

Stalham Community Infant School

Brumstead Road, Stalham, Norwich, NR12 9DG

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are often below the levels expected for their age, pupils make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics, and achieve well.
- In some year groups a high proportion of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. These pupils generally make good, and sometimes excellent progress, due to the high quality of help and guidance they receive.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe in school, and their very positive attitudes to learning are evident in every class.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan very imaginative and lively lessons that encourage pupils' active participation. Many of the teaching assistants give pupils high-quality support.
- Good leadership and management have had a positive impact on teaching and achievement due to good monitoring of teaching and learning, well-considered staff training and better tracking of pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in supporting and challenging the school has improved considerably since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress remains slower in writing than in other subject areas. The school's efforts to overcome pupils' weaker speaking and listening skills and their limited vocabulary have not yet been fully successful, and so not all pupils are reaching the standards they are capable of in writing.
- The school recently took over the pre-school within the same building, but has not yet fully merged it with the Reception class to make the most of the facilities and teaching space.
- The Reception staff do not always make the most of opportunities to guide children's learning, especially to develop writing skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and parts of lessons. Most of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, pupils, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were looked at carefully. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- The inspector analysed and took account of the school's past surveys of parental views, as well as 12 responses to the online survey (Parent View). In addition, nine staff questionnaires were considered.
- The inspector looked at key inspection documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own analysis of how it is doing, reports to the governing body and the school improvement plan.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stalham is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- An average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported through school action, but a well-above-average proportion are supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school receives additional government funding for this group of pupils, known as the pupil premium.
- The large majority of the pupils are White British. A small number start school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The governing body has taken over the leadership and management of the pre-school group since the last inspection. This is inspected and reported on separately.
- A children's centre shares the school site, but this was not included in the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in learning to write, and help more of them reach the higher levels, by:
 - giving pupils good, regular opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills, and to develop a wider vocabulary
 - giving the youngest children more opportunities to develop their emerging writing skills.
- Improve the education of the youngest children by:
 - fully integrating the pre-school to make the best use of available adults and resources
 - reviewing the planning of sessions, so that children spend less time choosing their own activities and adults provide more demanding, focused activities
 - reviewing the way space, displays of work and resources are used, to make the learning environment as stimulating as possible for young children.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically start in the Reception class with levels of knowledge and understanding below the levels expected nationally for their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional skills and aspects of their communication skills such as speaking, listening and writing. They make good progress in their personal and social development, playing together well, sharing toys and relating well to adults. Progress in other areas is not as good because the staff do not always make the most of opportunities to guide and promote children's learning, particularly in writing.
- The school's results in the 2012 Year 1 reading check were below average. Leaders reacted quickly by changing the way the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) is carried out. The current pupils' improved skills and clear enjoyment of a wide range of books show that this has been successful.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are improving each year. The current Year 2 pupils are making good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Improvements to the work on phonics are having a positive impact on pupils' spelling as well as their reading skills.
- Progress in writing remains slower. It is held back by pupils' weaker speaking and listening skills, and often limited vocabulary, which prevent more of them from reaching the higher levels in writing. The hard work carried out by the school to narrow the attainment gap between boys and girls in writing is beginning to show some success, but the work set is not always adapted enough to meet pupils' individual needs.
- Over the last two years, the school has considerably narrowed the gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups. This is a result of the additional support these pupils receive, funded by the pupil premium. All those supported by the pupil premium in Year 2 last year made good progress, and they reached above-average standards overall in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported. There are no marked differences in the achievement of different groups, including the very small number who speak English as an additional language.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching has improved since the last inspection through further training, especially in mathematics and phonics, where it has led to higher standards. This is supported by the effective links made between subject areas, such as between mathematics and literacy in Year 2 when discussing balance and scales.
- Teachers often plan very imaginative activities. The topic on 'giants' was introduced through the discovery of a giant footprint on the field, which then led into an exchange of letters between pupils and the giant. Activities are supported by a stimulating range of resources to ensure that pupils are interested, enjoy their work and are very involved.
- Better marking of work and giving pupils more independence in their learning were included in the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. Recent changes to marking and the way teachers feed back to pupils on their work have had a good impact. In a Year 2 lesson the

teacher gave pupils excellent opportunities to read the comments made in marking and respond to them, making their next steps very clear and even enabling pupils to set their own targets. Helpful targets show pupils what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning.

