

Diss Infant and Nursery School with Children's Centre

Fitzwalter Road, Diss, IP22 4PU

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well from starting points significantly below the levels expected for their age.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are above average this year in Year 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support provided for them is tailored to their individual needs.
- Some of the teaching in Reception and Year 2 is outstanding. In particular, teachers ask questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding and make them think hard.
- Behaviour is outstanding in and around the school, and pupils say they feel completely safe.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning.
- Outstanding and innovative assessment arrangements mean that all adults have an extremely good knowledge of how well individuals are learning and what they need to do next to improve their work more.
- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by the governing body, have improved teaching and maintained good levels of progress throughout the school. Their vision for excellence is shared by all staff.
- The curriculum is lively and stimulating with an emphasis on developing pupils' skills rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as strong as those in reading and mathematics because pupils do not always have the opportunity to write at length in different subjects.
- Pupils' handwriting varies in quality, and many pupils are not joining their letters.
- At times some pupils are not sufficiently challenged, especially during the introduction to lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were seen together with the executive headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, attended two assemblies and looked closely at examples of pupils’ work with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, the school’s checks on how well it is doing, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school’s partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leader in charge of Nursery and Reception, subject leaders, teachers, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter, and also spoke to parents during sports day.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size for an infant school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding in this school for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in April 2011 to run both the infant and junior schools. The two schools are run separately and have their own governing bodies. The executive headteacher's time is divided equally between the two schools.
- The executive headteacher is also responsible for running the children's centre on the school site. This is subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase achievement in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length across a range of different subjects
 - making sure that pupils join their letters together at an earlier stage to improve their handwriting.
- Make more teaching outstanding by making sure pupils of all abilities are challenged at every stage of a lesson, especially during the introduction.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress, no matter what their starting points. This is particularly the case in Reception, where adults take every opportunity to extend children's learning through high-quality questioning.
- Children's attainment levels on joining the Nursery Year have fallen since the last inspection. They now arrive with skills and abilities significantly below those expected for their age, and this has been reflected in standards at the end of Year 2 for the past couple of years. However, all pupils achieve well and standards are rising again. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach above-average standards in reading and mathematics and broadly average standards in writing by the end of this year.
- Writing is not quite so strong as reading and mathematics because pupils do not always have opportunities to write at length in different subjects. The quality of their handwriting is not consistently neat, as pupils are not encouraged to join their letters together early enough.
- In the 2012 reading check for Year 1 pupils, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the required standard. This is because phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well to pupils of different ages who are grouped on the basis of ability in reading. The present Year 1 pupils are on track to do even better this year.
- Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils' progress, which they are well on the way to meeting. Pupils are doing particularly well in mathematics, where a whole-school focus on investigations and problem-solving has led to rapid improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are performing better than similar groups nationally. They make good progress because their needs are identified early and programmes of support are set at the right level to see that they achieve well.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium reached higher standards than this group nationally in 2012 at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, and higher than all pupils nationally in mathematics. The attainment gap between this group and other pupils in the school was much narrower than the national picture, at just over half a term on average. Currently, eligible pupils are progressing equally as well as their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as the other pupils. In 2012, some pupils who joined the school partway through the year spoke little English. They did not score well in the end-of-year tests, as they had not been in the school long enough.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is confident as teachers have good subject knowledge and focus on developing pupils' basic skills of literacy, numeracy and communication. Teachers engage pupils well by giving lessons a good pace and planning plenty of practical activities. In a Year 1 science lesson, for example, pupils had to estimate how many raisins it would take to fill a jar before finding out for themselves.

