

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

Hungate Street, Aylsham, Norwich, NR11 6JZ

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Preparation for the next stage in pupils' education is excellent. In four of the last five years, pupils have left the school with reading, writing and mathematics standards that compared very favourably with schools nationally, especially in reading.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the nursery and reception classes, settle quickly and make outstanding progress.
- Right from the start, good reading habits are encouraged because the school sees basic skills as fundamental to achievement.
- Staff know their pupils exceptionally well and almost always see that their differing needs are met. Pupils appreciate that staff listen to their views and often act on them.
- Pupils have a thirst for learning and persevere to do their best. They are very enthusiastic about school and feel very safe. They behave outstandingly well.
- All staff have high expectations of themselves and each other. Teamwork is very strong; everyone wants to improve, everyone wants to share ideas to make the school better.
- Subjects are interesting so pupils enjoy learning. Excellent use is made of the superb outdoor environment for learning.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and share a close working relationship with staff which greatly benefits pupils. All responding to 'Parent View' would recommend the school.
- Since the previous inspection, training has been used well to further improve teaching so it is outstanding. This ensures pupils make rapid progress to reach high standards.
- Staff, governors and parents recognise the pivotal role of the headteacher in building and sustaining the school's success.
- Governors know the school exceptionally well and meticulously plan for its future.
- The school is at the heart of the local community and works closely with others to give all pupils an excellent start in education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector sampled eight lessons. Most were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and direct communications from parents. The responses to 20 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector 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 the 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 small infant and nursery school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is currently low. It was higher last year when it was in line with national averages.
- 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 also below average.
- Pupils are taught in five classes. In any one year, three of the five classes will be mixed-age, depending upon the pupil numbers in each year group.
- The headteacher is a 'Local Leader of Education' supporting other local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that every opportunity is taken to extend pupils' speaking skills and develop these to an even higher standard.
- Ensure that the very small number of pupils who find mathematics particularly difficult are as well supported as those who find English difficult.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding broadly as expected for this age. They are curious and ready to learn so the wide variety of interesting activities enables them to make very rapid progress. This continues through the Reception class so about four in every five children achieve a good level of development by the time they move into Year 1.
- Outstanding progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Currently, about three-quarters of Year 2 pupils, for example, are learning at twice the rate expected. This is because they are challenged to think hard and for themselves. In mathematics, for example, groups have very meaningful conversations about whether a heart shape can be divided into equal thirds, and use 'trial and error' to prove or disprove each other's ideas. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching high standards in mathematics is increasing further.
- Basic skills are taught very well so that pupils have the 'tools' they need to achieve. After disappointing results in the Year 1 2012 screening of phonics (how letters link to the sounds they make), the school changed its approach to include short intensive daily sessions, with all classes following a similar approach. As a consequence, 2013 results were much improved.
- Fundamental to the outstanding progress of the vast majority of pupils is that staff spot their needs very quickly so tasks they are given are neither too easy nor too hard. From nursery, children identified as more-able are given more difficult questions to answer. Parents say, 'Staff catch things early.'
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally do well because the staff get to know their precise needs, and then tailor their learning to fit.
- The pupil premium funding is used highly effectively. In 2013, pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in Year 2 attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment was significantly better than pupils nationally and similar pupils though not quite as high as that of other pupils in the school. Eligible pupils currently in the school make equally outstanding progress as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment is similar to that of others. Hence, the school is closing any remaining gaps.
- Pupils struggling with reading and writing do exceptionally well because the school screens them at the end of Reception and uses 'booster' sessions if they are falling behind. Their progress is checked and the work in sessions changed or adapted until pupils catch up. There is no such system in mathematics, so the very small number who find mathematics particularly difficult sometimes make good rather than outstanding progress.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are generally strong. However, very occasionally in lessons speaking skills are not promoted as effectively as they could be. This is because, in these rare instances, pupils sometimes answer questions with a word or short phrase. They are not challenged to put their answer in a sentence in order to extend their use of language further.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because staff succeed in their aim to, 'Create an atmosphere of vibrant learning.' When teachers announce, 'I'm going to throw down a challenge,' pupils beam with excitement and cannot wait to start.

