

Hempnall Primary School

The Street, Hempnall, Norwich, NR15 2AD

Inspection dates 20–21 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.

- From the warm welcome they receive when they arrive each day, pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Parents and carers agree. One said, 'Children feel very special here.'
- Children settle quickly and make a very good start in the Reception class.
- Pupils continue to make good progress from their different starting points because teachers set work that helps them learn, whatever their ability.
- Pupils with a range of disabilities and special educational needs do well because support is tailored to their individual needs and so they thrive.
- Well-trained teaching assistants help the pupils they support to make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They want to learn and try their best.
- Values such as respect and courtesy are seen as fundamental to school life. Everyone is encouraged equally.
- School leaders know the school well; they have built on strengths and tackled weaknesses effectively.
- Staff form an effective team. Morale is high. Pupils benefit from leaders' strong focus on training and developing staff's skills.
- Pupils benefit from seeing how closely their parents, carers and the school work together.
- Governors offer practical help as well as a long-term vision for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough chances to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects and everyday life situations.
- Teachers do not check sufficiently that pupils have read, understood and responded to the marking of their work.
- Questioning is not used enough to encourage pupils to explain what they are thinking or to clarify their understanding.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to develop the skills they need.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons. All of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and carers, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also spoke with some parents. The responses to 12 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and management documentation; the school's self-evaluation; the 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

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the extra government funding for children looked after by the local authority known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is very high. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. Reception children are taught separately. All other pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes; Year 1 are taught with Year 2, Year 3 with Year 4, and Year 5 with Year 6.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2012 to make comparisons with the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for any of its pupils.
- The school is in partnership with another nearby smaller-than-average primary school. The headteacher leads both schools, but each has a separate governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing more effective questioning skills that encourage pupils to provide more extended answers and so develop more fully the level of understanding of their work
 - ensuring that pupils read, understand and respond to their teachers' marking of their work.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by planning more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in different ways and across subjects.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the subjects they study by:
 - ensuring that pupils have adequate time to practise and refine their skills
 - promoting the greater integration of ICT into other subjects so that pupils understand its importance and relevance in everyday life
 - auditing staff skills and offering training where there are gaps.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children generally start school with similar skills and levels of experience to those expected for their age, although this year these are lower. This is because they are such a young year group, with two thirds born in the summer and effectively up to a year younger than most children taking the same assessment.
- In Reception, children make good progress because they learn as a single year group and the number in their class is lower. They have more contact with staff and they get off to a good start. The indoor and outdoor accommodation is also much improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress through the school largely because the tasks they are given to do are matched closely to their levels, so these are neither too easy nor too hard.
- Reading is a relative strength. This is because it is given a high priority, for example the eldest class generally start the day with a period of reading. Linking letters to the sounds they make (phonics) follows a well organised system where pupils learn in smaller groups of similar ability level.
- Writing has improved and is now good. Pupils think deeply about the construction of their writing. For example, a Year 5 pupil carefully selected the most suitable word to describe 'speed' from a useful word bank.
- Mathematics has been a relative weakness in Years 3 to 6. Standards are now much improved and pupils are making good, and sometimes very good, progress. This is largely because the school quickly recognised the problem, analysed what caused it, and put the right improvements in place to improve pupils' knowledge.
- Pupil premium funding is spent effectively, largely to give these pupils more intensive small group or individual guidance. As a result, they do well and catch up to levels similar to others in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, also do well largely because they benefit from extra support, for example to break tasks down into smaller steps.
- Pupils practise their reading and writing skills well in a wide range of relevant ways. They wrote to the parish council about the proposal for wind turbines, understanding how to apply what they learn in lessons to their lives. They do not have similar opportunities to practise numeracy skills in other subjects. Opportunities to learn and practise ICT skills are also too few.

The quality of teaching is good

- The start and end of every lesson, when teachers introduce or sum up the work, is outstanding because each group and ability level is catered for so that everyone is learning at the right level. A very flexible approach is used so that pupils only ever hear what is relevant to their learning.
- Teachers generally start the week with a clear plan of activities and quickly modify these as the

week's learning develops. They recognise when pupils are learning quicker than expected, or need more time and practise. They change plans to keep the pace right.

