

# Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy

Field Lane, Kessingland, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7QA

## Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- While leaders have brought significant improvements to the school, teaching, assessment, outcomes and the early years are not yet good.
- Achievement is still too variable in the school. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is not yet securely good. In particular, many older pupils are still catching up from the legacy of low achievement in the predecessor school.
- Some leaders are not using assessment information with enough precision. Most notably, middle leaders are not yet securely effective in using this to support pupils who need to catch up.
- Teaching, although improving, is not yet good. Teachers do not use assessment consistently enough to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- In some cases, teachers' expectations are not always high enough, particularly in encouraging and planning for pupils to use their writing skills in the wider curriculum.
- Leaders do not focus precisely enough on the progress that pupils are making when they undertake their routine monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders' feedback to staff is not always rigorous enough to support staff to improve rapidly.
- Teachers in the early years do not use assessment rigorously enough to identify what children know and can already do, so that their progress is quicker from their starting points.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since his arrival in September 2015, the headteacher has striven to raise standards.
- Leaders and staff share a mutual understanding of the ethos and vision in the school. As a result, the school is improving.
- Behaviour across the school is consistently good. Leaders' actions to raise standards in behaviour have been very effective.
- Governors and the trust have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively hold school leaders to account.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and parents agree.
- Leaders and staff meet the personal, social and emotional needs of their most vulnerable pupils remarkably well.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further refining the school’s assessment systems to track the progress of pupils, and groups of pupils, more precisely so that the actions that leaders take to help pupils catch up can be even more rigorous
  - ensuring that all monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment takes full account of the impact on the progress of different groups of pupils
  - improving the quality of feedback to teachers so that they have better guidance about how to improve the progress that pupils make
  - developing the confidence and skills of middle leaders further so that they use assessment information more precisely and develop greater rigour in their work, so that they have as clear an impact on the progress of pupils as senior leaders do.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
  - increase their expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, particularly in reading and mathematics
  - use prior assessment information more precisely to support pupils who are not making consistently good progress, and particularly those pupils who need to catch up
  - make sure that pupils have more opportunities to use their writing skills across all curriculum subjects.
- Further develop the effectiveness of the provision in the early years by ensuring that staff use assessment information to better inform and plan activities that ensure that children learn and develop more quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not as yet ensuring that teaching and learning and pupils' progress are consistently good.
- The headteacher and his team's hard work and ambition are starting to have an effect in raising standards. Their efforts have been hampered by staff changes and some weaker teaching, which has affected the rate of progress in some areas.
- The headteacher has introduced a new system to manage staff performance. This is beginning to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils. There is also now appropriately targeted training to help staff develop the skills they need. As a result, teachers are improving their practice. However, this is quicker for some than others. The headteacher, governors and the trust acknowledge that there is still some way to go to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best in the school and, therefore, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently effective.
- Leaders responsible for subjects or areas of the school's work are not consistently effective. Their feedback to staff is overtly focused on teachers' actions rather than the impact that teaching is having on pupils' progress.
- The deputy headteacher, along with the headteacher, has developed an assessment system that gives leaders and governors a clear overview of pupils' attainment, and uses this to discuss how well pupils achieve. However, leaders do not yet analyse this information in sufficient depth, especially the level of pupils' application of skills and knowledge across all of their learning. As a result, leaders cannot always identify rates of progress of all pupils in the current school year with enough precision and evidence to support them.
- Leaders have identified that the curriculum needs further development. The school provides a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, at times, this is not yet having a strong enough impact on pupils' ability to use their skills across other subject areas. Pupils' topic books do not have enough evidence to demonstrate that pupils are given ample opportunity to practise their writing skills.
- Kessingland Primary Academy is an improving school. Low standards in the predecessor school and some turbulence in leadership since the school opened as an academy have been challenges that leaders, governors and the trust have faced, head-on. The headteacher, supported well by the trust, the governing body and the two deputy headteachers, has been resilient and focused on securing solid, sustainable foundations where pupils come first and, as a result, their life chances are enhanced.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the pupils of this school, and a strong determination to improve. They know their school well and accurately share best practice between staff to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment where it is not yet securely good.
- All leaders carry out regular, routine checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders use the 'achievement team' meetings to provide teachers with

guidance on what they are doing well and areas for further development.

