

Queensway Infant School and Nursery

Queensway, Thetford, IP24 3DR

Inspection dates

15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders' roles, including subject leaders', are not well defined. Consequently they do not work effectively enough to plan for improvement or check on pupils' achievement.
- Governors do not make enough independent checks on the school's performance. As a result they do not rigorously hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching.
- Although pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make expected progress, their attainment in Reception and Year 2 in writing and mathematics is below average but improving.
- Not enough teaching is good. Teachers do not plan lessons to meet the differing needs of pupils, especially the more able.
- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils sometimes do not pay enough attention when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Pupils can be slow to settle to their tasks.
- Teachers' marking does not show pupils clearly how they can improve their work.
- Teaching assistants do not always have the necessary skills to support the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. This is because their training does not meet their needs.
- Pupils' safety requires improvement because attendance is below average and systems for improving it have not yet proved to be effective.
- Systems to record pupils' attainment and progress over time, so leaders, governors and teachers can analyse achievement and take action quickly when pupils are not making progress, are not rigorous enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported; as a result the gap between their attainment and others' is small.
- Pupils are happy in school. Their relationships with adults and with each other are good.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to use the sounds that letters make (phonics), and pupils use this knowledge successfully when reading unknown words in Years 1 and 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 13 lessons. The headteacher was invited to take part in joint observations with inspectors, but did not do so. Inspectors also made brief visits to other lessons. They looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, regarding safeguarding, child protection, attendance and behaviour policies, as well as records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans and its notes about the quality of teaching. Inspectors also read the minutes of governors' meetings, as well as the headteacher's reports to governors.
- Inspectors considered the responses to a questionnaire completed by 21 staff.
- There were not enough responses on the Parent View website for them to be considered by inspectors. However, inspectors listened to the views expressed by parents as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Stephen Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average. The proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. In some year groups nearly half the pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than average and is nearly one in five pupils. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also much higher than the national average and is nearly one in five pupils.
- The school has a nursery unit which children attend on a part-time basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and better teaching so that attainment in writing and mathematics rises by the end of Reception and Year 2, including those who speak English as an additional language by:
 - improving the level of challenge for all pupils, but particularly for the more able
 - making marking and feedback to pupils more effective, so that they have advice on how to improve, and have opportunities to act on it
 - reviewing the use and the professional development of teaching assistants so that they have a greater impact on pupils' achievement
 - ensuring all pupils settle quickly to their work and listen carefully to the teacher.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - rigorously focusing the skills of the school leaders, including subject leaders, on key improvement priorities so that all are able to contribute to the checks made on the effectiveness of the school, and to detailed planning for improvement.
 - developing systems which enable leaders and teachers to regularly use information on pupils' attainment and progress, to evaluate the impact of teaching and check on how well pupils are doing.
 - ensuring the systems in place to improve attendance are followed up rigorously.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- School leaders do not use data on pupil's progress and attainment effectively enough. Systems do not give sufficient information to teachers on the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, targets to improve pupils' attainment are not challenging enough.
- The levels of attainment reached by the majority of pupils by the time they leave the school have risen in recent years and some disadvantaged pupils, and those with very low starting points, make expected and better progress. Standards of reading are average in Year 1 and 2. Most parents agree that their children are happy, and say that they are effectively developing their basic skills.
- Leaders check on the effectiveness of the school but concentrate too much on successes and strengths, so do not address some weaknesses rigorously enough. As a result, actions to improve the school are not well enough focussed to deal with the most important issues, such as pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher sets targets for teachers to improve their skills, and there are some checks on the progress that pupils make in each class because pupils' work in books is studied carefully. There is an appropriate link between the progress made by pupils and teachers' pay. Discrimination is not tolerated and pupils are treated equally fairly by all staff. The pupil premium funding is spent effectively; eligible pupils are well supported, and are achieving in line with their classmates. The funding also offers these pupils more opportunities to participate in after-school activities.
- Subject leaders meet regularly with colleagues to discuss the progress of pupils, but they do not analyse well enough the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching of their subject, nor do they have a clear role in planning for improvement.
- School leaders are beginning to plan for the new National Curriculum. They ensure that the topics pupils study cover all areas of learning and give pupils a suitable understanding of their own culture and history as well as of the beliefs of others. The topics planned develop pupils' skills and understanding progressively. Teaching covers pupils' health, relationships and other social aspects which have a positive influence on developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Through these topics and lessons, as well as in assemblies, pupils are encouraged to develop respect for each other, while being given the opportunity to make choices of their own. They learn about right and wrong, and the need for fair rules. As a result, the pupils are acquiring positive attitudes, appropriate to their age, about living in a modern democratic society.
- The school uses its primary school sport funding effectively to broaden the range of sporting experiences offered to pupils and to develop staffs' skills in teaching dance and gymnastics. The funding has also been used to develop a range of after-school sports activities, in which many pupils now participate. The school promotes active life styles by making more playground equipment available at playtimes, and in showing pupils how to use it.
- The local authority has offered appropriate support to the school which has improved staffs' skills in teaching reading and phonics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors do not have enough systems of their own to check accurately on the strengths and weaknesses of the school or the quality and impact of teaching. They rely too much on the headteacher for information about its performance. For example, they do not make their own analysis of pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have systems in place to manage the performance of the headteacher, however the targets set for improvement do not focus enough on the achievement of pupils. Governors know that teachers' performance is used to determine their pay progression.
 - Governors make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding children meet the current national

