

Spixworth Infant School

Ivy Road, Spixworth, Norwich, Norfolk NR10 3PX

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2014

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.

- In three of the last five years, pupils left the school with exceptionally high combined levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From their very varied levels when they start school, pupils make good progress in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs benefit from extra help, often in small groups looking at a particular skill, so they do well.
- Pupils are made to think by their teachers' good use of various types of questioning.
- Spixworth is a harmonious school where staff and pupils respect one another. As a result, pupils behave well.
- Pupils say, and parents confirm, that they feel safe at school.
- The school is a focal point of the local community.
- Over many years, the school leaders and governors have a good track record of enabling staff to do well for the school and progress in their careers.
- School leaders and governors have maintained high pupils' achievement over several years.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching methods the school feels are successful are not used in all classes.
- Boys' written work is sometimes untidy and their handwriting little improved.
- Pupils say they are not clear how to use the marking of their work to improve further.
- Pupils' skills at linking letters to the sounds they make are low.
- Extra money provided by the government for sports is not yet used to offer pupils a greater range of opportunities or to train staff, nor is it clear how the school will check value for money.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. Five were joint observations with one or other of the co-headteachers.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to them read.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the co-headteachers, other staff, governors, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also took account of the school's own parent survey. The responses to the 11 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 monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; 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 children.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average infant school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- In comparison with other schools, the school has a much higher proportion of boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. All of Reception children and some Year 1 pupils are in two classes. The rest of Year 1 and all of Year 2 are in two other classes.
- An independently run pre-school and a children's centre share the site and building.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring all teachers follow the school's guidelines and expectations, particularly in relation to how all pupils assess their own work and boys present their work
 - providing pupils with clear age-appropriate guidance to improve their work.
- Raise the standard of phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) by:
 - good use of the assessment system to see all pupils learn at the right level and at a good rate of progress
 - ensuring the way activities are organised enables pupils to learn well.
- Make effective use of the government's additional sports funding to:
 - implement plans quickly so pupils benefit faster
 - define precisely how the impact of this work can be measured and evaluated.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in Reception their skills and experiences vary greatly. This year, for example, they are at the level expected for this age, while over the last three years they have been below. They make good progress because they learn from a wide range of interesting tasks, some they choose and some chosen by their teachers.
- Progress through the rest of the school is good. About eight in every ten pupils make expected or better progress.
- In three of the last five years, when Year 2 reading, writing and mathematics test results are combined, pupils have reached very high levels compared with those nationally.
- Last year, results were broadly the same as pupils elsewhere in the country in reading and writing. While these pupils made similarly good progress to those in previous years, they started from lower levels. The exception was mathematics. Although most pupils reached the expected level, few exceeded it.
- Information about pupils' progress suggests that this year's Year 2 will also make good progress but, because they also started from lower levels, they will catch up with pupils elsewhere, not overtake them.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics, and use of this skill in their reading, is relatively weak. In the recent Year 1 phonics check a much lower proportion of pupils than in other schools were at the expected level. Phonics is taught in large groups including pupils of a wide ability range. As a result, some find tasks too easy while others find tasks too hard. In addition, although the school has greatly improved how pupils' progress is tracked, this information is not used to set targets or make sure pupils learn at a good rate.
- The relatively high proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make good progress because learning assistants repeat anything they have not understood and give them longer to absorb new learning.
- There are not enough pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Last year, all those eligible in the school who did not have special educational needs made good progress and most reached higher levels than their peers.
- Pupils generally show good attitudes to learning and want to do well. However, some pupils, mainly boys, have lower standards of handwriting because they do not routinely try their best.
- Pupils' positive attitudes, enthusiasm and curiosity to learn play an important part in their learning. A Year 2 pupil, for example, recognised patterns in the numbers his class were using, and felt proud to explain what may have caused it.

The quality of teaching is good

- Reception children's learning benefits from watching and learning from the older children in their class.

