to reach these standards across the school than was previously the case, but a number of pupils have not reached these standards.
- While each teacher has created a curriculum in their class to enable more pupils to reach the expected standard in English and mathematics, a whole-school curriculum in most subjects is not in place. This means that it is sometimes not easy for teachers to build on pupils' learning from prior years, or to prepare them well for their next year group.
- Leaders of English and mathematics are rapidly developing their understanding of the quality of teaching in their subject across the whole school. They have opportunities to observe teaching and look at pupils' work, often accurately identifying where standards are high and where standards fall below expectations. Feedback to teachers, however, sometimes lacks precision and challenge, meaning that teachers do not always receive the support they need to raise standards for pupils.
- There are many examples of strong teaching in the school, but this is not the case for enough of the teaching, and leaders have not provided enough opportunities for examples of this effective practice to be shared across the whole school.
- Leaders and governors evaluate the school accurately. They have identified areas where improvements need to be made and have been successful in raising standards for many pupils. An example of this is the teaching of phonics, where a rigorously applied and well-managed system of phonics teaching has enabled pupils to read more accurately and apply these skills when reading in a range of different lessons. Leaders have detailed strategies for further improving standards across the curriculum but accept that some of these have not raised standards sufficiently.
- Leaders have provided some staff with training, and opportunities to learn from good practice at other schools. Staff value these opportunities provided by leaders, with almost all staff agreeing that they feel well supported working in the school in Ofsted's

staff survey. This sometimes improves the quality of teaching; for example, teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics has improved because the mathematics leader has shared with them the content of training that she has received. This can be observed in pupils' mathematics books, where some pupils make better progress because of improvements in their teacher's subject knowledge. The lessons learned from some training are, however, not always shared effectively enough across the whole school.

- Leaders have also enabled teachers to understand what constitutes attainment above the expected standard in English and mathematics. This has helped more pupils to achieve these higher levels, but school leaders accept that this proportion is not high enough.
- The school works very closely with the local authority. Leaders welcome visits from local authority representatives, who support and challenge them. An example of this is the monthly improvement board, where local authority representatives meet with governors and staff to monitor and evaluate the impact of school improvement strategies. Visit reports written on behalf of the local authority acknowledge the improvements that leaders have brought about, but express dissatisfaction with the pace and extent of some areas of school improvement.
- Leaders have introduced a new system of assessment to enable them to keep track of the standards being achieved by all pupils. They use it to identify pupils that are falling behind, and to intervene to help them to catch up. This has enabled many disadvantaged pupils to make good progress, as these pupils are discussed regularly in pupil progress meetings, where leaders decide how best to spend pupil premium funding to ensure that they do well. For the small number of disadvantaged pupils with higher starting points, however, progress is not so strong, because strategies for supporting them lack detail and clarity.
- The assessment system is mostly accurate, but a small number of pupils are recorded as working at a standard higher than that which is suggested by the quality of work in their books. This can lead to overoptimistic information being presented to the governing body, as well as the possibility that a small number of pupils may not receive the extra support that they require.
- Leaders have ensured that relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils spoke about how much they value recent changes to systems for managing behaviour, where respect, tolerance and reconciliation are emphasised.
- Leaders have made sure that pupils cover a sufficiently broad range of different subject areas beyond English and mathematics. Leaders have not, however, ensured that the curriculum in these subjects is planned well enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress in all year groups.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know their school well. They have a detailed understanding of the actions being taken to improve the school, and how effective these actions are. For example, they spoke knowledgeably about improvements to behaviour management and the teaching of phonics, and the impact of these actions on outcomes for pupils.

- Governors work closely with the local authority. They value their monthly meetings with staff, leaders and local authority representatives. Reports and minutes from their meetings show that they use this support to good effect to hold leaders to account for the standards achieved by pupils.
- Governors ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. They know how it is spent and know about its impact because the headteacher provides them with accurate and detailed information about the progress of the disadvantaged pupils in the school.
- Governors visit their school regularly, often looking in pupils' books or work on display to reassure themselves about improving standards. They acknowledge the improvements that they have seen recently, for example in standards in mathematics, but accept that outcomes for pupils have not reached the high expectations that they have set for their school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- In her role as designated safeguarding lead, the headteacher has created a culture that prioritises the safeguarding of pupils. Staff are fully supportive of, and compliant with, her high expectations. Staff and volunteers receive regular training, and systems are in place to ensure that concerns are raised and dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The school has recently undertaken a review of safeguarding carried out by the local authority. This confirmed for leaders and governors that safeguarding is well managed, with the school acting quickly on the small number of recommendations made to improve safeguarding further.
- Detailed checks are carried out and recorded for all adults working or volunteering in the school. Records of safeguarding concerns are kept secure, and show the actions taken for any issue raised with the safeguarding lead. They also show that the school works closely with external agencies where necessary to ensure the highest possible level of protection for pupils.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school, and that they have a high level of confidence in staff to keep them safe. A large majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child feels safe at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- While many pupils make good progress, standards across the school are too low because teaching in some subjects and year groups is not consistently good.
- Pupils' mental mathematics skills are sometimes strong, but a number of pupils are not confident with written arithmetic methods. For example, when presented with multi-step mathematical problems, or activities looking for mathematical patterns, some pupils were hindered by their lack of practise in writing down their working neatly and methodically.

