

Mile Cross Primary School

Braiser Road, Norwich, NR3 2QU

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress from low starting points on entry. They settle into routines quickly in the Nursery and by the end of Reception, they are very well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 and those in the specialist resource base make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of good teaching.
- The teaching of literacy, numeracy and communication skills is good. Pupils use these skills in a range of subjects, remain focused on learning and work well together.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They move safely around the school, their attendance is above average and they have good attitudes to learning.
- Good leadership and management by senior leaders, with good support from governors, has led to good improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement, teaching and leadership have moved from satisfactory to good.
- The school has the capacity for sustained improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few weaknesses remain in teaching and not enough is outstanding.
- Pupils are not developing their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling consistently enough in their writing.
- Occasionally, teachers give pupils work which is too easy for them.
- Subject leaders do not analyse performance information rigorously enough. Although they identify the right priorities for improvement, the remedies suggested are not sharp enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, including two in the specialist resource base. All teachers were seen teaching and 12 of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at their reading records. They also examined samples of pupils' work jointly with subject leaders and looked at a few individual case studies with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, subject leaders, staff from the specialist resource base, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and two members of the governing body. A training event for governors on the interpretation of performance data was also observed. A telephone discussion took place with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to Parent View and met with a few parents when they accompanied their children to school. Inspectors also examined 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including the school improvement plan, the summary of the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding policies and procedures, attendance figures, records of incidents of behaviour and the school's records of pupils' progress over time.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is high. This is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or from families where a parent is in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is high. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also high.
- The school manages specially resourced provision in the form of a specialist resource base for eight pupils at Key Stage 2 with disabilities and special educational needs due to cognition and learning. The majority of these pupils are supported at school action plus and the remainder have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all of these pupils are registered at the school. They attend for morning sessions in the base and are integrated into mainstream classes in the afternoons. A few, who attend for part of each morning, are registered at their local primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school part way through the school year.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, pupil numbers have steadily risen.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, eliminate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - pupils develop their use of English grammar, spelling and punctuation in their writing
 - teachers give pupils work which is not too easy for them
 - subject leaders rigorously analyse performance information and use this to develop sharper remedies to the school's priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding that are low compared with the levels expected nationally for their ages in most areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal and emotional development. They make consistently good progress in the Nursery and outstanding progress by the end of the Reception year where their attainment in each area of learning is close to the levels expected nationally for their ages.
- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now good and their good attitudes support their progress. Pupils build on their outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as they move from year to year. In 2013, Year 1 pupils just exceeded the national average for meeting the required standard in the phonics screening check, which was a significant improvement on their performance in 2012.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been rising steadily at Key stage 1 in recent years and is now close to the national average.
- By the end of Year 6, from their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making expected progress is close to the national average and those exceeding expectations are above the national average.
- The school's accurate information shows that all groups of pupils are making equally good progress. Those with disabilities and special educational needs are making good progress towards their targets, those who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress because they are receiving good support for their learning. The very few more-able pupils are doing as well as other pupils and making good progress in reaching the higher levels because they are given more demanding tasks to complete and are set targets to extend their learning.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are in line with their classmates in English and mathematics. They are making good progress from their different starting points as a result of good additional individual support they receive in literacy and numeracy by skilled teaching assistants to enable them to catch up quickly.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because they make good use of phonics (the sounds letters make) to read unfamiliar words and they read widely and often, as seen in their reading diaries.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the specialist resource base make good progress in communication, literacy and numeracy because staff make good use of well-chosen resources and articulate instructions very clearly. They check and record the small gains in learning pupils make and use this to extend their thinking so they make at least expected progress from their starting points.
- Pupils acquire and develop knowledge and understanding well in reading, writing and mathematics, although their progress in English grammar, punctuation and spelling is less secure.
- Very occasionally, the learning of different groups of pupils slows because adults do not check closely enough how well they are doing in their tasks to make sure that the work is not too easy

for them.

