

Costessey Infant School

Beaumont Road, Costessey, Norwich, NR5 0HG

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Costessey Infants is a very caring and nurturing school.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching is almost always good and occasionally outstanding.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils they support.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, do well.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe in school and have positive relationships with staff and each other.
- The school offers pupils exciting learning opportunities that interest them so they want to learn.
- Staff morale is good, and they form a strong team. Good-quality training is aimed at the right areas to help them improve teaching.
- Leaders build on the school's strengths and tackle its weaknesses effectively. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not always identified quickly enough and work pupils are given is not consistently at the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils are not always given time to read, understand and respond to the comments made by teachers in their books.
- Attendance is below average so pupils miss important lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and all teachers teaching. On 11 occasions, lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks, and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and other written responses. The inspectors also spoke to a small number of parents. The responses to eight staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the school's self-evaluation, records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from pupil premium is spent, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school, with year-on-year growth in pupil numbers.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional government funding for children in local authority care, children with a parent in the armed forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is low. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school is in partnership with one other, and shares a headteacher.
- The headteacher provides management support for other schools in Norfolk.
- The school is due shortly to change to academy status.
- Independent preschool and children's centres share the site and building.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - activities are closely matched to pupils' different levels so that they all learn at a good rate
 - pupils understand comments for improvement in their work, they have time to reflect on them and staff check that their response demonstrates their understanding.
- Raise the attainment of more-able pupils, in particular, by:
 - quickly and accurately identifying these pupils
 - checking their progress more closely and ensuring that they are not given work that is too easy for them.
- Improve attendance by seeking and implementing examples of good practise from other schools, particularly to further involve parents and give pupils more incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills below those typically expected for their age. Because of the excellent arrangements for introducing them to school, they already know their teachers well so they settle quickly.
- In Reception, children make good progress overall because they have a good balance of adult- and child-led activities, which are of good quality so they interest children, who persevere and do well. The outdoor area is also effectively. These are improvements since the last inspection.
- Good progress continues in Year 1 generally, although some pupils can struggle to follow when working with Year 2 if the activities are not closely matched to their levels. The school plans to introduce separate classes for each year group.
- In Year 2, progress continues to be good for the vast majority of pupils. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the levels expected in reading, writing and mathematics has been above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels is lower, though, particularly in mathematics. This is because the more-able pupils are not quickly identified when they join the school so tasks they are given are not always at the right level of difficulty. Their progress has not in the past been closely checked.
- In the recent past, school leaders and governors recognised that levels of attainment were beginning to dip. The headteacher, working closely with staff and the local authority, moved quickly to make changes in the right areas, such as the teaching of how letters link to the sounds they make (phonics). As a result, these key reading skills are now being taught with sharper focus so standards have improved.
- In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were about a term behind their classmates in mathematics and more than six months behind in reading and writing. The pupil premium funding is used to provide more staff so these pupils have the extra support they need. As a result of this and the good teaching they receive, eligible Year 2 pupils are now reaching similar levels to other pupils in writing and mathematics and are catching up in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from similarly good extra support and help, often in small groups run by skilled teaching assistants. These pupils, too, make good progress.
- There is no difference in the progress made by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.

The quality of teaching is good

- When teaching is most effective, questioning is used well, particularly to check pupils' understanding of the lesson and to encourage them to think more deeply. These teachers are alert to any misconception and quick to put it right. When a pupil said 14 is 'one and four', for example, the teacher quickly clarified whether the pupil meant one ten and four units, and checked he understood the difference between the two statements.

