

Emneth Primary School

Hollycroft Road, Emneth, Wisbech, PE14 8AY

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Determined and ambitious leadership by the headteacher has driven a range of crucial improvements that have led to a marked and rapid rise in the quality of teaching, and pupils' attainment and progress, throughout the school.
- Children in Reception are particularly well taught and make outstanding progress.
- A systematic programme of training has resulted in most teaching being good and some outstanding.
- Teachers make lessons lively and fun. Usually, challenging tasks are set that interest pupils and move their learning on quickly.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school, are well looked after and enjoy coming to school.
- Highly skilled, well-trained volunteers and staff provide valuable support for learning in the classroom, in small groups and for individuals.
- Excellent relationships contribute to the happy and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They play and work together harmoniously, and their attendance has improved.
- Well-thought-out, intriguing topics stimulate pupils' imagination and provide many creative, academic and sporting opportunities.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They ask challenging questions and ensure staff performance is rigorously checked.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics, although improved, is not as rapid as reading and writing.
- Pupils do not have a broad enough knowledge of cultures that make up today's United Kingdom.
- In some lessons, more-able pupils are given work which is too easy for them.
- Teachers' marking does not routinely inform pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to further improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and attended an assembly. Sometimes they were accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6, looked at work in pupils' books and observed them at play and lunch breaks.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, subject leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, met some parents informally at the start of the school day and reviewed a small number of letters received from parents. The inspectors also analysed questionnaires completed by 32 members of staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: the school development plan; the school's own assessment data and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; policies and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding; and information on pupils' progress and attainment, the performance of teachers and the work of the governing body.

Inspection team

Valerie Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and virtually all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. This is extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Alternative provision is made for a very small number of pupils to be taught at Nelson Academy, Downham Market and St Michael's CE VA Primary School, Kings Lynn for part of each week.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - more-able pupils are consistently challenged throughout the school
 - pupils understand how to improve their work, and teachers routinely check that they do so.
- Raise standards and progress in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in a wider range of subjects.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of the different cultures that make up modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, the determined headteacher, senior leaders and staff have briskly improved the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. As a result pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has accelerated significantly and attainment is rising.
- Pupils are swiftly making up for lost time as weaker teaching has been eliminated. The school's rigorous, regular and accurate six-weekly tracking of pupils' progress and attainment clearly demonstrates that they are now making speedy gains in all year groups.
- The current Year 6 are making better progress this year. The school's own information shows that the proportion of pupils set to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics is on track to improve vastly this year and compare favourably with the national averages for 2013. However, although progress in mathematics is improving throughout the school, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their basic skills in other subjects.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with development levels in line with those expected for their age. High quality teaching of stimulating activities means that children make exceptional progress in mathematics, reading, and writing and enter Year 1 with standards well above the national average across all areas of learning.
- A love of reading is encouraged from an early age and pupils read widely and often. Phonics (the sounds represented by letters) is taught systematically, and young pupils are able to read tricky words confidently and are able to talk about the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. As a result, a dramatically improved proportion of pupils achieved the required standard in the national screening check for reading in Year 1 in 2013. School information for the current Year 1 indicates that the proportion is set to rise again this year.
- In 2013, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were below average. School judgements for the current Year 2 indicate a marked improvement in progress and the proportion of pupils on track to exceed the nationally expected Level 2b and the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics compares very favourably with the 2013 national averages.
- The school has concentrated on raising standards and accelerating progress in reading, which has had a positive impact on writing. Mathematics progress has improved but not as quickly. However, the recently introduced calculation policy ensures skills progression throughout the year groups and will give pupils more opportunity to practise their basic mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well. The very small numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium generally make similar progress to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective support from skilled additional adults ensures that the attainment gap is closing in all subjects and year groups. There were too few eligible Year 6 pupils in 2013 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very effectively through additional support within the classroom, small groups and/or one-to-one assistance so they make good progress. The school keeps a close check on the attendance and achievement of the small number of pupils who attend the Nelson Academy and St Michael's CE VA Primary School to make sure they benefit.