- Children in nursery and reception become totally absorbed in the activities they are given, or they choose for themselves. Staff are always ready with a question that helps them to move on or develop their thinking further.
- Each lesson, teachers tell pupils what they will be doing and how it helps them. They clarify any 'tricky' words. During the lesson they regularly check no unexpected problems emerge. As a result, pupils invariably know where to put their energies so they know more at the end of the lesson than the start. They feel positive and say, 'I know I am getting better.'
- Lessons end with teachers asking pupils to show they understand the new learning by using it in a different way. A lesson about descriptive words ends with pupils describing each other's positive traits. In her thoughtful reflections, the teacher recognised the range of words pupils used could be extended and started to plan her next lesson to include a much wider vocabulary for pupils to use.
- Teaching assistants are very effective. In the youngest classes they put something out of the ordinary in the classroom or outdoor area, to make children stop and think. They encourage dialogue. A child saying, 'The dragon went over the hill,' is asked, 'What might he have seen?' so a new conversation begins. An older pupil struggling with a mathematical concept is prompted to use apparatus to 'see' her learning and understand the mathematics better.
- Pupils participate fully because they know teachers routinely end discussions by asking questions of any who, 'look like they might not have got it,' to check they did. Pupils think deeply because questions often ask them to apply what they have learnt to a different situation. If a pupil struggles to answer, they say, 'I throw the question to....' another pupil to answer and explain. The original pupil then repeats this aloud, to check they understand now.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils take excellent care of their books, equipment and school. While pupils say they occasionally fall out, they also say bullying is very rare and quickly resolved. As at the previous inspection, there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils who need additional support are nurtured and the school looks to remove any barrier that inhibits them from making similar progress to their peers.
- Pupils' opinions are valued. For example, they helped audit reading books and gave suggestions for new 'fresh' ones, so all are enthused to read.
- Pupils' independence is encouraged in many ways. For example, each pupil knows what to do to improve and 'uplift' their level because it protrudes from the top of their book as a constant reminder. In 'Busy Bees', a 'thumbs up' and 'buzzzzz' is given to anyone who succeeds.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Each year starts with reminders about safeguarding pupils. Staff describe the open school culture and say they would not hesitate to whistle-blow, 'The head tells us, don't think what happens if I do something, think what happens if I don't.'
- Pupils have a very good understanding about staying safe on the internet because they, and their parents, receive training and advice.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. School council pupils lead class

discussions on important topics such as, 'what makes a good learner?' and, 'What makes a good friend?' Views are collated to become the school expectation.

- Great care is taken when children join and leave the school, so worry is largely removed. Parents say staff, particularly the headteacher, 'go the extra mile', taking care to see pupils settle in well.
- Attendance is much improved because everything is done to make sure pupils attend. In the past a doctor's appointment might have meant a day off, now pupils come before or after.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Management of the school, at all levels, is excellent. Education is the core purpose, so the office manager undertakes many tasks to free the headteacher and staff to focus on work with pupils.
- Leadership of the school is equally strong and much improved since the previous inspection as teachers are much more involved in evaluating how well pupils and subjects are performing, and suggesting and leading changes. Staff share their best ideas and observe each other. Subject leaders are very effective in helping to improve their subjects and supporting other teachers.
- The headteacher advises other schools but makes absolutely sure that John of Gaunt continues to thrive and improve. First and foremost, she is a very able teacher who spends time in classes giving quiet advice and checking how well the school is delivering high quality learning.
- Staff say the headteacher leads by example and sets the 'tone'. They like how she manages change, making sure one change is working well before moving onto something new.
- The range of subjects and enrichment activities is excellent, most topics start with a 'Wow!' activity to inspire and enthuse pupils so they are very keen to learn. Visits and visitors enrich and extend subjects significantly.
- Primary school sports funding is used well to provide specialist coaches. This specialist teaching is used effectively; pupils' health and fitness benefit from the strong focus on skills and energetic activity. School staff have opportunities to learn new ideas and techniques from the specialists.
- Parents are part of everyday school life. They are welcome to join in learning activities and share lessons. Pupils feel the important adults in their lives work very closely together. Parents say they find the advice and guidance they are given very helpful in understanding what the school is doing so they can help their children at home.
- The school is pivotal in the local area so pupils develop a real understanding of what 'community' means. 'Family learning day' brings everyone together for fun learning. Schools locally form a very strong 'teaching family'. Staff train together and share ideas, pupils enjoy coming together for events such as dancing. Local organisations are involved beneficially.
- Given the school's consistently outstanding results and very good reputation, the local authority has provided only a 'light touch' level of support. Nonetheless, the school actively seeks advice and guidance from a wide range of sources to continually improve its work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors involve themselves fully in the life of the school. All gain from the regular training they undertake because governors explain what has been learnt to one another. Leadership

skills are developed systematically so everyone on the board can take on a role at a moment's notice. They listen to parents, for example about parking, look at the problem themselves and implement change. A key component of their work is that governors ask searching questions about the high standards, such as, 'What's making it happen?' This helpfully asks for an analysis of success, so it can be maintained and possibly applied elsewhere. Staff pay is linked to effectiveness and governors are prepared to tackle any underperformance. Finances are very carefully managed to achieve value-for-money, whether additional pupil premium funds or the new build. Governors are forward-thinking, already looking at what the school and its organisation might look like in a few years time. Legal requirements, including safeguarding, 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	120988
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	440573

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gavin Watson
Headteacher	Fiona Chant
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2010
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