

Beck Row Primary School

The Street, Beck Row, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 8AE

Inspection dates	21–22 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors and school leaders have failed to improve teaching sufficiently to prevent a decline in standards since the previous inspection.
- Too much teaching is ineffective, resulting in pupils' underachievement in key subjects and across year groups.
- Pupils have experienced too many changes of teacher which has slowed their learning. This is of concern to both the pupils and their parents.
- Teachers do not use the information they have about what pupils know, and can do, to plan work that matches the wide range of abilities of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Pupils are not challenged to do their best.
- In some lessons, pupils lose concentration because the activities do not interest them. Teachers do not always effectively challenge poor behaviour in lessons.
- A significant proportion of staff and a smaller proportion of parents do not have confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Work in pupils' books does not always match the assessment information recorded by the school. As a result, leaders' analysis of the effectiveness of teaching is overgenerous.
- Governors have not held senior leaders fully accountable for the allocation of additional funding, including pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and the primary sports funding.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 is lower than that of their peers and pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than others, and the gap in achievement is not closing across year groups.
- Arrangements for the management of teachers' performance lack rigour so teachers are not held fully to account for the quality of their work.
- Year 6 pupils do not develop the knowledge and skills needed for secondary school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well taught. They make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils feel safe at school and safeguarding procedures are sound.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the capacity for senior leadership to bring about the changes needed to improve teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing effective middle leaders so that improvements to the curriculum are rapid and the assessment of pupils' progress is accurate
 - ensuring that teachers consistently challenge and improve disruptive behaviour in lessons
 - making sure that all subjects are taught well so that pupils are well prepared for secondary school
 - improving communication with parents so that more have confidence in the leadership of the school
 - ensuring that teachers' pay awards are based on a thorough analysis of their work and that governors assure themselves of this.

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise standards across the school by making sure that:
 - all teachers have high expectation of what pupils can achieve
 - teaching takes account of what pupils can and cannot do and addresses any weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding before moving their learning on
 - learning activities stimulate the curiosity of pupils so that their enthusiasm and engagement increases
 - teachers insist that pupils use correct subject terminology so that their literacy improves and they have confidence when speaking and writing across all subjects.

- Improve the effectiveness of early years provision so that more pupils are ready for Year 1 by ensuring that more activities create opportunities for children to develop reading, writing and numeracy skills.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body, have failed to secure sufficient improvement in the areas identified at the last inspection. Although the issues affecting achievement are included in the school's own plans to improve, subsequent actions have not produced better outcomes for pupils. A significant group of parents do not have confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous. The termly development plans identify what needs to be done but the actions are not sharp enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders have not had an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. This has led to an overly positive view of provision and performance during a period when the progress and attainment of pupils has declined. Arrangements for how leaders judge teaching, when visiting lessons or checking pupils' work in their books, do not focus sufficiently on the quality of pupils' learning and their progress over time.
- Turbulence in staffing since September 2015 has hindered school leaders in making improvements to the curriculum and to the quality of teaching. A lack of consistency in the subject leadership of English and mathematics has limited the impact of the new curriculum introduced at the beginning of the year.
- Senior leaders have not carefully evaluated whether the way that the pupil premium funding is spent is having a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils is routinely monitored, and leaders record the interventions that are put in place for these pupils. However, this information is not used effectively to check whether the extra funding is improving pupils' achievement.
- The school has a current plan for the use of the primary physical education and sports premium funding, but there has been no robust analysis of whether the funding has improved pupils' skills and their access to a wider range of sports in recent years. This year it has been used to provide more opportunities for competitive sport as well as buying new sports equipment and for lunchtime activities such as tennis swing ball.
- Changes to the school's curriculum, following the previous inspection, have meant that subjects such as science are being given more time, and these lessons are enjoyed by pupils. However, leaders have only recently recognised that the science curriculum in key stage 2 does not provide enough challenge for older pupils. Consequently, these pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- The curriculum at key stage 2 does not offer pupils the breadth of experience that prepares them well for secondary school. For example, French lessons for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are on the school timetable but work in pupils' books shows that they have not been taught regularly throughout the year. Year 6 pupils also told inspectors that they had missed out on opportunities to participate in trips during their time at school.
- A significant minority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, or who contacted inspectors directly, expressed concerns about how their children's progress has been affected by the reorganisation of teaching groups and the frequent staff changes. However, most parents say that their children are happy at school.
- Assemblies give pupils the opportunity to reflect on values such as kindness and tolerance and in lessons they are introduced to other religions and ways of living. The school council provides an opportunity for pupils to experience democracy and also get involved in raising money for national events such as Children in Need. This is developing their understanding of what it is like to live in a modern multicultural Britain.
- A range of wider activities help to broaden the curriculum pupils are offered. Pupils spoke particularly enthusiastically about the weekly 'Zumba' class and also say they enjoy opportunities to sing, make things in craft club and participate in after-school sport. During the inspection, one group of pupils was out of school competing in a sporting event against other local schools and another group was participating in a local musical event.
- The local authority has offered support to the school in a variety of ways since the previous inspection but with little success. The headteacher did not find the advice consistent or helpful and so it did not have a positive impact on the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are committed to improving the school and visit regularly to monitor the school's work and offer support. They have struggled to secure continuity of staffing which has contributed to falling

attainment for pupils. Effective systems have not been in place to hold senior leaders to account for falling standards at the school.