requirements. They also ensure that all adults who work with pupils are checked for suitability. While they monitor pupils' behaviour and attendance, they do not challenge school leaders rigorously enough about these to bring about improvements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils enjoy their lessons, and usually try hard to complete the tasks set for them, they can sometimes be inattentive while teachers are talking to the whole class. Occasionally their inappropriate calling out can disrupt the flow of a lesson and they do not settle quickly to their work.
- Behaviour management is effective. This means that exclusions and incidents of racism are rare. Very few incidents of bullying occur because staff successfully sort out the issues pupils have with each other. Pupils are beginning to find ways to solve small disagreements themselves.
- Relationships between pupils are generally positive. Pupils help each other in lessons, and respect each others' opinions. Their relationships with adults are also positive, and this contributes to making the school an effective place for learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Attendance is below average. The school has introduced rewards for good attendance, but these and other strategies have yet to have an effective impact on improving attendance rates.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe adequately on the internet and understand how to handle cyber bullying. At playtimes pupils get on well together and inappropriate language is not often heard.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree. There are a large number of first aiders available at all times and staff have received training in safeguarding pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough, especially of the more able. This is because some teachers do not expect enough from pupils and do not always challenge them to reach higher levels in their work.
- Teachers make regular assessments of how much progress pupils have made through scrutinies of their work and by setting simple tests. However, teachers do not make enough use of this information when planning for pupils' differing needs. As a result, tasks are sometimes too easy or too hard for them, and this limits the progress they make.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, the marking does not always give pupils advice on how they can improve, nor is time allocated to make the necessary corrections to their work. This means some pupils are not clear about how to improve their skills.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they make expected progress and that their basic skills are developing adequately. Pupils' reading skills improve because staff teach phonics and comprehension skills well. Their writing skills progress steadily because activities are planned which enable pupils to write about their own experiences. They learn how to use mathematics adequately because practical activities carefully develop these skills.
- Teaching assistants often support groups and individuals who need additional help. These include disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, or pupils who speak English as an additional language. Once the teacher has set these pupils a task, teaching assistants are effective in helping them to make

progress. However, on occasions the teaching assistants listen to the teacher's explanations and so do not make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

- In some lessons, because teachers had designed appropriate resources to set a range of challenges and teaching assistants were clear about their work, pupils showed enthusiasm for their learning and made good progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, including that of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average in writing and mathematics. This includes the pupils who left the school in 2014. The school's information about the current Year 2 pupils is that a considerable proportion of these children started school with limited skills in these areas of learning.

- Children's starting points in Nursery and Reception classes are below those typical for their age. They do not make good progress because teachers do not always expect enough of them. Consequently, the attainment of children, including those from minority ethnic groups, remained below average at the start of Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils make effective progress, and have closed the gap on their classmates, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 the levels they have reached in reading, writing and mathematics are equal to those of their classmates. They are about a term behind other pupils nationally.
- While staff are beginning to check more closely on the progress of the most able, this has not yet helped them to learn faster, and these pupils make only expected progress.
- Pupils develop appropriate phonic skills to help them read unfamiliar words. They are well supported to improve their reading skills and confidence. As a result, attainment in reading is broadly average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make adequate progress from their different starting points because they are usually supported appropriately during lessons.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The leader and teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage assess the varying needs of children as they enter the Nursery or the Reception class. While the needs of children who begin school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age are effectively catered for, some children are not given enough challenges to make rapid progress. In addition, some children with other needs, such as those who speak English as an additional language, do not always get the right kind of support.
- Teachers use opportunities adequately to develop children's physical and listening skills. Adults make day-to-day checks about what the children have learned, and these contribute to half termly summaries. However, teachers do not always use these records to identify children who are not making good progress, and who may need extra support or challenge to do so.
- The leader and staff regularly plan activities which cover all the areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. However, while there are many opportunities for physical development, sometimes there are not enough opportunities for children to improve their skills in writing, counting and measuring. Skills in speaking for a range of purposes are well developed by encouraging children to take on roles in well-known stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. Children's phonic skills develop well because well taught sessions teach them to understand how this knowledge can be used to read.
- A considerable proportion of children start school with a limited concentration span. Through engagement in a range of tasks and activities this improves over time. Children are encouraged to develop their social awareness by sharing, co-operating, taking turns, and being polite and respectful towards others. As a result, most children develop social skills and patterns of behaviour which are appropriate for their age.

However, adults do not always encourage children to take on more difficult tasks, or to persevere when they have setbacks. As a result, children's self-confidence when taking on new challenges is a little limited.

- At least a third of children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age. They make broadly expected progress and most start Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities that remain below those expected. They are not effectively prepared to start Year 1 in writing and mathematics. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs receive additional support and make expected progress from their starting points...
- Leaders in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that welfare and safeguarding arrangements meet current 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	120897
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	448511

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Breffit
Headteacher	Linda Grainger
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2010
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