

Sparhawk Infant School & Nursery

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120999
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380145
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2012
Lead inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Marshall-Nichols
Headteacher	Carina Ingham
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geof Timms

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons, taught by four teachers, for a total of almost five hours, as well as spending other time looking at pupils' work. In addition, meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body, as well as pupils. The inspector took account of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of assessment data, policies, reports and planning documents. Responses to 98 parental questionnaires were analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average but high in some year groups. Their main needs are in speech, language and communication difficulties and hearing impairments.

The school has achieved gold 'Sing Up', Activemark and bronze ECO awards, and has Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Writing and mathematics skills have risen, and are currently above average. However, reading standards are broadly average. Only a few pupils reach the higher levels in all three subjects by the end of Year 2 and so achievement is not outstanding. Children have an excellent start to their schooling in the Nursery year where aspects of their learning are exemplary, and they make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, often from low starting points.
- Children’s good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes helps provide them with a good basis for their future learning. The good progress throughout the school is due to teaching that is consistently good over time. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs because interventions are well planned and effectively delivered. Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong and have a positive impact on learning.
- Pupils’ behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. This has a major impact on their learning and on how safe they feel at school. The best examples of their excellent social and moral development are shown through unprompted support for each other, such as in Year 1 when one child offered another their pencil. Pupils talk very positively about how well they get on together. The parents’ and carers’ questionnaires are equally positive about how safe pupils feel in school.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a strong vision focused on improving pupils’ learning, with a strong emphasis on thinking skills and the arts. The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support. A well-planned curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through the growing use of philosophy to encourage creative thinking.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading by:
 - further developing the support the school provides for parents to help their children
 - increasing the links made with other excellent providers to share good practice
 - developing pupils' reading with adults further so it has a more central place in the teaching of reading.

- Help teachers raise their expectations of the achievement of the middle and higher attaining pupils, and increase the level of challenge in the activities provided for them.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The achievement of most pupils in lessons observed during the inspection, and that reflected in the examples of their work scrutinised, was good. The progress pupils make from their varied starting points is usually good. Most children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Outstanding achievement is clearly evident in philosophy sessions. These are appropriate for the age group and provide very challenging opportunities to develop children's thinking skills. In the Reception and Nursery classes, children's learning needs are well provided for in the wide range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Progress is particularly strong in developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, and linking letters and sounds. For example, in one good session in Reception the theme of journeys was addressed through a good range of activities. One group worked together well using construction apparatus to make a range of imaginative vehicles. In the outside area, an adult helped another group explore a range of materials while making boats and testing them to see if they floated. Children were very involved and showed pride in their achievements.

In Key Stage 1, progress continues to be good. However, in 2011 too few pupils reached the highest levels. Current data support by inspection observations and show that standards in Year 2 are higher than last year, especially in writing. This shows that pupils are working at a level almost a year ahead of similar children nationally. In mathematics, standards are also above average while in reading they are slightly below average, although their understanding of sounds and letters is good. Even so, their enjoyment of books is clear. In Year 2, for example, pupils enjoyed sharing books they had brought into school and could talk knowledgeably about the author, illustrator and 'blurb'.

The school, through one member of staff, advises and supports other schools on the use of philosophy with children locally, nationally and internationally. This exemplary practice is spreading throughout the school and is having a positive impact on pupils'

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communication and thinking skills and this is beginning to be reflected in their achievement.

Parents and carers are very positive about their children's achievements at the school. Pupils say that the school helps them learn new things. Teaching assistants often provide excellent support in lessons for disabled pupils, such as those with a hearing impairment, and those pupils with special educational needs. Their careful planning, tracking of progress and very well taught interventions ensure these pupils make good progress. There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of pupils.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils say the school helps them to do as well as they can and they clearly enjoy their learning. One hundred per cent of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires said that their children are well taught and make good progress. The inspection findings support these positive views.

Teachers provide a wide range of good activities through the planned curriculum. Pupils learn much about other faiths and cultures and this promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The school has a very positive ethos and this supports pupils' learning; assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on a range of spiritual matters. Excellent cultural development is evident in the high-quality music performed and art work displayed. Excellent self-portraits by pupils in Years 1 and 2 create a very imaginative display. Teachers provide unusual projects such as one involving a mysterious object on the school field to promote creative and imaginative thinking and responses. Teachers encourage real challenge and imagination and this work clearly shows the high levels of achievement pupils can reach. In an excellent philosophy lesson in the Nursery children were challenged to think about the characteristics of two imaginary characters and whether they would change depending on their facial expressions or on what they wear.

