

Newnham Croft Primary School

Chedworth Street, Cambridge, CB3 9JF

Inspection dates 5–6 June 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Consequently, teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- Standards are above average in all subjects. All pupils make expected progress between Year 2 and Year 6 and many exceed expectations.
- For years, absence rates have been very high in comparison to other schools. Attendance is now average and improving rapidly.
- Governors are extremely astute and well informed about the school's work. They have a very clear view of how the school can improve and apply the right balance of support and challenge to ensure that plans for improvement come to fruition.
- All of the improvement points from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully, particularly the quality of teaching and learning in Reception.
- Leaders and managers at all levels have developed an outstanding curriculum. It focuses on the acquisition of key skills in reading, writing and mathematics while ensuring that pupils have access to rich and memorable learning experiences in all other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. They reciprocate the respect and courtesy afforded to them by staff and each other and show excellent attitudes towards learning. Their understanding of safety in and beyond school is impressive.
- Parental satisfaction has risen since the previous inspection and parents and carers attribute this to the headteacher's leadership. They especially appreciate significant improvements in communication between home and school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing is improving but not outstanding. Pupils are not always applying the skills they learn in literacy to written work in other subjects.
- The school has a robust system for gathering information to check pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science but this is unsystematic in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. This included 12 observations of lessons (some seen together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher) taught by class teachers or specialist teachers. They looked in depth at pupils' written work in exercise books, examples of work on display and examined the school's information about teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The views of the 59 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, along with one letter received from a parent and 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, safeguarding and personnel records, plans for future improvement, self-evaluation and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.
- A few pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to the inspectors.

Inspection team

Linda Killman, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Varney

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Half of the pupils attending are from a very wide range of minority ethnic heritages and the rest are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year is much higher than average. Many families have short-term placements at the university nearby. Their children have previously been educated in different international education systems.
- A few pupils generate additional government funding through the pupil premium. This funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and other groups.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught either in a single-age class or a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- A pre-school and after school club are hosted on the premises. These are registered with Ofsted but privately run and subject to separate inspections.
- The headteacher has been in post for less than two years and the deputy took up her post at the start of this school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects
 - setting higher expectations for pupils to apply their literacy skills effectively to written tasks in all subjects and, in some classes, with greater attention to detail in the way it is presented
 - building in sufficient time for pupils to reflect on and respond to teachers' marking.
- Develop a systematic approach for recording and evidencing pupils' achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children who join in Reception are ready for school with skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception Year. When they move into Year 1 the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is significantly higher than the national figure.
- Across the school, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Through Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress, especially in developing secure knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), and the very large majority reach the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check. They confidently blend sounds together to read a word and break down individual sounds to spell them.
- The proportions of pupils making expected and more than expected progress in reading and mathematics are close to or above national figures. However, progress in writing between the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has previously been too variable. Greater emphasis on the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is making a difference to the progress of pupils across the school, and is enabling current Year 6 pupils to make good progress.
- In most classes pupils do not do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces in a range of subjects to use and apply their literacy skills and to practise setting out their work neatly.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language all make good progress because the extra help they receive is of very good quality. Support staff are highly trained to deliver well-designed programmes expertly and pupils forge ahead in their learning as a consequence.
- The school has used the pupil premium effectively to narrow the gap between eligible pupils' achievement and others. In 2012, the gap was significant, with pupils almost two years behind others in English and mathematics. Last year this reduced to two terms and this year it has narrowed further.
- The most-able pupils make good progress by the time they leave, as seen by the numbers of Year 6 pupils working well above the levels expected for their age. They are strongly encouraged to challenge themselves. For example, when offered the choice of taking the very demanding Level 6 test papers, more pupils than ever before opted to sit them.
- New primary school sports funding is used well to promote healthy lifestyles and increase participation through physical education and sport. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards exercise. They are keen participants in a very wide range of different sports and games including, for example, hockey and cross country running.
- Standards in art, craft and design exceed those usually seen and finished pieces show extreme care and attention to detail. Pupils develop originality and apply their imagination through unique first hand experiences such as looking at organisms under a microscope to inspire their art.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is consistently good and some is outstanding. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the very wide range of approaches and methods that teachers employ to keep learning fresh and dynamic. The level of challenge stretches pupils of all abilities without inhibiting them. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to get off to a good start.
- The teaching of writing has a greater focus this year on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Technical accuracy and sentence structure are improving but new strategies have not been employed for long enough to show outstanding progress. Curriculum planning for subjects other than English does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills.
- Teachers' choice of texts, images, technology and other resources such as utilising the skills of local experts to support learning is innovative. They make excellent use of the extensive school grounds and the rich resources available in the local area to secure good-quality learning for pupils of all ages. All teachers create a positive climate for learning that keeps pupils interested and engaged.
- Assessment is regular and accurate. Marking is up to date and usually helpful in pointing out how pupils can improve their work. However, not all teachers allow sufficient time for pupils to respond to the marking.
- The contribution that teaching makes in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have frequent opportunities to work together in pairs and groups sharing their ideas, planning and making decisions, negotiating, choosing their level of challenge and celebrating each other's achievements. Through teaching in Forest School and in science, for example, pupils' fascination about the world around them is heightened.
- Many parents, carers and governors expressed their gratitude in the 'extra mile' that all staff are prepared to go in providing their children with rich and memorable experiences. As one parent commented 'They give such a lot beyond the call of duty.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are extremely well-mannered and treat adults and each other with great respect and consideration. All pupils have free range of the school grounds at break times: older pupils play alongside Reception children with ease because, as one pupil explained, 'it's everyone's job to look after them'.
- There have been no exclusions in the school's recent past. Incidences of unacceptable behaviour or racist remarks are exceedingly rare and followed up diligently should they occur.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning: they are quick to settle, eager to learn and responsive to whomever is teaching the lesson or the group. Pupils' views were universally positive about school. They were keen to share those things that make school special such as The Green Flag recently awarded for their eco-schools work in developing a sustainable environment.
- Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about different types of bullying. They commented that 'it just doesn't really happen' and were keen to point out a display on anti-bullying that teachers refer to frequently 'to remind us'.

