

# Necton VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	134043
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	381594
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Duncan Ramsey

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Steel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	School Road Necton Swaffham PE37 8HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01760 722975
<b>Fax number</b>	01760 720992
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	14–15 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381594



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey

Additional Inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by six teachers, and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and had discussions with a group of Year 2 pupils and a group from Year 6. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records, and assessment information relating to pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 96 parents and carers, 93 pupils, and 21 staff.

## Information about the school

Necton VA Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. It opened in September 2007, replacing the former first and middle schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that of schools nationally. Almost all pupils have White British backgrounds and of the very few of minority ethnic heritage, none speaks English as an additional language. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools status, the Activemark award, and is a Drama for Learning School. It is also a member of the Children's University promoting learning outside the classroom. There has been significant disruption to staffing during the last two years. The school meets the current floor standard, through which the government sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A privately managed pre-school setting, the Little Oaks Playgroup, operates from the school site and is 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and the school has been successful in creating a warm, welcoming ethos that values all pupils. The school is not good because pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- The achievement of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. Typically, their achievement in English is stronger than that in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but improving. Good teaching is evident when there are high expectations, an accurate match between tasks and pupils' ability levels, and active pupil involvement. Those are not yet consistent features of all lessons. In addition, teachers do not always use discussions at the end of lessons effectively to consolidate the learning that has taken place within the class.
- Behaviour and safety are good. The values-led curriculum encourages good behaviour and conduct around school effectively. Older pupils respond very well to the school's expectation that they act as good role models to the younger ones.
- Changes in teaching staff since the last inspection have resulted in significant challenges with regard to securing whole-school consistency and have slowed the pace of school improvement and pupils' progress. The headteacher has shown good leadership by implementing effective plans to tackle those challenges, appointing high-quality staff and introducing focused intervention plans to help pupils make better progress. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving, so that pupils are making better progress and working at age-related levels. Performance management systems are used

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effectively to bring improvements in teaching.

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

- Raise attainment and improve progress especially in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring pupils have sufficient practice in mental mathematics activities
  - supporting the progress of more able pupils through the provision of more challenging tasks.
  - encouraging the active involvement of pupils in all lessons
- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - providing sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils in all lessons
  - using discussion time more effectively at the end of each lesson to consolidate learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children's skills and abilities on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage show considerable variation each year, ranging from being in line with national expectations to well below. The school's analysis of children's abilities shows they are often below national expectations in language and communication, reading and writing, and personal development. The children make good progress because of good-quality teaching which develops their confidence and provides an exciting environment that stimulates learning both indoors and outdoors. By the end of Reception Year, the gap with national attainment has narrowed. Pupils of all abilities, both boys and girls, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 and attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, though there was a significant dip in mathematics last year. The current Year 2 cohort has been assessed as working close to national expectations in all areas, showing improved progress from their starting points.

Progress remains satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. In English, the performance of pupils has varied over the last three years, sometimes above national expectations and sometimes below. In mathematics, however, pupils have consistently achieved below the expected level. A significant dip in mathematics in 2011 was caused by a cohort that experienced some unavoidable disruption to their teaching and contained a much higher than average proportion of pupils with difficulties that affected their learning. The gaps in pupils' attainment caused by changes in teaching staff are closing. That is most apparent where teachers have high expectations and plan activities that support the progress of all groups of pupils. It was demonstrated in a Year 4 class that were developing problem-solving skills in mathematics. Very high expectations from the class teacher, combined with effective support for the wide range of abilities in class, meant all pupils made good progress and reached a

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standard above expectations for their age.

Progress and attainment in reading has been stronger than in writing and mathematics. Pupils of all ages are supported to learn a range of strategies that help them to read with confidence. They make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar text and enjoy reading a wide variety of books. The quality of teaching in this area varies but is always at least satisfactory and is particularly good in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to all other pupils. The support they receive enables them to work confidently in lessons. Older boys are given particularly effective support to make progress in reading, as are those with more severe learning difficulties, who are integrated effectively into class.

Parents and carers are confident that their children make good progress, a view also held by pupils. Inspectors found that groups of pupils make satisfactory progress over time in lessons.

### **Quality of teaching**

The school's focus on improving teaching and learning is having a positive impact on the quality and consistency of the strategies used to support pupils' developing knowledge and understanding. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are enthusiastic learners and enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities that help them to enjoy school. Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that children make use of the opportunities for child-initiated writing.

