

# Nene Valley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133537
<b>Local Authority</b>	Peterborough
<b>Inspection number</b>	381511
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Kirk

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gail Warnes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Mansell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Sugar Way Peterborough PE2 9RT
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 21 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, policies, safeguarding documents and teachers' planning of work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as 73 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the improved achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 reflects pupils' current achievement across the school.
- Whether teachers' expectations of more-able pupils are high enough and how well pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- The effectiveness of the senior leaders and the governing body in rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school.

## Information about the school

Nene Valley is an average-sized primary school serving a relatively new housing development on the outskirts of Peterborough. As more houses are built, the school is continually expanding to accommodate new pupils, many of whom enter the school other than at the normal times. The large majority of pupils are White British, with about 25% from a very wide range of minority ethnic heritages, a few of whom are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved the International Schools Award and National Healthy School status. The school operates a daily breakfast club, managed by the governing body.

An after-school club is situated within the school but is not managed by the governing body. This setting was inspected separately.

**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: how good is the school?****2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

This is a good school where pupils say they feel safe and are well cared for by staff. Pupils behave well, are polite, friendly and confident to try out new skills in lessons. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, but improving rapidly. Progress throughout both key stages is good and is improving strongly particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils' current achievement is better in English than in mathematics as a result of recent initiatives by the school to improve the teaching of reading and to develop teachers' ability to assess pupils' writing accurately. School and national data show that the progress of Year 6 pupils in particular has accelerated significantly. This improvement can be attributed to good teaching, positive relationships and an exciting curriculum. Sometimes teachers make the learning intentions for lessons too complicated, trying to teach too many aspects of learning at the same time, reducing progress. Although teachers adapt work to suit pupils of different abilities, occasionally, the work is either too hard or too easy, so some pupils make less progress than others in the lesson.

The youngest children in Reception have a good start to their school life. They make good progress in all areas because staff are careful to assess each child's stage of learning and personal development and plan the next steps for each of them. In all years, pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their high rate of attendance and their excellent contribution to their school and to the community. They take on a variety of jobs, such as acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils and checking the recycling of waste materials. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's core values encourage pupils to think deeply about how these relate to their own and others' experiences in the world around them.

The headteacher and senior staff communicate consistently high expectations, and their vision to continue the school's improved performance is shared by all. Consequently, teachers are increasingly accountable for the performance of the pupils they teach. The improvements in teaching also result from the school's successful focus on changing the content of the curriculum, from which pupils develop an excellent understanding of the national and international dimensions of community cohesion, which is reflected in the achievement of the International Schools Award. The school has extensive links with China and much creative work takes place.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The school has worked hard to engage them to assist their children's learning. For example, there was a particularly high take-up for the series of workshops held in Reception to enable parents and

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carers to understand the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and to work alongside their child.

Good leadership and management, driven by the headteacher, are central to the improvements taking place, such as the improved use of assessment to evaluate pupils' progress and to inform teachers' planning of work. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the governing body to hold the school to account on key issues. Strong leadership has ensured better progress and a better quality of teaching since the previous inspection, demonstrating the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics to above the national average by:
  - sharing the good practice already used by some teachers in using the 'steps to success' to help pupils understand new concepts and calculations
  - developing pupils' problem-solving skills across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' learning by ensuring that teaching:
  - consistently follows the school's best practice in simplifying what pupils are intended to learn in each lesson with a focus on essentials
  - uses fully assessment data on pupils' prior attainment to provide activities that hold the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities
  - ensures that pupils always understand what they need to do to achieve well.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Attainment, although average overall, is above average in English and improving strongly. Many of the pupils who join this continually expanding school during term times have levels of attainment below those of other pupils. They, together with all other pupils make good progress, but given the limited time some are in the school, their attainment does not always match that of others. Recent assessment results, endorsed by inspectors' observations, indicate that pupils in Years 4 to 6 currently have above-average standards in English, where progress is most rapid. Standards in mathematics are broadly average because the good practice developed by some teachers in helping pupils to understand new mathematical concepts and calculations has not been shared sufficiently. In an effective Year 3 lesson, pupils were helped to understand the 'steps to success', for subtracting two-digit numbers using a number line. Each step was explicit, with diagrams and written instructions. Achievement in English is good throughout the school for all groups of pupils. This was exemplified in a Year 4 lesson where pupils successfully worked in groups to change a narrative into a playscript.

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Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress with helpful adult support in lessons and targeted interventions when required.

Pupils enjoy their learning, reflected in their positive attitudes and clear enjoyment of all that the school has to offer. Pupils' good understanding of how to stay healthy is evident in their ability to discuss the impact of a balanced diet and the importance of taking regular exercise – supported by the school's achievement of National Healthy School status and the impressive take-up of sports activities. Members of the school council are formally elected and responsibly take part in staff interviews. Links to a local business enable pupils to develop workplace skills well through working alongside engineers. However, pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills are less well developed as teachers have only just started to evaluate individual pupils' attainment in this area to inform them when planning lessons. Consequently, pupils' development of workplace skills do not match their high rate of attendance. Pupils show initiative in gaining knowledge and understanding for themselves. For example, lower attainers in a Year 5 mathematics lesson applied themselves diligently to test all the possible nets which made a cube, checking their solutions with each other. They were clearly enthusiastic when talking about what they had discovered.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Most teaching is securing good learning and progress. Teachers have good subject

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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knowledge and relationships between adults and pupils are positive. English and information and communication technology are used effectively across the full curriculum. Resources are chosen well. Teachers' good use of questioning encourages pupils to talk about their work and explain their thinking. The school collates and uses valuable assessment data in assessing performance. Occasionally, this is not used to best effect, so learning is not fully adapted for different abilities and pupils struggle to understand how to improve their work. Marking is sometimes informative in highlighting the strengths and areas for development for individual pupils. However, too often work is simply ticked and advice for how to improve is absent.