- School leaders ensure that, in keeping with the school's Christian ethos, learning opportunities promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils reflect maturely on the range of cultures and religions they learn about. Pupils also show they have a secure understanding of British values such as democracy and respect to demonstrate their readiness for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils worked with a neighbouring school to elect house captains, discussing and planning the voting process, and demonstrating an understanding of the importance of having the right to vote.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Additional funding is used well to provide precisely targeted teaching. Leaders quickly get to know their pupils well. Potential barriers to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities accessing their work are fully reviewed and appropriate support allocated that is routinely evaluated to check that it is making a difference. This has led to better rates of progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used carefully by school leaders. The pupil premium strategy on the school's website, coupled with the case study and observation evidence seen during the inspection, demonstrates that funding is being precisely targeted at supporting disadvantaged pupils appropriately in their learning. This is as a result of much high-quality work with families and ensuring that the well-being and emotional, social needs of pupils are assessed quickly and met precisely. The positive impact of this can now be seen across the school.
- Sport funding is spent well to improve pupils' skills and increase their engagement and motivation in physical activity. Specialist coaches are used to help teachers improve their physical education (PE) teaching skills, increase the clubs on offer and, additional to this, resources, including more specialist resources focusing on helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the PE curriculum. As a result, there is more uptake of extra-curricular clubs on offer by all pupils whatever their ability or need, and monitoring of the teaching of PE shows a growing confidence in teachers to deliver higher-quality PE lessons.
- Leaders and staff, particularly the school's 'SaFS (student and family support)' team, have worked hard to gain the confidence, trust and respect of parents during the period of turmoil and change for the school. The school's own recent survey shows that, overall, parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate what the leadership team is trying to achieve. Ofsted's parent text service and online questionnaire, Parent View, confirm this. One parent spoke for many saying: 'Excellent school has definitely come a long way in the last few years. No complaints, really happy and would definitely recommend this school to other parents.'
- Support from the trust in varying capacities has helped leaders, including governors, to increase their effectiveness. It has helped them all gain a clear picture of the school's work and plan the next steps for rapid, sustained improvement. The trust has a realistic and accurate view of the school and has contributed effectively to the positive journey the school has undertaken since converting to an academy.

## Governance

- The chair of the governing body fully appreciates the need for governors to be highly skilled, knowledgeable and effective in their role to challenge and support leaders. She, along with the trust's support, is leading governors effectively.
- Governors seek the right information about teachers' performance to help them evaluate the information they are provided with in assessing the quality of teaching and learning. They also effectively monitor the headteacher's professional development and performance, which has meant he has been well supported through a time of significant challenge and change for the school.
- All governors are fully involved in the life of the school. A cycle of monitoring is in place which links the work of the committees effectively. Visits into school are focused and purposeful and the subsequent reports are sufficiently detailed to keep all governors well informed. Governors undertake a forensic analysis of assessment information and ensure that there is a clear line of accountability for all leaders.
- Governors know how additional funds are used to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They know about the impact the funding is having on the most vulnerable pupils' achievement and provide appropriate challenge to ensure that regular reviews are undertaken so that there is continuous focus on the quality of the provision for these pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff work effectively to reach out to the community to ensure that the many vulnerable pupils are cared for well. This work has been a major focus for the school. Consequently, the headteacher has established effective relationships with the community, parents and families to ensure that pupils access the support that they need.
- Leaders put a high priority on the safety and well-being of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are well managed by the SaFS team and procedures are reviewed regularly. Leaders are diligent in making sure that staff training is up to date and covers all aspects such as being able to recognise the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- Staff have built up close working relationships with external agencies and make good use of specialist help and advice. Staff know their pupils and their families very well and are vigilant to any potential safeguarding concerns. Parents agree that their children are well looked after in school and kept safe.
- Leaders have taken rigorous steps to improve attendance and punctuality. They have provided effective support for families to encourage regular attendance. Consequently, the current attendance information is closer to the national average and improving swiftly over time. This is particularly the case for vulnerable groups of pupils.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching is still too variable across the school. Although the quality of teaching is improving, it does not yet ensure that progress from pupils' various starting points is consistently good.
- Over time, teaching has not been consistently strong enough to secure good progress and high standards for pupils, particularly in key stage 2 in reading and mathematics. Weaknesses in the teaching of reading and mathematics have not yet been eradicated swiftly enough to ensure that outcomes in these subjects are improving rapidly. This is why the quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement.
- Teachers do not use their subject knowledge consistently well in mathematics and reading. This means that they do not consistently provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in these subjects and, as a result, not all pupils are making up for previous lost ground quickly enough.
- Teachers provide regular guidance for pupils. However, its impact on pupils' progress diminishes when it does not help them identify how to apply their skills or challenge them to explain their reasoning. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said teachers were less clear about how well they were doing in mathematics than in other subjects. Consequently, outcomes in mathematics are still not good.
- Teachers actively promote reading through daily activities, the school's new library and events like the 'lads and dads' reading groups. However, there is a lack of a shared approach to reading. As a result, leaders have identified that more staff training is required to build teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding so that children and pupils develop their reading skills more rapidly.
- Over time, there have been substantial gains in the attainment of pupils' writing across the whole school. This is because teachers are being more precise about identifying the gaps in pupils' knowledge so that these can inform their teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This occasionally extends to other curriculum subjects where some pupils have been given the opportunity to apply their writing skills effectively, although this is not yet well embedded. As a result, pupils are currently achieving better in writing than in reading and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff have engaged productively in recent training and take care in getting to know individual pupils so they are well aware of their various needs. This makes sure that teachers plan effectively for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and that these pupils are well supported to successfully access their work.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from carefully tailored support that ensures that both their academic and emotional needs are met, enabling them to become confident learners. Early additional intervention to teaching, along with targeted one-to-one focused support, is ensuring that the progress disadvantaged pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics is improving.
- Overall, the most able pupils are being challenged in their work where teachers plan for pupils' higher starting points. Here, teachers do ensure that pupils are deepening their knowledge and applying what they know to different situations, and occasionally across other curriculum subjects. In the instances where the most able pupils are not making as much progress, it is where teachers do not use assessment as thoroughly to

