

# Drake Infant School and Nursery

Fairfields, Croxton Road, Thetford, IP24 1JW

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make outstanding progress, which is sustained in Years 1 and 2.
- The proportion of children who leave the Reception class to join Year 1 with a good level of development is significantly higher than found nationally.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Pupils who have a disability or special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are entitled to the pupil premium funding also make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is excellent and meets the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. This means that pupils make the progress of which they are capable and that none falls behind.
- Behaviour and safety are exemplary. Pupils are eager learners. They work hard and their attitudes make a highly effective contribution to the excellent progress they make.
- Promotion of pupils' personal, social and emotional development and of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and builds the foundation for their excellent academic progress.
- The headteacher, assistant headteachers and the governing body make a highly effective contribution to sustaining pupils' outstanding progress and maintaining the high quality of teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 19 lessons. The inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher or by one of the school's two assistant headteachers during 16 of the observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher and teachers with additional responsibilities, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspectors took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average but rising steadily.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also broadly average and rising steadily. Eleven different languages are spoken.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The Little Pirates pre-school, which is managed by the governing body, is housed on the site in the adjoining children's centre. Little Pirates provides before, after-school and day care. This provision is inspected separately.
- The headteacher supports other schools in her capacity as a local leader in education.

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

- Ensure that the pupils' outstanding achievement is sustained by:
  - focusing closely on the skills of potentially higher attaining pupils, so that they make the progress they need to attain higher than expected levels in writing
  - consistently using questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding and enabling them to draw on what they already know and can do.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Many of the pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 started in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that were below and in some cases well below that expected for their age. The current Nursery group joined with skills and knowledge that are only slightly below that expected for their age, other than in communication and writing, which was below the expected level.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. This pattern of progress is firmly established over several years. By the time they join Year 1 the proportion of children showing a good level of development for their age is significantly higher than found in the majority of schools.
- In recent years, at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have, at worst, been broadly average. In 2013 standards in all three subjects were above average. Given their various starting points pupils progress in recent years is outstanding.
- Pupils currently in Year 2 are also on course to make outstanding progress. The school's tracking of their progress and the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are again on course to be above average.
- Pupils acquire the basic skills of communication and mathematics exceptionally well; especially those pupils who speak English as an additional language. These pupils settle in quickly and soon catch up with those in other groups. Their progress in mathematics is remarkable. They receive exceptional teaching which focuses precisely on the development of essential mental and oral mathematical skills.
- Pupils soon become avid readers, based on their excellent acquisition of the sounds made by letters and words (phonics). They love to listen to stories, as well as reading for themselves.
- While standards in reading and writing are above average the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels in writing tends to lag behind that for reading. This is because pupils take longer to acquire the basic skills of writing than they do those of reading. The school has introduced a scheme for teaching reading and writing that links the two areas closely together and is already paying dividends with increased progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium all progress at a rate that is close to that made by pupils in other groups. In the current Year 2 pupils eligible for the pupil premium are about a term ahead of the others in mathematics. There is no difference in their attainment in English.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of how hard pupils will work in lessons and of the progress they are capable of making. This applies right from the time children begin in the Nursery and continues until they leave at the end of Year 2.
- Teachers plan precisely to provide work that is closely matched to the learning needs and stages of development reached by each pupil. During the inspection this was typified by a Year 1 lesson

aimed at lower attaining pupils, including some who have special educational needs. The teacher shared a story that captured pupils' interest and imagination, inspiring them to produce some high quality writing.