Vibrant displays across the school effectively celebrate pupils' achievements. The curriculum is imaginative, with a good focus on practical work and experimentation. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were presented with a range of liquids and solids mixed together because the 'aliens' had not organised their space-ship carefully, resulting in a contaminated water tank and mixed products in their storage area. Pupils cooperated well in groups and tested various methods to successfully separate the materials. A limitation of the curriculum is that it does not yet ensure pupils' achievement in mathematics matches that in English.

The school's good care, guidance and support for individuals means that pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable make the most of all that the school has to offer. Pupils who join in the school's morning sensory circuits club show clear enjoyment of the specialist activities to aid physical and mental development. The school has good examples of support for individuals, resulting in improved behaviour, punctuality and achievement. Pupils who attend the daily breakfast club enjoy the wide range of activities and games on offer, as well as the healthy food options. The club is friendly and provides a positive start to school day. Safeguarding and welfare are good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers at all levels are ambitious to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to achieve as well as they can and promotion of equality of opportunity is embedded within the school's ethos. Senior leaders track individual pupils' and groups' progress effectively to identify any underperformance and take action as necessary. Pupils from different ethnic heritages achieve equally well. Leaders and

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managers make good use of monitoring activities to help evaluate the performance of the school. Consequently, teaching has improved although, occasionally, best practice is not consistently applied. The focus on improving English has been successful, and new initiatives have started to raise attainment and accelerate progress in mathematics.

The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. It undertakes its own extensive monitoring, focused well on the school's priorities, to question and challenge performance. It has changed its organisation to ensure all members have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Members are tenacious in monitoring safeguarding arrangements, resulting in effective improvements to security. The school effectively integrates safety and safeguarding into the curriculum to help pupils understand how to stay safe. Leaders are constantly vigilant to improve teachers' practice to reflect developing technologies. The very large majority of parents and carers are convinced that the school is a safe place for their children. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and acts on feedback received, for example by undertaking actions to improve parents' and carers' knowledge of how to help their children learn through the introduction of 'learning logs'.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to mix with and communicate with pupils from other schools which have different cultural, religious and socio-economic contexts to their own. The impact of this work is evident in the positive way pupils embrace new pupils to the school from a range of different heritages, including those for whom English is an additional language.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage



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

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Pupils achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because adults have good knowledge of learning and welfare needs. An interesting, welcoming and well-equipped Early Years Foundation Stage unit promotes positive attitudes to learning and a good range of experiences. Opportunities for role play are particularly well developed. Children enjoyed using the binoculars to spot 'animals in the jungle', while others using animal masks attempted to hide in dens and behind trees. Pupils' number skills are developed well through adult-led group work and a selection of independent activities using appropriate equipment. For example, in one lesson seen, two boys persevered with their chosen activity to make a line of ten bears. They counted them, placing a finger carefully on each bear as they had been shown, constantly adjusting how many they had until they had exactly the right number. Children know the rules to keep themselves safe and take responsibility for choosing what they do, for example, when to have their milk during the morning session. Behaviour is good. Leaders and managers are able to demonstrate how they have raised children's achievement year on year by analysing annual results and comparing them to those nationally to indicate any areas where the school is performing well or needs to improve. Action has been taken to adapt the curriculum so children make even better progress. However, some independent activities do not sufficiently challenge children to try out new ideas or engage them actively enough in their learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, all said that their children enjoyed school. One summed up the views of many, 'I am more than happy with the school and all of the staff.' Inspection findings firmly endorse parents and carers' positive views about the school. The few written concerns were individual matters. The inspectors judge the school to be diligent in dealing with parental concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nene Valley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	78	16	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	71	18	25	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	45	35	48	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	45	35	48	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	56	31	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	44	40	55	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	62	27	37	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	45	35	48	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	48	31	42	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	37	34	47	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	33	40	55	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	52	71	19	26	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	70	20	27	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Nene Valley Primary School, Peterborough, PE2 9RT**

Thank you for making us very welcome and answering our questions when we inspected your school recently. You told us that the staff take good care of you and that you feel safe in school. We were impressed with your good attitudes and behaviour and by how well you take care of one another, for example, those of you in Year 6 who we observed looking after and playing with your Reception 'buddies'.

We judge that Nene Valley is a good school. Your progress is accelerating each year and your attainment is average in mathematics and better in English. The teaching is good. Your teachers are particularly skilled at making lessons interesting and enjoyable, for example, by planning practical activities when you make things or do experiments. You have an excellent understanding of what is right and wrong, and your knowledge and positive attitude towards other cultures and religions are outstanding. Your development of workplace skills is good and your attendance is excellent – showing how much you enjoy coming to school. You contribute extremely well to the school in many ways, for example, by taking on the responsibility for checking that each class does its recycling.

To improve your school further, we have asked your teachers to help you to do better in mathematics and to simplify exactly what they want you to learn in each lesson, so that you are very clear about what you need to do to achieve well. Very occasionally, the work set for you is too hard or too easy, so we have asked the teachers to take extra care to ensure that your work is at exactly the right level to challenge each one of you, so that you learn really fast.

You can help too by trying especially hard in mathematics and by keeping up all your important jobs around school so that everything continues to run smoothly.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk  
Lead inspector

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