- Skilled teaching assistants make a positive impact. They improve the learning of pupils who struggle, by providing carefully planned extra work. They are equally effective when the whole class learns together. Here, they actively guide pupils; for example, by breaking down the teacher's instructions into smaller steps for those who do not understand, or by giving pupils a visual demonstration of what the teacher is expecting from them.
- Some teachers use pupils' responses during the lesson particularly effectively. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 mathematics lesson, as the teacher worked with each group in turn, she was alert to pupils within the group who understood quickly. These she immediately moved to harder work. Likewise, those who needed a little extra support were kept back for the extra tuition that gave them a more solid foundation to build on.
- Teachers often divide the class into ability groups. This works well for those pupils needing extra help because they are clearly identified and their particular needs matched closely to the activities they undertake. It is not as accurate for the most able. These pupils are not as well identified and sometimes have insufficient challenge to ensure that they learn at a faster rate.
- Although teachers mark work regularly, and write supportive comments, marking does not always give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Where it does, staff do not routinely give pupils time to read and understand the comments given, nor do they routinely check that pupils have followed the guidance. As a result, it has limited impact, especially for the most able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Attitudes to learning are very positive. Staff are very respectful of pupils and they, in turn, follow this lead. Staff encourage good behaviour and pupils want to please them, so lessons flow freely and this contributes to the good learning.
 - In Reception, the good structure to the day gives children many opportunities to develop both independence and teamwork skills.
 - All pupils concentrate, persevere and take pride in doing their best. They are keen and enthusiastic learners who want to succeed.
 - Pupils say they feel safe. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when they use the internet. Equally, they understand the different forms of bullying, say incidents are rare and that they know staff will deal with any quickly and effectively.
 - Pupils willingly take on responsibility, and have a sense of community within the school. They are proud of the part they play in the life of the school and in the local area. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
 - Although the school is trying to improve attendance, and has had particular success with those most frequently absent, the attendance rate remains below the national average. While parents are regularly reminded and pupils receive some rewards for good attendance, more could be done to improve it. A particular concern is the relatively high number of absences either side of the weekend.
 - Parents say their children are happy in school, and that they themselves feel their children are well looked after. Although there are several opportunities for parents to come into school, some
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say they would like more information about how their children are progressing. They would like more information about events, and more notice, too. The school is aware of this and is taking appropriate action.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have complementary skills and form a highly effective team. They lead the staff very well. With governors and staff, they share high expectations and ambition for the school.
- The headteacher has identified the most crucial improvements needed to drive the school forward. Expertise is used effectively and standards are rising.
- School leaders enable and encourage staff to focus on further improving the quality of teaching. Staff are given opportunities to work with highly effective teachers; for example, within the partner school.
- The curriculum is good. Outstanding use is made of links between subjects so that new learning in one consolidates prior learning in another. During the inspection, writing about life on the *Mayflower* began with effective use of drama so pupils truly 'lived' the experience. Some pupils were 'sailors', others interviewers, asking questions they had compiled. Conversations were sometimes recorded using tablet computers or videoing equipment. This was particularly effective in engaging those boys who are reluctant writers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: parents were impressed by the depth and thought of their children's reflections at the end of assembly. Parents are positive about their children's schooling but cautious about the rapid changes the school is going through.
- Expertise is shared well with the partner school to provide practical help in important areas, such as provision for pupils with special educational needs and analysis of data. With other local schools, much is done to extend and enrich pupils' learning and pastoral opportunities.
- On a practical day-to-day level, the local authority supports the school well and responds to any requests made of it. Longer-term support, though, has been based on a 'desktop' analysis of data, rather than school visit, so any response comes after the event.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate understanding of the school, including its teaching. Through regular class visits, they know what is going well and where change is needed. They understand national data and challenge the school about what it shows, but are less knowledgeable about the impact of changes the school has made. For example, they know how pupil premium funds are spent but not whether this has benefited eligible pupils. Individual expertise is used well. Governance ensures that the school fully meets statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding. Clear targets are set for staff, and governors check arrangements, but there has not been a link between targets achieved and pay. Together with the headteacher, the governing body is now establishing systems to make sure that this happens.

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	120800
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412677

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Betts (Vice Chair)
Headteacher	Anthony Hull
Date of previous school inspection	20 Jan 2010
Telephone number	01603 742856
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Email address	office@costessey-infant.norfolk.sch.uk

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