

Astley Primary School

Fakenham Road, Melton Constable, NR24 2HH

Inspection dates 25–26 March 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.

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and governors have made marked improvements to the quality of teaching and the progress the pupils make.
- Children achieve well in the Reception class.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have risen considerably in the last two years.
- Steps to improve the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) are proving successful and quickly improving pupils' reading skills.
- Pupils supported by extra government funding achieve well.
- The teaching is lively and interests the pupils. Teachers' questions help pupils to understand new work.
- Attendance has improved to be in line with the national average.
- Pupils behave well and concentrate on their work.
- The deputy headteacher keeps a keen eye on the progress all groups of pupils are making and acts quickly if individuals fall behind.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not frequently made to think hard about applying what they have learned in mathematics to solve problems.
- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient help and direction to improve their spelling in marked work.
- Not all pupils present their work carefully and with neat handwriting.
- The school's plans for improvement are not sufficiently sharply focused to make sure that pupils' standards continue to improve.
- Some parents do not think their views and concerns are given sufficient consideration.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons. These were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and heard some of them read.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils’ books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were analysed from the 40 responses to the questionnaire on the Parent View website. In addition, the views of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were considered.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Dutton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning) is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- One in five pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This proportion is lower than the national average. This extra government funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority, and those who have a parent serving in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils reach higher levels in mathematics and spell words accurately, by:
 - setting problems and investigations in mathematics that make them think hard, particularly the most-able pupils
 - marking spelling mistakes in a manner that promotes improvement and greater accuracy
 - expecting all pupils to take care with their presentation of work and maintain neat handwriting.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that plans for school improvement are more sharply focused on improving standards further and have clear criteria against which success can be measured
 - consulting with, informing and encouraging more parents to be frequently involved in school life so that they are convinced their views and concerns are fully considered.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The results of national tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013 show a marked improvement on those of the previous year and are broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The data the school records about the progress pupils make show that these improvements are being sustained.
- Pupils make good progress. The rate of progress in reading and particularly in mathematics has increased considerably in the last few years. Progress continues to accelerate but in mathematics the most able are not given problems that make them think hard often enough to increase the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels.
- Many children start school with less well developed skills and knowledge than are expected for their age. Children in the Reception class made good progress and most reached a good level of development last year. The records that the staff maintain to illustrate each child's progress show that children who are currently in the Reception class are currently achieving well.
- Pupils are making good progress in composing sentences and grouping their ideas into paragraphs. However, not all write neatly and present their work carefully. Some older pupils have not developed a continuous style of handwriting. In addition, although improving, some older pupils' spelling is not yet as accurate as it should be.
- In the national screening check of phonic skills last year, Year 1 pupils did not do well enough. A radical change in approach to the teaching of phonics has accelerated progress. Most of the pupils have now caught up and this is evident in their reading, where they consistently tackle unfamiliar words with confidence.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Some pupils have made rapid progress as a result of the help and support they receive. The progress these pupils make is regularly reviewed to make sure they receive the right level of support so they continue to do well.
- The pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 last year reached similar standards to those of their classmates in reading, and higher standards in writing and mathematics. In other year groups, eligible pupils are making good progress in line with that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Underperformance has been tackled and, as a result, pupils are making good progress. Teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate the pupils who say they enjoy 'learning new things'. Teachers question the pupils well to deepen their knowledge.
- The teaching takes good account of the range of abilities in each class. In most lessons, the work that the teachers set is at the right level, both to build on what pupils are already able to do, and to make sure that they make good progress. Work is carefully adjusted where pupils need extra help or are finding it easy.
- The adults who work alongside the teachers explain very clearly what they want the pupils to

do. This is particularly helpful to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In some lessons, the teachers also provide well-chosen prompts to help these pupils focus on particular learning and make good progress.