- Some pupils do not have a confident mastery of basic skills because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In mathematics, this means that they are sometimes given work that is too hard for them. In other subjects, including English, weaknesses in pupils' sentence structure, spelling and punctuation sometimes prevent them from expressing themselves effectively in their writing. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to assess what some pupils have learned and support them to take the next step in their learning.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work are not high enough. Pupils do not always take pride in their work, and teachers sometimes tolerate work that is scruffily presented. Some teachers are aware of this and are taking action to improve pupils' presentation of work, but standards and expectations vary between classes.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They listen carefully to their teachers and apply themselves diligently to learning activities. Where teachers have created a curriculum that enables pupils to practise and apply the skills that they need, pupils make good progress and outcomes are strong. Examples include information sheets about Africa in Year 3 and Year 4, or mathematics activities based on direction and rotation in Year 1 and Year 2. Some pupils, however, do not work well independently, because they do not have the skills and knowledge to be independent learners.
- Where lessons are well planned, and learning activities match pupils' abilities and starting points, many pupils make good progress. Teachers' expectations are often high, and in mathematics in particular, many pupils respond well to challenges that test their mathematical reasoning skills. For some pupils, however, the work is too hard, while other pupils are not challenged enough.
- The school has introduced a new assessment system that measures pupils' attainment and progress using test results and teachers' assessments. For many pupils, this assessment system helps them to make good progress because teachers use it to plan work that is right for them. For this reason, the quality of work in a number of pupils' books shows improvement over time. Work in some pupils' books, however, suggests that teachers do not always use this information effectively to set work at the right level of challenge, and these pupils make less progress.
- Where pupils are provided with intervention to help them to catch up, the quality of the intervention is good. Teachers direct teaching assistants well, and disadvantaged pupils benefit from these interventions.
- In most year groups, teachers and support staff are able to use their subject knowledge to ask questions that help pupils to overcome their misunderstandings and build their knowledge and skills. In a Year 5 and Year 6 English lesson, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to explain the effect of an author's choice of language. The richness of this whole-class discussion, however, cannot consistently be seen in the quality of pupils' written work.
- The standard of spelling is improving for these pupils because of improvements in the quality of teaching of phonics in Reception and key stage 1. The accuracy of older pupils' spelling, however, is weak, with pupils in key stage 2 routinely misspelling high-frequency words.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and speak enthusiastically to staff and to each other about their work. They respond well to questioning, and respectfully encourage each other to be reflective when speaking in class.
- Pupils are keen to speak about how much they like going to school. They appreciate their 'reward time' and like the way that teachers make learning interesting. They enjoy the residential visits provided for all key stage 2 pupils. Key stage 1 pupils also described how much they enjoy their visits, such as their recent opportunity to observe seals in their natural habitat.
- The school has introduced new activities to boost pupils' self-confidence and foster a positive attitude towards school. Pupils spoke highly of a number of these activities, such as 'Relax Kids' and 'Toast Club'.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to take responsibility for different aspects of school life. Older pupils act as prefects, looking after younger pupils in assembly and around the school. Pupils are also proud of their school facilities, and take good care of them, for example in their roles as librarians or ICT monitors.
- The school ensures that pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. Some older pupils spoke about what they had learned in their recent visit to the 'Crucial Crew' in preparation for the challenges of secondary school, while many explained what the school teaches them about online safety.
- When asked, pupils found it difficult to recall any incidents of bullying. They had a high level of confidence that staff would deal with it well if it occurred.
- Pupils described how changes to the way behaviour is managed has improved the friendly atmosphere of the school. They explained how they are supported and encouraged to discuss their differences with each other if conflicts occur. They also said that they were satisfied with the resolutions to their differences that this new approach has brought about.
- A number of parents described how much their children enjoy going to school. One parent described the school as 'happy, exciting and child-centred'. Another parent stated that the school is 'a lovely place to go and my child loves it there'.
- The school meets the spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of the pupils well. Links with the local church are strong, with a 'messy church' meeting regularly in school. Pupils spoke with knowledge and enthusiasm about raising money for their chosen charities. They also explained how much they value the opportunities that the school provides for them to take part in musical and dramatic performances.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils show respect to each other and to adults at all times. Their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime is calm and friendly. The large outdoor space meant that some pupils could play a well-organised and supervised game of football, while others explored and played imaginatively together.
- Behaviour in class is well managed by teachers. When producing written work, pupils focus well and do not disturb each other unnecessarily. Even when a learning activity requires an element of performance, such as a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson about play scripts, pupils express their enjoyment of their learning in a non-disruptive way.
- A number of parents expressed concerns about the school's management of behaviour in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Because of this, the inspector took every opportunity to test their concerns, but found no evidence to support them. In fact, some parents particularly praised the high standards of behaviour in the school, with one commenting, 'I always find the pupils from all year groups to be polite and kind to everyone.'
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average, and no group of pupils has significantly high levels of absence. The school supports and challenges parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly and puts in place all due consequences if parents fall short in their responsibilities.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Require improvement