pinpoint where pupils are starting from. As a result, they occasionally repeat learning that they already know and are proficient at.

- The most effective teaching, very often for the most vulnerable pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that pupils are given appropriate and timely opportunities to consolidate and deepen their understanding. Here, teachers model clearly what pupils are expected to achieve, and use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' thinking to develop pupils' explanation and reasoning. Where this happens, pupils' learning and progress are more rapid.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders' work to ensure that pupils are ready to learn and thoroughly supported in their emotional well-being is a strength in the school. The school's recent SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection confirmed this.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' emotional well-being is paramount in their work. Leaders are incredibly vigilant to pupils' developmental needs, and ensure that they provide meaningful support for those pupils who most need it, at crucial times in their lives.
- In particular, there are a large number of pupils who are young carers, and leaders go the extra mile in order to ensure that these pupils are supported and celebrated throughout the school. Pupils talk very knowledgeably, empathetically and affectionately about the large number of young carers they have in school. Pupils explained about the 'young carer week' the school held in which they experienced some aspects of what the expectations are for these pupils on a daily basis.
- The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to develop a good knowledge of how to stay safe from harm. Pupils talked about their understanding about fire and road safety. Additionally, pupils were adamant that the school has prepared them well to stay safe when using the internet, with a detailed insight into the risks that they may face.
- Pupils say they feel comfortable approaching any adult in the school to talk through their worries. They gave examples where this is continually encouraged by adults like the 'come and talk' area in the playground and they spoke fondly about members of the SaFS team whom they feel know them very well.
- Pupils thrive on the wide range of creative opportunities for them to contribute to both life in school and within the school community, as well as the chances their families have to be a part of their school life – for example, the celebration assemblies parents attend to share pupils' learning, the young carers' VIP lunches, and the community FISH (food in the school holidays) initiative.
- Attitudes to learning are generally strong. Pupils report that they are proud of their school. Pupils talk about how they enjoy being a part of Kessingland and feel that the school has prepared them well for their future. They spoke with thoughtfulness and enthusiasm about how they are taught to be resilient, both in their learning and in their

day-to-day life. On a few occasions, some pupils lose interest when they repeat work they know and have already covered.

- Parents who completed Parent View and contributed to the Ofsted text service said that their children are happy at the school and they believe their children are very well cared for and looked after. The majority of parents would recommend the school to others. One parent said: 'I can see how much this school will benefit children in future years as they progress through the school having had such a good start.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move about the school in an orderly manner, are mindful of school rules and follow them thoughtfully. Pupils behave well during assembly and show respect for each other's views. They are courteous to staff and visitors, and talk and play happily with each other during unstructured times such as playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour and know why they should behave well. Positive behaviour is widely celebrated and adults watch for pupils doing the right thing. The 'always' pupils are rewarded routinely. These pupils pride themselves on always displaying appropriate behaviour no matter what. Pupils told inspectors that they understand the school's golden rules represented by 'R.A.C.E.' and the 'staying on the right track' behaviour system. They are proud, both of themselves and others when they 'go above and beyond to reach the gold road'.
- During the inspection, pupils demonstrated that they are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They display exemplary manners. Their sensible behaviour in school helps to create a calm, purposeful environment.
- Leaders keep thorough and detailed records of occasional incidents of poor behaviour. They analyse this information for trends and use it to inform the support given to pupils. Where the school has identified that pupils may need additional support to help them manage their own behaviour, effective provision has been put in place and appropriate actions taken.
- Breaktimes are characterised by friendly relationships. Older pupils regularly support and help younger pupils. Year 6 pupils take all their responsibilities seriously and are proud to be the oldest pupils in the school.
- Historically, attendance has been below the national average over time. This is particularly so for the more vulnerable pupils. However, leaders' relentless focus, and monitoring of this, is ensuring that attendance is continuously improving. As a result of the effective work with families, recent attendance information shows that the school attendance and persistent absence rates are getting better and are now closer to the national averages.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Requires improvement**