Teachers record a wide range of assessment information, including the detail from the recently updated and improved tracking system. They use this information well to group pupils. However, too many tasks remain focused on the whole class rather than targeted especially at the middle ability or more able pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants and other support staff work closely together. This has a positive impact on the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Sound technology and signing, for example, are used well to enable hearing impaired pupils take a full part in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a very harmonious community. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. This is typical over time as is evident in questionnaire responses and other evidence. Pupils are very polite and friendly to those they know and respectful towards visitors. Their excellent behaviour in lessons helps their

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learning and they cooperate and collaborate very effectively. This is evident, for example, by the way children in reception play and work together developing their social skills by sharing and collaborating. In Year 1 pupils worked well together to solve a mathematical problem linked to their literacy text. Pupils throughout the school love talking about and sharing their work.

Pupils spoken to said behaviour was good in lessons and at other times as well. While pupils have a good understanding of what consists of bullying, they could remember no examples of any bullying behaviour in school. Parents and carers are also very positive about the behaviour in school and all of those who responded said children felt safe and the school responded well to any concerns raised. These views are supported by the inspection evidence. One parent wrote that the school is 'very supportive towards my son, he has developed much better than expected.'

From the Early Years Foundation Stage, they enter school happily and punctually, building good habits for the future. There is a strong focus on routines, a well-structured day and excellent planned opportunities to learn and play together in the Nursery and Reception class. This helps prepare children well for Year 1. Attendance is above average. Firm efforts are made to ensure all pupils are safe and able to learn effectively.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. One parent wrote that 'The headteacher is the pinnacle point of the school, caring and professional.' This reflects the views of many and is supported by the evidence of the inspection. The headteacher provides a clear vision and leadership focused on raising standards but also on retaining creativity throughout the curriculum.

The headteacher has developed an improved and more detailed tracking system that enables staff to see clearly how well their pupils are progressing. This means any underachievement is quickly recognised and addressed through interventions in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. The school is proactive in seeking outside support and expertise as required. This extends the creative curriculum as well as providing extra support and expertise for the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

All members of staff say they are proud to be at the school. Although a small number are unsure how well the school provides for their professional development, effective systems for staff training and the good leadership of teaching is raising standards still further, and has ensured that teachers are continually improving their practice. This has resulted in some members of staff being asked to lead training on the curriculum or philosophy at a local and national level. With many clear improvements over a sustained period building further on what was already a good school in the past, it is evident that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Staff work well as a team and

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subject leaders are effective in developing new ideas and focusing on raising standards. They have good systems for monitoring their subjects through a range of activities including talking with pupils and observing lessons. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well, including the excellent promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and philosophy.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. An effective system for visiting the school and monitoring its work is followed well and provides governors with useful reports on what is observed. The outcomes of these visits help inform the judgements and decisions made at governing body meetings. The school is very effective at promoting equality and tackling any discrimination, as is shown by the excellent inclusion of the pupils with hearing impairments. Every effort is made to develop pupils' views and experiences of the wider world. The safeguarding arrangements fully meet current government requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sparhawk Infant School & Nursery, Norwich, NR7 8BU

Thank you for the way you welcomed me to your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit, reading your questionnaires and talking with many of you about your school. I especially enjoyed having lunch with you. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. This is important because it helps the teachers provide you with interesting work as well as keeping you safe and happy in school. Keep it up!

Sparhawk is a good school. I am sure that it will continue to improve in the future because you are all working so hard together to make it successful. This is especially evident in writing and mathematics, in which you do well. I have asked the teachers to try and help more of you get better at reading. You have sound basic skills and just need opportunities to develop them further.

It is evident that more of you should be reaching even higher levels before you leave the school. I have asked teachers to try and help more of you who find learning easier to do even better and give you work that will challenge you more.

The headteacher and governing body provide good leadership. Your teachers work very hard to give you some good, interesting lessons. I especially enjoyed seeing a philosophy lesson and some of the displays of this work. You are learning the basic skills well and this is helping you to be ready for junior school and your future lives.

Thank you again for your friendliness and help. I hope the concert went well and that you continue to enjoy your time at Sparhawk and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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