- The progress that pupils make is insufficiently strong in some subjects and year groups because of inconsistencies in the standard of teaching and the variable quality of the curriculum across the school.
- Some teachers have a good understanding of what pupils need to do to make good progress across much of the curriculum, but some pupils cannot make good progress because work is not pitched at the right level for them.
- Poor standards of presentation in some pupils' books make it difficult for teachers to identify their misconceptions and provide them with effective feedback. For these pupils, this hinders their progress.
- Phonics is taught well, ensuring that many pupils read with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. In Year 5 and Year 6, these skills are less evident. Here, many pupils can speak with understanding about the wide and interesting range of literature that they read, but their inconsistent grasp of age-appropriate writing skills makes it difficult for some pupils to express their response to text effectively in writing.
- The curriculum does not support all pupils to develop secure basic skills and habits in English and mathematics. Consequently, some pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- There is a lack of clarity and detail in some areas of the school's curriculum. This means that some teachers do not ensure that pupils develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills because they are not clear about what pupils need to learn.
- Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are accurately assessed, and interventions provided for them are effective. Some higher-attaining disadvantaged



pupils, however, do not always make good progress from their higher starting points because the curriculum sometimes does not meet their needs.

- Pupils with SEND make good progress in the school. This is because the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) assesses these pupils' needs accurately, and diligently ensures that their teachers plan to meet their needs in class. She also ensures that effective interventions are put in place where necessary.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Some children's progress in the Reception class is not strong enough because the activities that are planned for them are not suitably challenging for all children.
- Leaders do not have an accurate enough understanding of the effectiveness of their early years provision. When they monitor the quality of the provision, they do not always provide staff with feedback that is precise and challenging enough to bring about improved standards for children.
- The deployment of resources in different areas for learning does not always provide children with effective learning opportunities. Children play well together independently, but sometimes it is not clear what the purpose of their activities is, or how they support children's learning.
- Staff help children to think about and discuss age-appropriate questions during whole-class teaching. For example, in one lesson, pupils were encouraged to identify differences between them. Staff do not always, however, continue to support this level of discussion when children learn and play independently.
- Staff do not always use questioning and discussion well enough to support children's development. Where there is clarity of purpose, for example when children were using coins to find different amounts of money, children make progress, because staff know what they want children to achieve and ask questions accordingly. At other times, staff are unclear about the purpose of the activity, and questioning is consequently ineffective.
- Staff are diligent in their assessment of what children can achieve, but this information is not always used effectively to plan challenging activities for children.
- Staff in the early years foundation stage are provided with suitable training by the school, and have opportunities to benefit from working with early years practitioners from other schools. However, leaders are aware of their need to be more diligent in ensuring that this training has an increasingly positive impact on children's standards.
- Parents speak highly about the communication they receive from the Reception class teacher. They appreciate the access they have to children's learning journeys, and value the 'focus child' system which enables them to have regular detailed feedback about their child's progress.
- Children in the Reception class are safe and well supervised at all times. Even when not directly supervised, children play happily together, treating each other with respect and consideration.

## School details

Unique reference number	121129
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10088661

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Sullivan
Headteacher	Jennie Muller
Telephone number	01362 692033
Website	<a href="http://www.yaxhamprimaryschool.co.uk">www.yaxhamprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@yaxham.norfolk.sch.uk">office@yaxham.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There has been a significant change in staffing since the last inspection, with the appointment of a new headteacher and two new class teachers.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND support, or who have an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and middle leaders, including the SENCo, early years foundation stage leader and subject leaders.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils. He also spoke with pupils in their lessons and around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspector listened to pupils read.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work in their exercise books.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, local authority monitoring documents, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's assessment tracking records, records of the provision for pupils with SEND, records of pupil interventions, safeguarding records (including the single central record), behaviour records, attendance records, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 29 free-text responses. He also considered the 11 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Richard Hopkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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