- Excellent relationships between pupils and the adults who help them mean that pupils become increasingly confident learners. Detailed attention is given to pupils' personal, social and emotional development and to their spiritual moral, social and cultural development. This provides a firm foundation for pupils' excellent academic progress. From the moment they enter the Nursery children from all backgrounds thrive.
- The basic skills of communication and mathematics are taught exceptionally well. The school's scheme to link pupils' learning in reading to that in writing is paying dividends in sustaining pupils' excellent progress; although the proportion of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels in reading still exceeds that for writing.
- Pupils are taught literacy skills each morning in groups that are based precisely on the various stages of development they have reached. This is proving to be highly effective. Even so, there are isolated occasions when teachers do not phrase questions in ways that enable pupils to fully explore their own knowledge and understanding in order to provide increasingly detailed answers.
- Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and to the progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. This is particularly evident when these pupils are taught in small groups and benefit from work that is tailored precisely to their individual needs.
- Assessments of pupils' progress are frequent and accurate. The evidence gained from assessments is used effectively to plan subsequent steps in learning for all pupils and for the early identification and support of any pupil who is at the slightest risk of falling behind.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils show excellent attitudes to their learning. They work hard, sustain their interest, develop independence and are always willing to answer questions and contribute to discussions. During one lesson a group of children in the Reception class spontaneously set up a farm. Their enthusiasm for this project and ability to talk about what they were doing far exceeded the level expected for their age.
- Pupils are well mannered and courteous. They love to do jobs and take responsibility. For example, when they set out the hall for assembly and tidy up afterwards.
- Pupils are caring and kind towards each other and relate exceptionally well to adults. They greatly appreciate the help they receive and the ways in which adults respond to any worries they might have, be they personal or to do with their work. Pupil-premium funding is being used effectively to provide nurture. This is helping those pupils involved to make excellent progress in their personal development.
- Pupils are proud of the progress they make and attach great value to the ways in which adults recognise and celebrate their efforts and successes.
- Behaviour around school and during lessons is outstanding. Bullying of any type is rare and

isolated incidents are soon resolved. Pupils are sensitive towards those pupils who come from backgrounds and cultures that are different to their own. Discrimination is not tolerated. The school has excellent procedures in place to make sure that pupils are protected from cyber bullying in its various forms.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents are confident that this is the case. Pupils are knowledgeable about aspects of road safety; such as riding their bikes correctly.
- Attendance is broadly average. This has not always been the case and school leaders have worked very effectively to support parents in recognising the importance of their children's regular attendance at school.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The commitment to providing equality of opportunity for each pupil is at the heart of the school's work.
- The headteacher, assistant headteachers, the governing body and staff who have additional responsibilities work together very effectively to sustain pupils' exceptional progress and an outstanding quality of teaching. Their success in this respect provides a strong indicator of the school's potential to maintain the high quality of provision in the future. Even so, no one is complacent as they strive together for continued improvement.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. Plans for future developments are carefully thought through to sustain pupils' excellent progress and continuous improvement. Procedures for rewarding effective teaching are linked closely to the school's targets for pupils' attainment and progress; with each teacher having precise targets for development. There are excellent opportunities for the training of staff. These, combined with the support provided by school leaders, are greatly appreciated and morale is high.
- The school engages well with parents and carers. They are positive about all aspects of its work and appreciate the availability of staff and the information they receive about their children's needs and progress.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed very effectively. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from provision that enables them to make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. There is an ideal balance between opportunities for children to learn through play and alongside side each other and times when adults provide them with direct guidance to enhance their basic skills. The range of learning activities promotes children's communication skills exceptionally well. During the inspection the youngest children seized the opportunity to become pirates for a day with great enthusiasm.
- The school provides an excellent range of learning activities and enrichment opportunities. This includes a highly effective focus each morning for Years 1 and 2 to acquire the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Afternoon sessions are focused on providing a rich range of activities in a variety of contexts for pupils to use and apply the skills they have gained during the morning sessions. Every minute is used to provide pupils with learning opportunities. Excellent attention is given to promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Poetry, singing, music and story telling all have a high profile.

- The recently available funding for the promotion of primary school sport is being used wisely for staff training to enable the school to offer a lasting legacy of exercise and sport to promote pupils' health and well being over time.
- The local authority rightly regards the school as 'light touch' and fully capable of standing on its own two feet in terms of sustaining the outstanding provision.
- The headteacher provides valuable and much appreciated support for other schools in her capacity as a local leader in education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors do an excellent job. They are well aware of the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work and what is needed to maintain its outstanding status. Governors access appropriate training. They also receive high quality information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress from the headteacher and staff with aspect and subject responsibilities. Governors are also regular visitors, with each visit focused on measuring the impact of one of the school's identified areas for improvement. Governors are knowledgeable about the progress made by the various groups of pupils and are fully involved in the systems that reward school leaders and teachers for the quality of their performance in relation to the school's targets for pupils' attainment and progress. They know how the school would tackle any underperformance. Governors also check closely to ensure that the school's budget is used wisely. They are fully aware of the positive impact that additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the school sport funding are having on pupils' progress and the quality of their learning. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe at school meet current 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120995
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	425416

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Heidi Peck
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Bartrop
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01842 762055
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