- Pupils say they like the clarity of knowing at the start of each lesson what they are expected to do and how they will know they have achieved it.
- Pupils are alert during whole class discussions because teachers make sure pupils do not know who will be asked to contribute next.
- Pupils are made to think carefully because teachers make sure they ask questions that are hard enough for each pupil.
- More-able pupils do well because teachers watch how they are doing during the lesson and make the task more difficult if necessary.
- Pupils who struggle with reading, writing or mathematics do well because learning assistants take them back over the work in more detail until they have understood.
- Teachers often carefully position pupils who struggle so that they are near an adult who can check they have understood, so that they are always able to learn.
- Pupils' ability to judge for themselves how they are doing, and decide where they need to try harder, varies between classes because they are not all given similar opportunities to learn and practise these skills.
- Some boys produce untidy work because their teachers do not insist that they do their best. Their handwriting, too, can be more careful on the first day of term than it is on the last.
- Teachers' marking clearly states what pupils have achieved, but pupils struggle to identify any specific examples of where their teacher's marking helps them improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in the classroom and around the school. There are a few inconsistencies between staff so pupils are not always sure of the expectations. Exclusions are very rare and only occur for appropriate reasons.
- The majority of pupils have very positive relationships with the adults they work with. They are polite to staff because staff are polite to them and to each other. As a result, lessons flow without interruption.
- Pupils want to learn and are proud of their accomplishments especially recognition at the 'achievement assembly', itself suggested by pupils.
- Year 2 pupils enjoy the opportunities to play an important role in the life of their school. For example, those in the school council conduct the annual survey of pupils' views.
- The school council has an important part to play as their views are sought at an early stage of designing the school's development plan.
- After training, older pupils act as 'playground buddies' demonstrating various games to the youngest children and contributing to the positive feel of playtime. The activity area, introduced

to improve behaviour, is beneficial.

- Eating lunch is an equally positive experience because pupils enjoy sitting in the 'family' groups and chatting amiably with older pupils who help them at each table.
- Assemblies continue the relaxed but respectful family atmosphere and help build pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils were keen to offer the characteristics of a 'super child', and quickly realised many of them, such as 'helpful', described themselves.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good awareness of safety and the eldest enjoy the responsibility they have to look after the youngest at play and lunchtimes.
- Pupils have a basic understanding of the various types of bullying, including dangers associated with the use of the internet, and know that they should report any concerns to an adult.
- Some pupils, mainly boys, happily settle for presenting work less than their best, or handwriting that is no better than they did in the past.
- Attendance is close to the national average for primary schools and pupils are generally on time for school.

The leadership and management are good

- Nearly everyone, including the pupils, contribute to shaping the school's development plan. The exception is parents, and the school has yet to find a meaningful way of canvassing their views.
- The partnership with parents is generally strong. Parents regularly attend the 'cafes' when helpful techniques are shared with them so they can better support their children's learning.
- The school benefits from a strong leadership team which demonstrates a capacity for further improvement. The innovative co-headship is seen as enabling leaders with complementary skills to work together, and staff feel that this works well.
- Leaders successfully promote equal opportunities and ensure that there is no discrimination within the school.
- School leaders responded very quickly to the dip in 2013 Year 2 mathematics results, giving greater emphasis to problem-solving activities that enable pupils to practise the skills to reach higher levels. In areas such as phonics, however, response has been insufficient.
- Good links are made between subjects, so that what is learnt in one is applied in another. Visits, visitors and the good range of clubs enrich learning. Some activities, such as forest schools, are particularly chosen to engage the high proportion of boys.
- A strength of the school is that staffs' skills and expertise are recognised and fostered through quality training, to the benefit of pupils. Staff are encouraged to take on leadership roles and look for ways to apply what they learn.
- A thorough audit of staff skills has given the school information to plan the use of additional

sports' funding. However, nothing has yet been put in place and no clear plans exist for how the school will check the money is well spent.

- The school has a very good reputation for meeting the special educational needs of pupils, and draws on the expertise and resources of a local special school.
- Links with the local cluster of schools are strong. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to work together, for example to sing in a large group. Staff benefit from sharing ideas.
- Links with both the pre-school and junior school are strong so that transitions are well managed. Junior pupils return as sports leaders and staff from the two schools train together when beneficial.
- Because the school is successful, the local authority has little direct involvement in it.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- A relatively small group of governors are very active in shaping the school's direction. These governors have a clear understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved. Even so, the work of the governing body is hampered because it generally has vacancies, currently six of the 14 places. Governors undertake training so they know what is expected of them. Because they visit the school they know what teaching is like. They know how performance management is used to raise the quality of teaching, and have plans in place to reward good teaching, and to tackle underperformance. They know how the budget is spent. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent but do not know precisely how each action impacts on pupils' achievement. They are diligent about safeguarding pupils and ensuring this and all other legal requirements 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	120896
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	431259

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	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachel Leighton
Headteacher	Ms Catharine Smith and Mrs Victoria Wyatt
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2009
Telephone number	01603 898483
Fax number	01603 893372
Email address	office@spixworth.norfolk.sch.uk

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