- The number of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the early years remains variable. Observations of children’s learning indicate that those who are currently in the Reception class are on track to achieve well from their different starting points and the proportion achieving a good level of development is increasing.
- Although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Year 1 phonics screening was below the national average in 2015 and 2016, it has improved. The very recent phonics outcomes for 2017 show that this will be sustained.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in key stage 1. The school report an improvement in 2017 and current submitted teachers’ assessments show that this is the case. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in Year 2 are making accelerated progress more consistently than in some other areas of the school. As a result, achievement in key stage 1 is improving.
- Inconsistencies in the teaching of reading and mathematics over time mean that pupils historically made slower progress than that seen nationally. This is particularly so in key stage 2. In 2016, the numbers of pupils reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national level. The current school assessment information does show that, overall, the rate of progress key stage 2 pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, but that this is not yet rapid enough in some classes.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils’ progress was in line with that of other pupils nationally in reading and writing. However, it was lower in mathematics. The additional funding leaders receive is used well to support disadvantaged pupils both to access their work in class and also to effectively meet their varying social, emotional and personal needs. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, including the most able of them, is steadily improving from their varied starting points. More of the most able disadvantaged pupils are now working towards a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress from their wide-ranging starting points. This is because the help they receive, including from additional adults, is well planned, regularly checked and targeted well to their needs.
- The achievement of the most able pupils, including the few most able disadvantaged pupils, is improving, particularly in reading and writing, whereby in 2016 the proportion of higher attainers achieving the higher standards by the end of Year 6 was at least in line with the national average.
- By the time Year 6 leave Kessingland, although their rates of progress are improving and significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding are diminishing, their attainment is still below the national average. However, inspection evidence of pupils’ rapid progress in their confidence and personal, social and emotional development indicates that they are equipped with skills and attitudes that stand them in good stead to continue their swift catch-up at secondary school.

**Early years provision**

**Requires improvement**

- The early years classes have grown over time. Leaders identify that there have been many significant changes in the early years which have resulted in inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning. Although improvements are evident, the early years provision is not yet consistently good.
- Historically, children joined the Nursery with the skills and knowledge typically below those expected for children of the same age. Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is slightly below the national average, outcome information shows that the gap is diminishing and attainment is rising over time. This means that more children are well prepared for transition to Year 1 both academically and emotionally.
- The new online assessment system is not yet well embedded and used effectively to provide evidence of children's development. Teachers and staff work tirelessly to upload information, but it is not closely linked to the assessment of pupils well enough, or used effectively to plan for children's next steps. Equally, teachers do not use assessment broadly enough to identify precise gaps in children's knowledge.
- Teachers do not yet use children's starting points precisely enough to identify their next stages in learning. Planning too often underestimates what children can already do, and provides activities that are sometimes too easy.
- Children settle quickly into well-established school routines. They know what to do when working and playing together, and when listening and responding to staff. As a result, there is a calm but purposeful learning environment which children enjoy being a part of.
- Adults encourage children to develop their confidence and independence. This is particularly so when children select where to play. Children help and support each other demonstrating effective interpersonal skills.
- Parents are very positive about the opportunities they receive to be part of their children's education. Parental input is welcomed by the staff. This ensures that all of each individual child's achievements, from home and school, are captured to contribute to their learning journey.
- The early years provision in the school is becoming increasingly popular with the community. In recent years, the improvements in the learning environment, care of children and leadership have become more appealing to local parents. As a result, the numbers of children in the early years are rising.
- All staff who work with the early years children take good care of them and keep them safe. The training and development staff have received have ensured that children are well cared for and that safeguarding is effective.

## School details

Unique reference number	141172
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10031343

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jan Pierson
Headteacher	Adrian Crossland
Telephone number	01502 740 223
Website	<a href="http://www.kessingland.dneat.org">www.kessingland.dneat.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@kessingland.dneat.org">head@kessingland.dneat.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its

website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, school staff and the chair of the governing body plus other governors. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from the trust and other trustees supporting the school.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and lunchtimes. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised the pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a wide range of their books. They also listened to a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors closely observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information, showing the progress pupils currently in school are making.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body and trust meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to Parent View. Inspectors considered 12 free-text responses from parents and 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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