In all lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils' positive behaviour promote a purposeful climate for learning and secure good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development in pupils. A range of satisfactory and good teaching was observed. The best teaching provided pupils' with challenging activities matched to their ability levels. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils developed scientific skills of investigation and sorting through carefully thought-out activities that included excellent teacher support and a stimulating independent activity in the role-play area. Strong cross-curricular links are also seen in the best teaching with particularly good emphasis on developing literacy skills through outdoor activities. Although such effective practice is seen in a good number of lessons, it is not embedded fully throughout the school and pupils are not given sufficient time to practise their mental mathematics in order to support their progress fully in other aspects of the subject. In some lessons where teaching is satisfactory, it is because activities provided for pupils of different ability levels are not thought through sufficiently to provide enough challenge. In addition, discussion time at the end of lessons is not always used well enough to ensure that pupils have a chance to consolidate the learning that has just taken place.

Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils of all ability levels and are

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always briefed fully by teachers on the purpose of the lesson. Teaching assistants provide good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and are successful in ensuring all pupils are included in activities wherever possible.

Inspection findings do not endorse fully the views of most parents and carers and pupils that teaching is good, because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential as learners. In particular, progress in Key Stage 2 can slow and the rate of pupils' mathematical development is variable.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The vast majority of pupils behave well around school and in their lessons. They are encouraged to show kindness and respect and to develop an enthusiasm for learning. The warmth of relationships is evidence of the school's caring ethos and the strength of pupils' social development. Attendance has improved, so that it is now above average. Older pupils are particularly good at acting as role models. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically and show considerable care, for example, when they play with the puppets in the Reception-Year playground. Pupils' behaviour for learning is good. Pupils respond well when they are given opportunities for independent learning and exciting practical activities.

Inspection findings endorse the views of the vast majority of parents and carers who believe that their children are safe in school. Inspectors found that the overwhelming majority of pupils are polite and courteous and that, when they do misbehave, they are treated fairly and in a positive manner. A small minority of parents and carers commented that learning is sometimes disrupted during lessons, but the inspection found no evidence of this. Pupils agree that behaviour is good and consider the school to be a friendly and fun place. They say that bullying is very rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively by relating it to the school's values. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based name calling. Older pupils feel confident to help the young ones with grazes in the playground because they have all been trained in first aid.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has led the school well through a period of significant staffing turbulence that has hindered pupils' progress recently. The governing body has provided good support during this time and it has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and how to improve the school to the next level. Increased staffing stability since September 2011 and a range of new school initiatives have had an impact on pupils' progress, so that pupils of all abilities are now performing in line with national expectations. The role of middle leaders is developing, so that they are making an increasing contribution to pupils' progress.

The appointment of high-quality new staff, combined with good systems for induction, staff training, and performance management, mean that there is now the

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opportunity to develop consistency in all classes. Already, a new mathematics intervention strategy has had a significant effect in increasing the rates of progress in this area. The school uses the information from monitoring the strategies to plan the curriculum, so it has greater impact on reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although inconsistencies remain, the improvements secured so far this year are reflected in pupils' faster progress and attainment data that is stronger than in previous years. In particular, the progress in Key Stage 2 is more rapid, as is that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school's track record since the previous inspection shows there is satisfactory capacity for improvement.

The school has close working relationships with a variety of outside agencies and uses these well to promote equal opportunities. It is particularly effective at ensuring that good care is taken of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, so that they make equal progress to other pupils. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are managed well and applied consistently. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good, as are opportunities to take part in a wide range of curriculum activities. The choir has been particularly successful at performing for a wide range of audiences in and out of school. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the curriculum is planned suitably to meet the needs of all pupils, irrespective of background or ability.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](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.

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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



16 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Necton VA Primary School, Swaffham, PE37 8HT**

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires you completed. Yours is a satisfactory school, with some good features.

- Children make good progress in the Reception class.
- You enjoy your school and treat each with respect.
- Your attendance is good and almost all of you behave well and are keen to learn.
- You are learning more in your lessons and making better progress now than before, because the quality of teaching is improving and because of all the extra programmes that have been put in place to help you with things you find difficult.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure the school improves.

These are the things I have asked the school to do better.

- I have asked the teachers to make sure that you improve your mathematics by using targets more effectively, giving you more practice at mental mathematics and providing more challenging activities for those who find mathematics easy.
- I have asked the teachers to help all of you make good progress in every lesson by matching activities to your ability levels and by spending time at the end of each lesson discussing what you have learnt, so that you can be sure you have understood what was intended.

Yours sincerely

Duncan Ramsey  
Lead inspector

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