- Teaching in the Reception class is good. The children learn effectively through a range of activities, such as those seen which are currently linked to the theme of 'pirates'. For example, the children responded very confidently as they set about making clocks to replace those the pirates had stolen. The teacher used the opportunity well to develop the children's understanding of 'times of the day'.
- The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching has led to pupils having a clearer understanding of what they need to do to be successful. Teachers' marking helps pupils to know what they have done well and where their work can be improved. However, the manner in which spelling is marked does not require the pupils to correct words they should know how to spell.
- The teachers have clear expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well and relationships are positive. They expect the pupils to listen carefully and concentrate on their work and they do so. However, there is too much variation in teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is resulting in pupils making faster progress. In mathematics in Year 5, the teachers set problems at the right level for the pupils when they were investigating factors. However, work in the pupils' books shows that the most able are not always set investigations that challenge them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn. They concentrate, and behave well in lessons, which are rarely disrupted. Pupils respond positively to teachers' questions and enjoy many of the activities provided for them. However, not all pupils present their work carefully enough.
- Pupils are very clear about the school's expectations for good behaviour and respond to them positively. They are aware of the consequences of their actions and the rewards and sanctions that they can expect. In discussion with pupils, they say that behaviour is typically good and that they enjoy lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders rigorously check to make sure that adults are suitable to work with children. They make the building secure and check all those entering it. The deputy headteacher has conversations with groups of pupils to find out how safe they feel.
- Some parents have concerns about parking on the road outside the school. The school is working with the North Norfolk District Council to improve the pathways. Cycling proficiency training and interactive workshops extend pupils' understanding of staying safe.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and, when they occur, they are recorded and dealt with. Checks are carried out to make sure there is no recurrence. Pupils are aware of the need to be vigilant when using the internet and of the risks of cyber-bullying.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved because the school follows up absences robustly. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities as school councillors, eco-councillors, house captains and members of 'The Astley News' team.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly check the quality of teaching. They identify where teachers can make improvements, and subsequent checks make sure their suggestions have been acted upon. These observations have brought about improvement and a greater consistency to the quality of teaching.
- The deputy headteacher tracks the progress of all pupils in considerable detail. The thorough analysis the school subsequently completes of the progress that pupils make has underpinned improvement since the previous inspection. For example, where the school's own checks of Year 1 pupils' knowledge of phonics has raised concerns, swift action has been taken to bring improvement. Consequently, pupils' phonic skills have improved considerably since the results of the national check in 2013.
- The appraisal of the quality of teachers' work is carried out systematically. The teachers are set targets as a result of the regular meetings they each hold with the senior leadership team to check pupils' performance.
- The school's plans for improvement set out many actions to be taken to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics further. However, they do not have a sharp enough focus to bring further rapid improvement. In addition, the criteria against which the headteacher and governors can monitor success are not sufficiently clear.
- The subjects and topics the pupils are taught are interesting and contribute to their learning. This year the school has successfully introduced a structured and comprehensive programme of teaching pupils phonics and to improve their spelling skills. Timetabled subjects are supplemented by a diverse range of after-school clubs and activities that include a circus club and a ukulele club.
- The additional funds provided for sport are being used effectively by the school to develop a wider range of activities for pupils by joining with other schools. The teacher who leads physical education has also received extra training which is then shared with other teachers. The impact of this training was evident when Year 6 pupils practised their hockey skills.
- While the majority of parents are happy with the work of the school, some are not. Some parents do not think their views or concerns are given sufficient consideration. In conversation, it is clear that some parents think that the recent trial of changes to arrangements at the start of the school day were made without sufficient consultation or detailed explanation. Leaders have not yet persuaded all parents that their views are fully taken account of.
- The local authority officer makes regular visits to the school each term and is supporting the school through the 'to good and great' programme. Specialist support has been provided to improve teaching in mathematics. Leaders are also directed to outstanding schools so they can learn from the best practice in the area.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors received training from the local authority and, consequently, are able to analyse the data on pupils' progress and attainment for themselves and hold the headteacher to account to make sure the school continues to improve. They also keep abreast of how well the school is performing through the reports the headteacher provides about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

- The governors know what the quality of teaching is across the school. They have supported the headteacher to tackle underperformance in teaching and have linked rewards for teachers to improvements in their performance in enabling pupils to achieve well.
- Governors are involved in all major spending decisions. For example, they competently manage recent government funding, including the sports premium and the purchase of a comprehensive programme to improve the younger pupils' phonic knowledge and older pupils' spelling. They receive regular reports about the impact this is having on pupils' progress.
- Governors also know how the pupil premium is spent and check on the impact of this expenditure on eligible pupils' progress.
- They ensure that safeguarding meets current statutory 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

Unique reference number	121015
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	430780

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Hems
Headteacher	Helen Pegg
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2012
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