- Governors can account for how the pupil premium and sports funding is spent but do not have the procedures in place to tell them what impact it is having.
- Governors' view of the quality of teaching at the school does not comprehensively take into account the quality of teachers' work. Teachers have been rewarded when there is insufficient evidence of the positive impact of their work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils. Staff training is up to date. The school works effectively with local agencies to ensure that vulnerable children and their families are identified and supported. Parents spoken to agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because, over time, it leads to inadequate progress and outcomes for pupils. In some year groups, frequent changes of teacher have disrupted pupils' learning and progress. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not always picked up and addressed by teachers.
- There is not enough teaching of the quality required to raise standards quickly. Visits to lessons and pupils' work show that teachers are not challenging pupils of different abilities well enough.
- Changes in staffing have meant that classes have been reorganised during the year. Pupils and their parents have found this confusing and frustrating because, in the new classes, activities are not well matched to the needs of pupils. This was made clear to inspectors by pupils and also by the parents who responded to the online questionnaire.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. Some do not deal effectively with the off-task behaviour of a few pupils even though it can distract others and stop them from learning. In some classes, teachers do not challenge pupils when they produce work below the standard they are capable of reaching.
- Teachers regularly record information on how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics. Senior leaders use this to track the progress of all pupils. However, the quality of the work in pupils' books does not always show the same rate of progress reported by teachers. Teachers are not routinely using assessment information to help them to address gaps in pupils' knowledge or to help pupils practise and master key skills. Progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is not currently analysed.
- Too often, teaching does not inspire pupils to learn. When activities do not engage their curiosity, pupils lose interest and this leads to a loss of concentration and so slows their learning.
- Basic reading and writing skills are now taught at the heart of the English curriculum and this is beginning to address a legacy of weak teaching and learning. However, the handwriting of pupils at key stage 2 is underdeveloped and pupils make frequent spelling errors. They do not use punctuation and grammar correctly. In year groups where teaching has been stable this year, pupils are beginning to make better progress with their writing. Teachers plan more opportunities for pupils to write at length, to build up their stamina for writing.
- Teachers are increasingly using subject-specific language to improve pupils' vocabulary. For example, in one literacy lesson, the teacher responded to pupils' suggestions of words that would improve a basic sentence by naming the type of word they had suggested, such as adverb or adjective. However, pupils do not have an essential grasp of different parts of speech.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils do not always understand the purpose of learning because they are not encouraged to use their skills and understanding in real situations. As a result, some pupils quickly lose interest in their learning. For example, in a lesson where pupils were learning how to calculate the area of a shape, they struggled to explain to inspectors how they might be able to use this skill and so did not see that it was of any use to them.
- Teaching assistants, in most lessons, work effectively with teachers to support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, too often, their role in class is to manage the behaviour of individual pupils rather than to support them with their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils feel that their school is a safe place. However, a few pupils told inspectors that there are incidents of bullying, especially name-calling, which have upset them. Clear systems are in place to support pupils if they do have concerns, but pupils say they have not reported incidents because they do not have confidence that anything will change if they do. School records confirm that no bullying incidents have been reported since September.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and could explain to inspectors about the importance of using safety settings and reporting anything that worries them to an adult. Visits from the police and fire service on a 'safety day' gave pupils confidence about how to deal with issues that might arise outside school.
- Regular assemblies provide opportunities for all pupils to reflect on their school values. During the inspection, this value was 'wisdom', and pupils provided some thoughtful responses to the question 'Where does our wisdom come from?' Thinking time, when pupils closed their eyes for a few minutes, was well observed. When talking to inspectors, pupils could also recall messages from previous assemblies on other values such as 'bravery' and 'resilience' and explain why these are valuable.
- Older pupils take responsibilities such as being a member of the school council, a play leader or a 'helping hand' very seriously. An eco-team has been created in response to a request from the school council and older pupils volunteer to spend their lunchtimes supporting staff with duties such as providing help to younger pupils.
- Attendance is improving and is in line with the national average for 2015. Good attendance is rewarded and celebrated. The school attendance officer works closely with outside agencies to support those pupils who do not attend well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils try their best in lessons when teachers have high expectations and provide them with interesting activities. Too often, when pupils begin to lose their focus on learning, teachers do not act quickly or effectively to tackle this and so the learning of other pupils in the class is affected.
- School records show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour that lead to pupils being removed from lessons is decreasing. The number of exclusions from school is also decreasing. Even so, both removals from lessons and exclusions from school still occur too often.
- At breaktimes, in the outside play areas, most pupils socialise together happily, many of them playing with pupils from other year groups. On occasions, the boisterous behaviour of a small number of pupils is not picked up and corrected quickly enough by duty staff.
- Around the school building, most pupils behave with respect towards each other and towards adults. Pupils of all ages held doors open for inspectors and greeted them with smiles and 'hellos'. They talked confidently to inspectors about their experiences of school.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Standards have fallen since the previous inspection. In 2015, attainment in the national tests at Year 6 was below the national average in reading and writing and well below in mathematics. The progress pupils made across key stage 2 was also well below the national average, being within the lowest 10% of schools nationally.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is inadequate at key stage 2. Assessment information provided by the school shows that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is likely to be lower than in 2015. Too few pupils at the end of key stage 2 have the writing or mathematical skills appropriate for their age. Teaching has not been effective in closing the gaps in their skills, left by weaker teaching in the past, quickly enough to ensure that they are adequately prepared for their move to secondary school.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average in 2015. However, evidence in the school's recent assessments shows that fewer than half of current Year 2 pupils will reach the standards appropriate for their age by the end of key stage 1. This is a result of disruption to their learning because of frequent staff changes.