- Pupils show immense interest in exploring, understanding and learning about different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups within school, nationally and globally. New arrivals receive a warm welcome and make friends quickly whether they are able to speak English initially or not. They act as interpreters for others and advise staff and each other of the correct pronunciation when learning new foreign languages.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are thorough, implemented consistently and updated immediately when new guidance is issued. Pupils are very clear of how to reduce risk whether online or in their everyday lives.
- In the past, the school's absence rates have been much higher than average because of the high number of families taking holidays (often to return home) in term time. The headteacher, supported by governors has worked closely with parents and carers to help them to see the impact that absence has on their children's learning and well-being. As a consequence, attendance is average for the first time and improving rapidly.
- When pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they are completely ready for secondary education. They are mature, enthusiastic learners who relish a challenge and have high aspirations. These open-minded youngsters are extremely keen to have a go at a range of activities and to learn about different communities and lifestyles.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding, visionary leader who is recognised and respected by staff, parents and carers and governors for her rigour in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work. She leads by example and possesses in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is highly innovative and open to new ideas, taking on board advice from experts and advisers readily.
- The new deputy headteacher is effective and ambitious for the school to be the best that it can be. She has already had an impact in improving the progress pupils make in writing in her role as the leader of literacy.
- Regular checks of teaching, effective use of appraisal and very well-targeted professional development of staff have improved the quality of teaching. All staff have a clear understanding of how their performance can be improved. The frequency of outstanding teaching is rising.
- Strong leadership from the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved provision and ensures that whether children are taught in the pure Reception class or the mixed-age class, they have full access to the appropriate curriculum and make good progress.
- Everyone takes responsibility for raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. Subject leaders have been trained well to carry out their responsibilities. All of them gather information about teaching and learning but the very good system used for recording pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science is not replicated in all subjects.
- The curriculum, to which all staff contribute, is outstanding especially in its breadth and richness. It responds to and reflects pupils' interests and is highly relevant often providing opportunities for pupils to learn from first hand experiences. It prepares pupils for life in modern British society excellently. The school is very well prepared for the introduction of the new National Curriculum from September.

- This summer, 25 clubs are available during and beyond the school day. These are often run by specialists and experts in sport and music or members of the community such as a botanist who runs gardening club. The range of visitors who come into school to share their skills, expertise and experiences with pupils is immense and includes authors, lecturers, and professors, leaders of different religions, surgeons and archaeologists.
- The sports funding is enhancing the school's already extensive provision and enabling more pupils to participate in competitive sports.
- Partnership work with fellow professionals and other agencies is well developed. The local authority has provided good support in commissioning a consultant to check the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Advisers have had an input in developing staff expertise in the provision for pupils who have English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Parents and carers speak very highly of the improvements in communication with the school. Information flows freely between home and school capitalising on use of technology and accessibility to staff who make themselves available at the start and close of each school day.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and both challenges and supports the school in pursuit of improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors are extremely well informed and bring to the table a range of useful skills and valuable knowledge. The governing body is in touch with all aspects of the school's work through regular visits and other monitoring activities. Data are understood very well. Governors use data effectively to check for improvements and to hold leaders accountable. For example, they know how pupil premium is spent and expect to see return for the funding of additional staff in terms of eligible pupils' improved achievement. They ensure that pay progression is closely linked to classroom performance. The governing body plans ahead. It anticipates national and local issues that could affect the school and makes adjustments to ensure that provision is sustainable. Finances are managed well and safeguarding arrangements meet 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	110658
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	444206

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Clamp
Headteacher	Sharon Williams
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
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