- The way teachers manage pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are highly skilled at motivating pupils to learn and encouraging them to persevere with their work. For example, Year 2 pupils tackled challenging division problems in mathematics linked to their topic on space.
- There is some outstanding teaching in Reception where adults ask children searching open-ended questions and build on their interests to develop learning. Children were working out how to make their own percussion instruments using a bottle as a mould and the teacher asked them, 'What happens if you take the bottle out?' Other children were making a mat for a pet dog and the teacher asked, 'How are we going to make sure it's big enough?'
- The consistently good teaching of phonics makes sure that pupils develop their reading skills quickly. Teaching to ability groups means that work is set at just the right level, with flexibility to move pupils between groups as necessary.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress over time and that teachers expect them to produce a good quantity of work. They receive helpful verbal and written feedback. Each week pupils have a one-to-one consultation with their teacher known as 'assess and review' to check how they are getting on and to set new targets. This means that pupils are very aware of how they are doing and what they have to do to further improve their work.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes 'personal learning plans' are completed daily for each child to record their achievements and their next steps in learning. This level of detail is also reflected in exemplary 'learning journals' that set out children's development over time through photographs, observations and examples of their work.
- Where teaching is not quite so strong, pupils are not all challenged in every part of the lesson. In particular, sometimes the whole class sits through an introduction which is not pitched at the right level for particular groups such as more-able pupils, who could be better challenged by working with a teaching assistant or on their own.
- Homework is well organised to involve parents and build on the skills pupils have learnt in school. This promotes the partnership with parents well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- As a result of the outstanding management of behaviour, pupils behave extremely well in class and around the school. They know exactly what is expected of them and have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils have great enthusiasm for learning and talk excitedly about the things they are finding out. Pupils say that there is no bullying. They are confident that if they have any problems an adult will help them to sort them out. Pupils know what bullying means and how to be a good friend.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and who spoke to inspectors were very positive about pupils' behaviour. They are clear that the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- Children showed their excellent behaviour during the sports day for the Reception classes. They participated in a series of events, concentrating well and cooperating with one another.
- Pupils say they feel totally safe at school. Through termly 'safety weeks' they build up a good

understanding of how to keep safe in a range of different situations, such as when crossing the road or faced with a fire.

- Most pupils attend very well. Attendance is above that usually found in infant schools, and compares favourably with all primary schools. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed outstanding systems to run and manage not only the infant school, but also the children's centre on the same site. When the executive headteacher is away running the junior school the deputy headteacher takes full responsibility for the day-to-day running of the infant school. Their excellent partnership means that the drive for improvement carries on, whoever is in charge on any particular day.
- Leaders work very closely with other professionals such as parent support advisers, particularly through the children's centre. As a result they develop an excellent knowledge of the children and their families even before they join the infant school, and can help to identify needs and provide support very early on.
- Senior leaders are passionate about making sure that each individual child becomes the best they can be both in terms of their learning and their personal development. There is a buzz of excitement that pervades the whole school because of the stimulating and active experiences that pupils enjoy each day. Leaders make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes and the pupils who have special educational needs are catered for particularly well. The leaders responsible for these areas show flair and imagination, and have introduced innovative approaches which are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The rigour with which teachers keep track of how pupils are doing, often on a daily basis, means that they have an excellent understanding of their progress and what needs to happen to help them improve rapidly. This is particularly the case in the Nursery and Reception classes, where children's interests routinely shape the planning for each new day.
- The management of teachers' performance is very thorough. Staff are set individual targets that are linked to pupils' performance as well as whole-school priorities. Vigorous monitoring of teaching is supported by very clear feedback about how teaching can improve even more, and followed up promptly to see that changes have been made. Teachers are expected to show the impact in their practice of any training they have received.
- The vibrant curriculum captures pupils' imagination very well while emphasising basic skills. There are lots of practical activities to interest and engage pupils, especially in the arts and music. They often make models and investigate topics, such as space, in depth. The school's high-quality personal and social health education programme contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While there are many links across subjects to develop key skills, sometimes pupils do not do enough writing in different subjects.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good school, but the school makes good use of a range of highly effective training from the local authority and other providers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They challenge as well as support the school's leaders. A carefully planned annual monitoring cycle makes sure that governors check the school's work thoroughly, especially around its key priorities for improvement. They know what the school is doing to manage teachers' performance, and how it rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. Governors make sure that finances are spent well, and that the pupil premium has a positive impact on the progress of eligible pupils. They ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet, and in fact exceed, national requirements.

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	120803
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412703

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Corrick
Headteacher	Sue Youngs
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2007
Telephone number	01379 642768
Fax number	01379 642768
Email address	office@diss-inf.norfolk.sch.uk

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