- Pupils and staff share very positive relationships, so pupils want to please staff and lessons flow because no time is wasted. Transitions from one activity to the next are particularly slick. Pupils say they enjoy the fun in looking for 'red herrings' in the tasks they are given, the examples meant to test that they truly understand what they are learning.
- Teamwork is strong. Skilled teaching assistants know what teachers want them to do, and good training ensures they know how to do it. Together, staff form a highly effective unit.
- Teachers make very good use of technology in their direct teaching, for example to give a visual explanation or catch pupils' interest. When pupils undertake activities, though, it is rarely used.
- When teachers give pupils opportunities to explain their thinking, pupils respond very positively and learn well. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils multiplied by ten. The teacher asked, 'It looks like you added a zero, but what did you really do?' A useful discussion clarified any misconceptions. Generally, however, teachers tell pupils, rather than ask them the questions to deepen or extend their learning. When the same class counted down in tens from 112 and most stopped at two, one pupil continued and said, 'Minus eight.' The teacher praised her but did not, for example, ask what came next.
- Homework is effective. Pupils say they particularly enjoy the 'learning logs' which give them a challenge but leave them to decide how to respond to it.
- Marking is better than when the school was last inspected because pupils are now given some useful comments about what they need to improve next. However, this is not consistent. Teachers rarely check that pupils have read and understood their advice, or that they have acted upon it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils bring a lot to their learning and right from the youngest they demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning. Whether responding very positively to staff or choosing for themselves, pupils concentrate, persevere and take pride in doing their best. They know their targets and take pleasure in reaching them.
- Pupils' behaviour is generally good. On the few occasions when this is not the case, it is managed very well because the same systems are used by all staff, so that pupils know what is expected of them. The strong emphasis on praise is beneficial. In the Year 1 and 2 class, for example, as soon as the teacher calls the class together and says to a pupil, 'Thank you for showing me you are ready,' the others quickly follow.
- Pupils and their parents and carers say they feel safe at school. Whether talking about road or e-safety, pupils are knowledgeable. They say bullying is rare and they are confident staff will deal with any incident very quickly.
- Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they are taught. For example, the changes made to mathematics include two-weekly checks. They relish these, and the opportunity to try to beat their last score. As they themselves see the improvements they make, their self-esteem rises and they are incentivised to go on and try harder.

- Attendance is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils attend very well because they enjoy school and want to be there.

The leadership and management are good

- Everyone shares a common vision for the school's future and an understanding of the pathway to it. Leadership is strong, clear and consistent.
- Leaders know the school well. Accurate analysis recognises strengths and areas to improve. Clear actions are put in place to eradicate underperformance, for example in mathematics.
- Staff form a very effective team. They know what is expected of them, and what they may expect of others. They are proud of their school. Every response to the survey was positive.
- Teachers meet school leaders regularly to discuss the progress of each pupil. This information is used effectively to check that every pupil is making progress and, if not, to find the reasons why and make the necessary changes to bring about improvement.
- Staff training is a strength. Everyone recognises its importance. Governors maintain the budget allocation which the headteacher uses carefully to ensure staff have the training they need to be effective. Some costs are shared with the partner school, to the benefit of both. Excellent guidance from a training school has increased the effectiveness of teaching assistants in supporting mathematics.
- Pupils say they enjoy the subjects they are taught, particularly the 'fun' activity teachers use to 'grab' their interest at the start of a new topic, and the visits to deepen their understanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school sees everyone has equal opportunities to benefit from all it does. Clear policies are in place should any racial incidents occur.
- Parents and carers are strong and trusting partners. Every respondent to the on-line survey stated they would recommend the school. Innovative use of some pupil premium funding supports any of these families and children needing advice with child-related issues.
- The local authority gives the school good practical support to eradicate underperformance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well and use their first-hand knowledge to make prudent long-term plans. In practical ways, too, they help, for example running a holiday learning scheme. They form an effective group because they are well trained. Increasingly, they are asking questions of the school to help them make better decisions. Finance is managed very carefully and pupil premium funding allocated correctly. Governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding. Performance management is used effectively to develop staff.

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	120815
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412045

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Hyde-Smith
Headteacher	Miriam Elston (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
Telephone number	01508 499264
Fax number	01508 499264
Email address	office@hempnall.norfolk.sch.uk

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