- Pupils make good progress in physical development, in staying fit and healthy because primary sport funding is used well to support their health and well-being. This was seen for example, during lunchtime when many pupils' were enjoying skipping and exercising vigorously as a result of the initiative to encourage skipping to stay healthy.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good, including in English and mathematics. Most lessons seen across the school were good or better and in these lessons teachers promote enthusiasm for learning. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is often outstanding.
- Pupils work well together and are thoroughly absorbed in learning. They usually develop new knowledge and skills quickly because teachers' questioning is pertinent and shows a good knowledge of how well pupils are learning.
- Pupils apply the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects, such as religious education, history, science and cooking because these are well taught and teachers include the development of these skills in well-planned lessons.
- Pupils' progress is checked each half term by the school and any weaknesses in learning are identified so that new remedies and extra support can be arranged. Pupils generally know how well they are doing through feedback in lessons and in marking where they are told how to improve their work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those at an early stage of learning English, make good progress because teaching assistants break tasks down into smaller steps, carefully explain the meaning of any technical language and clarifying their misunderstandings. They provide equally good support for learning to enable pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those who enter the school other than at the usual times of admission to catch up with their classmates.
- Teaching in the specialist resource base is good because all adults work well together to ensure every pupil understands the task. They articulate instructions clearly and explain difficult words or ideas by using examples. Adults continuously check and record the small steps of progress pupils make. Consequently all pupils remain focused on their learning and make good progress.
- Very occasionally in lessons which require improvement, the learning of a few pupils with different abilities slows because the work is too easy for them. In these lessons, adults sometimes do not check pupils' learning frequently enough so miss opportunities to give them harder work to do.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to develop their use of English grammar punctuation and spelling in their written work. Occasionally, teachers do not correct pupils' spellings, punctuation or grammar and do not comment on untidy work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are consistently positive across year groups and in different subjects and are having a good impact on the progress they are making. Most pupils are well-prepared for lessons and arrive punctually. They respond quickly to staff instructions and low-level disruption is uncommon.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good because staff provide good role models to show pupils how to behave, and pupils respond well to consistently good management of their behaviour by staff. Staff expectations for behaviour are high and they make good use of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour.
- Pupils have a good awareness of bullying and how to prevent it. As a result, there are few instances of bullying. This was confirmed in discussion with pupils, and in the questionnaire returns of staff and parents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils stay safe in school and show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They know how to avoid unsafe situations when using computers or mobile phones. Pupils move from one area of the school safely and play safely in the playground. Parents, staff and pupils believe that pupils are safe in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage stay safe and secure because staff are highly effective in promoting their safety and well-being and ensure children enjoy their learning.
- Pupils in the specialist resource base are well behaved and take pride in their learning. This enables most of them to return successfully to their mainstream classes on a full-time basis by Year 5.
- Pupils have good relationships with adults and with each other. They listen carefully and respect the views of others and are polite and courteous to visitors.
- Attendance is now above average and is rising year on year.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in the few lessons which required improvement pupils did not always remain fully focused on learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides consistently good leadership and direction for the school and is well supported by his leadership team. As a result, staff morale is high and teamwork is strong with a commitment to make this an outstanding school.
- Leaders regularly and rigorously monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning using criteria from the national guidance on teaching standards to make sharper judgements on teaching. The outcomes of their checks are used to provide feedback to teachers on the strengths in their teaching and to identify clear areas for improvement.
- Leaders provide good opportunities for professional development where weaker teaching is seen and newly qualified teachers receive good support through mentoring. The management of staff performance is rigorous and relates precisely to the national 'Teachers' Standards' and whole-school priorities for development. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity

and preventing discrimination of any kind.

- The school's own view of itself and its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. This information is used effectively by leaders to develop clear and well- founded priorities for development. However, subject leaders are not analysing information rigorously enough to ensure that they identify the right remedies to meet the school's priorities. The actions they identify are too general and not related, for example, to improving punctuation, grammar and spelling.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum which is well planned to provide a broad range of activities which interest pupils. There is a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills in different subjects with good opportunities to promote writing. There is a wide range of clubs and trips to engage pupils and enrich learning such as the dance club and choir.
- Leaders have ensured good use of pupil-premium funding, for example, to subsidise the breakfast club which has improved attendance and promoted health and well-being for the pupils concerned. It has also provided additional support for individuals and small groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy.
- Good use is made of primary sports funding to provide coaching and additional activities such as dance and skipping. This has resulted in a good uptake from pupils and for the first time the school now has an all-girls football team.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding as it is resulting in consistently good and better teaching and outcomes for children.
- Leadership of the specialist resource base is good, with strong partnerships with outside agencies. This leads to good teaching and good progress, ensuring pupils with disabilities and special educational needs arising from cognition and learning re-integrate successfully to mainstream classes.
- The headteacher has instilled confidence and has the support of parents. They expressed strongly positive views in their questionnaire responses to Parent View. Most would recommend the school to other parents.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school through, for example, the regular review of its work since November 2013.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are providing good direction and oversight for the school's work. They visit the school regularly and have a first-hand view of the quality of teaching, which they know is good. They ensure that performance management is rigorous and set clear priorities for the headteacher to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching. They ensure that objectives set for improving the performance of staff are linked to the headteacher's objectives and that good teaching is rewarded and any weaknesses are dealt with. Governors are using data to hold the school to account for its work. In a governors' meeting seen, members were asking why, for example, there were no pupils at Key Stage 2 entered for the higher Level 6 in the national tests. Governors ensure that the legal requirements are met for safeguarding; they regularly review policies and ensure all potential risks are assessed and procedures for vetting staff and visitors are rigorous. Governors have overseen good use of pupil-premium funding and primary sports funding to provide value for money and check that this is having a good effect on pupils.

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	134958
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	430781

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Mackay
Headteacher	Stuart Allen
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2012
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