- Generally, the tasks set for most pupils within lessons are not too easy or too hard. However, more-able pupils are not consistently challenged and do not make the progress they are capable of in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection. The meticulousness of regular monitoring by senior and subject leaders ensures high expectations and teaching which is mostly good and outstanding in some age groups. Well-chosen training has contributed to better teaching and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Reception class, children enjoy learning through purposeful play in a wide range of activities, both in the outdoor area and in the classroom. Children make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching. During the inspection, some children inside were writing high-calibre stories about the rainbow fish, while others enthusiastically used magnifying glasses to carefully draw pictures and some produced carefully cut, brightly coloured collages. Outside, number skills were being developed in the sandpit and water table, as were fine motor skills and upper body strength using other resources.
- Teachers' good planning, secure subject knowledge, probing questions and accurate assessment enable pupils to make good progress. Clear explanations and success criteria enable pupils to know what they are going to learn and what they have to achieve from the outset of each lesson.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards to provide stimulating introductions to lessons and bring learning to life with photographs and raps. This, alongside other activities, promote positive open-minded attitudes to learning, life and the wider world.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work together in pairs and groups. Classrooms are brought alive by role play and interacting with set scenes. Pupils in Year 1 were writing newspaper reports based on 'the stolen picture crime scene', having returned to their classroom and found it in disarray.
- Highly skilled and valuable teaching assistants, volunteers and other adults make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are well briefed by teachers and have the knowledge to help pupils make swift progress in all subjects.
- Teachers make good links between subjects to stimulate thinking and learning. Pupils in Year 4 were encouraged to calculate the total cost of a number of balls, collected as a warm up activity, in a physical education lesson and pupils in Year 6 had to use mathematics to prove how a 100,000 ton tanker could float while a 20 gram pebble would sink.
- Work in books is marked regularly, in all classes and subjects. The marking is often more helpful in writing than in mathematics, where it is generally positive but does not consistently give clear information on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check to make sure pupils have responded to their guidance in order to learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are confident, articulate, polite and courteous. They hold doors open for adults and are respectful and welcoming to visitors. They play well together in the playground and respond quickly to adults' requests.

- Pupils respond positively to teachers' encouragement and have good attitudes to learning. They generally concentrate well and persevere. Even when the subject matter is not so engaging and the pupils become passive observers, they do not behave inappropriately.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils and a calm atmosphere result from behaviour being consistently well managed throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and want to behave well. Their behaviour is sometimes exemplary.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and that incidents of bullying, such as name-calling, are rare. They are clear about how to obtain help if the need arises and are confident an adult will deal with any concerns.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including the use of the internet. They were able to talk about what they should and should not do to keep safe while using the roads or medicines, or when near water.
- Due to the conscientious work of the parent support adviser, attendance has improved dramatically since the last inspection and is now average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and exclusions are rare.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, wrote letters or spoke informally to inspectors feel that their children are well looked after, happy and safe. An overwhelming majority of parents felt their children settled very quickly, and that they were kept well informed of events and were made to feel very welcome.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has had a considerable impact on raising staff morale and driving improvement. Her ongoing enthusiasm to move the school forward is fully supported by governors, and almost all staff and parents, who are delighted with the changes that have been made. She has built a strong team and as a result the quality of teaching has improved rapidly, progress has accelerated and standards are rising.
- All teachers have individual targets and know exactly what they need to be focusing on to improve their practice. They are aware that meeting the targets, which are linked to the school development plan, pupils' progress and attainment, drives pay rises or promotion. A raft of training opportunities, for all staff, has ensured areas identified for improvement are proficiently tackled.
- The impact of the headteacher's leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been outstanding. Through clear guidance, the class teacher and all adults have been able to show a rapid improvement in children's achievement through precise planning based on individual needs and regular assessment.
- The school improvement plan, based on thorough, accurate self-evaluation, details the next steps in the school's future. Knowledgeable subject leaders work alongside the headteacher to ensure that teaching is monitored regularly and pupils' attainment and progress are carefully checked. They organise staff meetings and support staff members as and when appropriate.
- Parental links have dramatically improved since the last inspection. Parents and volunteers are welcomed into school. They help on a regular basis within classrooms, assist with visits, attend assemblies and take part in coffee mornings and parents' evenings. A regular newsletter keeps

parents informed of forthcoming events, and a comprehensive website shows the varied activities taking place. The overwhelming majority of parents are highly supportive of school and the headteacher's initiatives. As one wrote, 'This place rocks!'

- The funding for primary school sport and physical education has been used to enhance the subject leader's knowledge, and to train two additional members of staff to teach high quality physical education lessons. It has also been used to provide swimming for Years 2 to 6 and develop a designated mini football pitch on the playground to further encourage physical exercise at lunch and break times. More pupils are partaking in physical activities throughout the school and pupils can clearly talk about the benefits of an exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
- The enriched curriculum supports pupils' personal, spiritual and social development well. Topics are engaging and are frequently enhanced by visits and visitors to school. Displays show pupils enjoy a rich range of subjects with many opportunities to use their creative skills. Music and drama play an important role in pupils' education, culminating this year in a community play entitled 'Emneth in World War 1, discovering the past, remembering the fallen'. However, leaders have not yet done enough to ensure that pupils' knowledge of the different cultures in modern-day Britain is extensively developed.
- The local authority has provided effective bespoke support to meet the needs of the school, including through the 'Norfolk to Good and Great' programme to help schools improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They are skilled and knowledgeable about current legislation and ensure they undertake relevant training to keep them up-to-date. They actively recruit specific members of the community to ensure their skills are broad and balanced. Governors maintain a high profile within the school and are regularly available to staff and parents. They are keenly aware of how the budget is spent and are clear about the impact of pupil premium and sports funding on progress and attainment. Regular meetings ensure they keep a close eye on standards and progress in mathematics, reading and writing for all pupils, and hold school leaders to account at all times. They ask challenging questions and undertake a raft of monitoring visits both during and after the school day. They ensure national safeguarding 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	120870
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	442047

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Walters
Headteacher	Alison Townsend
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2012
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