- For the past three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) check has been consistently above the national average. However, current school information shows that, because of inconsistencies in the way phonics has been taught over this year, this proportion will fall in 2016. Pupils struggled to sound out words when reading to inspectors and were not routinely applying phonics skills in lessons to help their learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils varies considerably across year groups. In some classes where they have had consistent teaching, they are making similar progress to their peers. In others, it is not good enough and disadvantaged pupils are falling behind.
- The small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for and make good progress from their varied starting points.
- Children from Gypsy/Roma or Traveller heritage attend well and achieve as well as their peers, and better than other Gypsy/Roma or Traveller children nationally.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- There are two Reception classes at the school in the early years. Many of the children who start in Reception leave at the end of the year to attend the primary school at the local airbase.
- Children's starting points on entry are variable, but some of the information collected to show their starting points is now missing and so there is not a clear picture of how much progress all children have made over the year.
- For the past two years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been below the national average. Information provided by the school, supported by observations during the inspection, shows that just over half of the children have reached a good level of development and are ready to start in Year 1.
- The small numbers of disadvantaged children make year-on-year comparisons unhelpful, but disadvantaged children generally do not make the same progress towards a good level of development as their peers.
- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to interest and provoke the curiosity of the children. The classrooms and outside area provide a stimulating environment in which children can play and learn.
- When play is effectively guided by adults, learning can be rapid. However, at times, children give up too easily on tasks that they find challenging. When children do not understand what they are expected to do or are not guided in their learning, they have limited opportunities to use and develop their early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Staff are caring and supportive and engage well with the children to support their learning. The behaviour of the children is good when they are absorbed in activities or working with teachers. Occasionally, during more independent play, some children do not share willingly with others.
- Children's individual 'learning journeys' (records of children's experiences and progress) are recorded and shared with parents electronically, meaning that parents are kept up to date with how their children are progressing. Parents spoken to at the end of the day said that their children enjoyed coming to school and they were happy with the progress they had made.
- The new leader of the early years has a realistic picture of the strengths of current provision and what needs to be done to further improve. She has already put in place new systems to ensure that staff know when children are ready to start to read, which has led to the introduction of more focused word work.

School details

Unique reference number	124541
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection Number	10011845

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Greenfield
Headteacher	Emma Nicholson
Telephone number	01638 713001
Website	www.beckrow.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	admin@beckrow.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2014

Information about this school

- Beck Row Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the children are from White British or Other White backgrounds. Only a small number of these children stay at the school for key stage 1 and key stage 2. A small number of pupils come from families of Gypsy/Roma or Traveller heritage; this proportion is above the national average.
- Since September 2015, just under a half of all pupils who have attended the school have arrived or left during the year.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after, is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils who have a statement of educational need or an education, health and care plan.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In December 2015, the school was issued with a pre-warning notice by the local authority. In May 2016, the Department for Education issued the governing body with a warning notice to improve.
- A consultant headteacher has provided leadership support during the absence of the substantive headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher had just returned to her position.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class, some jointly with the headteacher.
- The quality of the work in pupils' books was scrutinised across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders and subject leaders as well as three governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to various groups of pupils, including the school council, listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including minutes of governors' meetings, the school development plan, information on current progress and the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as an email and a letter. They spoke informally to parents at the end of the school day. The views of the 15 pupils who responded to the online survey for pupils were considered as well as the 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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