- In the Reception class, children's progress in learning basic skills is supported effectively through well-chosen resources and good opportunities for children to choose learning activities for themselves. However, staff do not provide enough demanding and focused teaching to small groups, or on a one-to-one basis, to rapidly build children's skills.
- Teaching assistants often provide very effective support to teachers and pupils, particularly when working with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Higher-level assistants have been trained well to teach phonics and do this effectively with small groups of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour and safety are good because teachers manage pupils well. Very strong and positive relationships are immediately established with children when they start in Reception. This acts as a base for children's positive attitudes to school, so their learning flourishes. In Year 1, for example, pupils listened to each other with interest as they showed each other their work in mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good; they are polite and considerate to others. A good system of rewards and sanctions ensures that any issues that may arise are quickly dealt with in a positive way.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel safe at school, and this is supported by the views of parents and carers. Older pupils say that bullying is very rare and is usually to do with name-calling, and they are confident that any problems are dealt with well by the staff. They trust the adults and would share any concerns or worries with them. The school makes sure that pupils know about road safety and how to use computers safely.
- Parents say their children enjoy coming to school. This was supported by discussions held with pupils. They say how well teachers help them learn. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as being a member of the school council and the 'green team'. During the inspection, pupils baked cakes to sell for charity.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has led the school well since the last inspection. The issues raised then have been tackled effectively through focused training to improve teaching and learning. Staff are clear about their roles and work well together as a team. Responsibilities are divided sensibly, given the small size of the school.
- The headteacher monitors teaching and learning effectively by observing lessons, and checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. Leaders carefully track the progress made by all pupils.
- Teachers' performance is checked carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses. Focused training in areas such as mathematics and phonics has ensured that more of the teaching is at least good. The challenging targets set for teachers are based appropriately on raising standards and the priorities in the school improvement plan.

- The local authority provides this good school with appropriately 'light touch' support. It is aware that the school and governors seek further support as and when they need it. For example, the school has worked with an advanced skills teacher from another school, and this was arranged by the local authority which was aware of the need to raise standards in mathematics. The governing body has carried out a rigorous evaluation of its own work with local authority support. Other training and regular visits from an improvement partner help maintain a focus on standards and make sure the school continues to have a good capacity to improve.
- The use of performance information in tracking pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. It is now good, and especially effective in tracking different groups of pupils such as those supported by the pupil premium, who are funded to work in small groups within classes, or to receive individual one-to-one help and guidance. The money is used well to improve these pupils' progress.
- The school has recently taken on the leadership and management of the pre-school, which was previously run privately but used part of the school building. It is not yet fully integrated with the Reception class. For example, the accommodation and available adult support are not yet used fully effectively to promote children's learning.
- Some very effective and imaginative links between subjects bring learning to life, and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, good use of art, design and technology to create model buildings like those at the time of the Great Fire of London helped pupils understand more about the times and some of the characters of that period. The development of 'forest school' work on the site and at a local wood has boosted pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The school makes sure that all pupils have equal access to all activities and does not tolerate any discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has successfully worked hard since the last inspection to improve its ability to support and challenge the school. It now does this effectively. Individual governors are now linked to different aspects of the school's work and analyse information about pupils' progress in detail. They have developed the work of the different governing body committees very effectively to ensure consistency in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Governors regularly visit the school and have recently devised a more formal system to monitor the priorities in the school improvement plan more closely. They have a high profile in school through taking assemblies and attending school events. They have a clear picture of teaching quality, and understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school would deal with any underperformance. Governors ensure that salary increases are linked to the progress made by pupils, teaching quality and responsibilities. They have made good decisions over the spending of the pupil premium, especially through the development of extra support for vulnerable pupils. They check the impact on pupils' progress carefully to ensure best use of this funding. The governing body makes sure that all national requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120854
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405970

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Leech
Headteacher	Joan Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2011
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