

# Aylsham, St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Nursery and Infant School

School House Lane, Blickling Road, Norwich, NR11 6EX

## Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and other leaders, resulting in consistently good teaching and standards being maintained at above average levels.
- The governing body is especially effective in its work to improve teaching and boost progress.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage through a wide range of purposeful and stimulating experiences.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 because teachers know them well and plan activities that meet their needs.
- Pupils behave extremely well and have a real thirst for learning. They have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and fully included in school life. They make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because there is occasional variation in teachers' expectations of pupils' writing.
- The assessment of children's skills in literacy in the early years has sometimes been too cautious and not fully captured the good progress that they make.

## **Information about this inspection**

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in 11 lessons or parts of lessons, all jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with a group of Year 2 pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with teaching staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and 27 written comments from parents. The inspector consulted the school's own survey of parents and also spoke informally to parents on the playground.
- The inspector observed two acts of collective worship.

## **Inspection team**

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## **Full report**

### **Information about this school**

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Less than one twentieth of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding which in this school supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, at one twentieth, is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, less than one tenth, is average.
- Nursery children attend school part-time over the week, although this may involve some full days.
- The headteacher has been appointed to the post since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of a local cluster of nine schools which has formed a Trust for promoting best practice.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Move teaching to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers have the same consistently high expectations of pupils' writing.
- Refine assessment in the early years, especially of literacy, to capture fully the good progress that pupils make.

## Inspection judgements

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has led the whole school community in setting clear aims and values which place the individual child at the centre of its work. Her relentless drive for improvement has resulted in above average standards being maintained.
- The school has a very positive Christian culture in which pupils thrive, and which promotes their outstanding personal development and behaviour.
- Strong leadership of teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and that teaching staff have every opportunity to learn from one another and best practice in other schools. Local headteachers work effectively together to support one another in checking the quality of teaching in their schools.
- Rigorous systems are used to track the progress of pupils so that teachers are very clear about how well they are doing and can identify promptly any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Teachers have challenging targets, as part of the management of their performance, linked to whole-school priorities. They only receive pay rises if their performance merits it.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support the very few eligible pupils in making good progress. Staff clearly identify their needs and fashion the additional help around them for the best impact.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their areas and are actively involved in checking provision. They help to shape good practice and support their colleagues well both in school and through the cluster of local schools.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well and fosters very good relations with a range of organisations. These include the local church, the wider community and support services such as speech and language assistance. Discrimination is not tolerated at all.
- The quality of the curriculum is effective in engaging pupils and meeting their needs. The school uses its grounds extremely well to promote outdoor learning such as through 'forest schools'. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits, visitors and clubs to enrich their learning. They make a positive contribution to the local and wider communities. For example, they sing at the Christmas market in the town hall and support a school in Cambodia. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Many come in as volunteers and they also have a thriving friends' association to raise money for the school.
- The school is recognised as a good school by the local authority. School leaders access the support that they identify that the school needs from a range of providers.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is being spent effectively on coaching for pupils and training for staff, with a focus this year on gymnastics. The opening of several new clubs, including dodge ball, has promoted greater participation in sport by pupils. There has been a beneficial impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because the drive of leaders to ensure excellence has not yet resulted in a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching. Consequently, although pupils' progress is good too few are making rapid progress across all classes.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly effective. They have an excellent understanding of the school and how it operates. They know all about the quality of teaching, the performance of pupils compared with other schools nationally, the management of teachers' performance and the effectiveness of the spending of additional funding. They also know how good teaching is rewarded and any underperformance tackled. They make sure that they regularly visit to see first-hand what is going on, and to check progress against the school's key priorities. This places them in a very strong position to challenge the headteacher and other staff about aspects of the school's performance. This is very clearly recorded in the minutes of their meetings. They have kept their skills honed and make a strong contribution to the local cluster of schools, particularly in developing an electronic governors' hub through which information can be shared between the governing bodies of the nine schools.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are very enthusiastic. They love coming to school. All parents who spoke to the inspector stressed how much their children enjoy learning.
- A key factor that contributes to pupils' outstanding behaviour is the way they learn to cooperate when working outdoors in 'forest school' sessions. For example, they learn to respect one another and the environment when building dens or looking for insects.
- All adults in the school manage behaviour very well. This means that pupils are clear about expectations and increasingly regulate their own behaviour. The school can point to individuals whose behaviour has improved considerably as a result of the excellent support they have received.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and carry out a wide range of jobs, such as librarians and helping the younger children. They also raise money for charity, such as 'Children in Need'.
- Pupils' attendance compares favourably with the national average for all primary schools, even though the pupils are younger and more prone to illness as their immune systems develop. This reflects the fact that it is hard to keep them away they enjoy school so much.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Bullying is not an issue. Pupils know how to deal with different types of bullying should it occur. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the roads. They challenge visitors to make sure they are wearing their official badge to show they have passed through security.
- Parents agree with pupils that they are completely safe at school. They learn how to handle tools safely and how to manage risk, for example when using the climbing frames.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Positive relationships create a climate in which pupils want to learn. Teachers give them mainly demanding work to do that makes them think. As a result, the impact of teaching on literacy and reading is good. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils who were writing firework poems used a wide range of exciting adjectives and literacy devices such as onomatopoeia.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to read in class and are encouraged to read daily at home. Regular 'reading roundabouts' ensure that pupils read and discuss a wide range of interesting texts. For example,

Year 2 pupils were finding out about the Hindu festival of Diwali from a selection of books.

- Good use of technology by both teachers and pupils brings learning to life. Pupils use the computers for research and to publish their own work. Teachers make stimulating presentations that engage the pupils well.
- Mathematics is well taught. A new approach this year using a different type of practical apparatus is proving successful in securing pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts. They have frequent opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve everyday problems.
- Regular philosophy sessions help pupils to think clearly as they listen carefully to others and express their own opinions.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children develop basic skills swiftly. A focus on early writing has given children many opportunities for mark making and the development of their physical manipulative skills. For example, 'funky fingers' and 'dough gym' ensure that children use tweezers and other appliances to hone their pencil grip in preparation for writing.
- Books show that pupils mainly make good progress over time. Occasionally, where there are pupils of the same year group spread across more than one class, the work they produce varies between classes. This is because of differences in expectations, particularly of the quality and quantity of writing.
- Teachers give pupils regular and helpful feedback about their work, and show them how to improve it. This helps to accelerate their progress.

### **The achievement of pupils**

**is good**

- Children join the school with a range of skills that are broadly typical, but less well developed in language and communication. They make good progress in the early years because staff know them very well and provide a good range of interesting activities to spur on their curiosity.
- In 2014 children left Reception above average in all areas of learning except literacy. The performance of pupils currently in Year 1 suggests that the early years' assessments of literacy were rather cautious and actually children achieved well.
- When pupils leave Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. This has consistently been the case year-on-year and reflects the good progress pupils make in all subjects in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics (the sounds that letters make) by the end of Year 2. They can tackle new words with confidence and develop a love of reading. In Year 1 pupils have not performed as well as they can because they have not had sufficient exposure to the nonsense words that appear in the phonics check and try to make them into real words. However, they catch up in Year 2 and almost all of the 22 pupils who retook the check reached the required standard.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school identifies their needs early and ensures that they receive good quality support from teaching staff. Teaching assistants also work well with these pupils and receive effective training to provide consistently effective help.
- There were no pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 2 in 2014. Elsewhere in the school the very few pupils who benefit from the additional funding make good progress like their peers as a result of the individual and small-group support they receive.
- The most able pupils are generally well challenged. An above average proportion of pupils reached the

higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. These pupils are given extra support to ensure they reach their full potential.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children achieve well. They learn effectively both indoors and outside. The outside areas are particularly well equipped and organised to stimulate and challenge pupils in all aspects of their learning. For example, 'mud kitchens' enable them to explore the environment around them.
- Good teaching ensures that children make a good start as soon as they join the early years whether in Nursery or Reception. They settle very quickly and are most considerate of one another. Their behaviour is outstanding and they know how to stay safe. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore and find out new things.
- In Reception children enjoyed making their own space role-play area consisting of a rocket and 'mission control' with a dazzling array of knobs to operate. This enabled them to let their imaginations fly.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1. Good leadership and management ensure that all staff know what children need to do next to reach the next level of learning. Children's achievements are recorded in informative 'learning stories' and parents are fully involved in their progress. In 2014, while children performed well in most areas of learning, the assessments for literacy were too cautious and did not fully reflect the strong gains they had made from their different starting points.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121027
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	448516

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eleanor Milligan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine McMahon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 732260
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