

# Emneth Nursery School

Hollycroft Road, Wisbech, PE14 8AY

**Inspection dates** 3–4 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is a caring and friendly school where everyone is valued. All staff are committed to make sure that the children are the most important part of the school, and that learning is inspired by them.
- The executive headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has galvanised the staff to ensure that standards for all children are continually improving.
- All children make at least good progress in all areas of the Emneth curriculum, which has been devised with the development of the whole child at the heart of it. Teaching is good.
- The governors care passionately about the school and hold senior leaders to account, making sure that the standards of teaching and outcomes for children are continually rising.
- The behaviour of the children is outstanding. Children are confident, polite and well-mannered. They have an enthusiasm to learn, playing cooperatively with their friends and supporting each other if any difficulties arise.
- Safety is outstanding. For leaders and all adults in the school, keeping children safe is a top priority. All safeguarding systems are excellent.
- Parents have an extremely positive view of the school. They are overwhelmingly confident in the education their children receive at Emneth nursery school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always challenge all children to extend their learning and occasionally opportunities are lost.
- Parents do not habitually have the opportunity to contribute to their child's learning journey with examples of learning from home, or in discussion about how this can be used in their child's next steps.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector made extended observations of lessons both indoors and outdoors. These included sessions when all the children were engaged in activities they chose for themselves. Other observations were made when the children learned together in small groups led by adults. In some of the observations, the inspector was accompanied by the deputy headteacher. The inspector chatted informally with many of the children as they played.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took note of the 24 replies that were made to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and of the more detailed comments made by parents in written communications.
- The inspector took note of 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector checked a range of documentation, including the Emneth curriculum, records of children's progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, documentation about keeping children safe, and about how staff performance is managed.

## Inspection team

Samantha Stewart, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All children in this school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Emneth is an average sized nursery school.
- The school brings together on one site early years education and care with support for families. The school's executive headteacher and governing body are also responsible for the children's centre. This was not part of the inspection.
- About 5% of current children have been identified as being disabled or as having special educational needs. About half of these children receive help with their needs from agencies outside the nursery.
- Children can access child care from the age of two. Children can access nursery provision from the term after they turn three years old. Provision in the nursery school is on a part-time basis, either five mornings or five afternoons per week, up to 15 hours free nursery education.
- As the two-year-olds are fully incorporated into the nursery, they were observed together with the rest of the children.
- Nearly all children are White British.
- The interim executive headteacher took over the headship in September 2014 for two days per week. She is also the headteacher of the local primary school. The current deputy headteacher changed her role in September 2014 from assistant headteacher. She oversees the day-to-day running of the nursery school.
- The governing body have undergone a vast amount of change over the last nine months. The chair of governors took up the position in September 2014 and there are five new governors.
- As this is a nursery school, there is no pupil premium funding or sports premium funding from the government.

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

- Make teaching and children's achievement outstanding by:
  - taking full advantage of opportunities to challenge children to think hard, and to extend their learning
  - providing parents with more opportunities to share with the nursery information about their child's learning and development at home.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear passion for the nursery. In a short space of time they have galvanised a team of teachers and practitioners to focus effectively on the very best outcomes for all the children in Emneth Nursery School.
- Senior leaders have a drive and commitment to the continual improvement of the quality of teaching and the outcomes for all children. This can be seen through an effective process of performance management for all staff. This is linked to children's progress and the continual enhancement of the skills of the staff, specifically relating to education in the early years.
- Senior staff keep a careful track on the quality of teaching, and provide clear feedback to colleagues to help them improve their performance. The progress of individuals is checked regularly, and quick action is taken to help any who are in danger of falling behind.
- The deputy headteacher, alongside other staff, has skilfully devised an exciting and thought-provoking curriculum with the development of individual children at the heart of it. The Emneth curriculum is pivotal in creating the understanding that the child is at the centre of his or her own learning, ably supported and directed by skilled practitioners. The curriculum is exciting and engaging. An array of activities, linked to a theme, is continually enhanced from the children's interests and suggestions. Children of all ages from two years to five years are encouraged to flow freely between indoor and outdoor areas and between different play rooms.
- All staff, supported by senior leaders, continually assess the progress of children against the eight principles of the Emneth curriculum. Moderation of practitioner assessments takes place between staff, the deputy headteacher and the executive headteacher, who has a vast experience of early years education. Children's progress is shared with parents on a termly basis via a Key Worker meeting and a progress report. At this meeting parents are asked to contribute to the next steps in learning for their children.
- All children are made to feel valued and part of the community. Signing and a timetable using pictures and symbols enable children of all abilities to join in fully with nursery life. As a result, equality of opportunity is promoted well and any discrimination tackled effectively.
- The focus on fostering children's personal, social and emotional development is very successful. Children's excellent behaviour, concentration and attitudes mean children are well-placed to develop their understanding in other areas of learning. The strong focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a major contribution to the school as a harmonious and happy community. This helps children to be well prepared for their next school, and at their own level, children are helped to understand basic British values.
- In her role as the special educational needs coordinator, the deputy headteacher has a clear understanding of the needs of this group of children. Assessments are quickly undertaken and appropriate levels of support are given to individual children. The provision is delivered by skilled practitioners who build up a rapport with the children and by doing so, ensure that they make good or better progress from their individual starting points.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and positive about the school. This was seen both on the Parent View electronic questionnaire and through letters sent directly to the inspector. One parent commented 'I feel that any child would thrive in this environment.'
- The local authority has given direction to the governing body and senior leaders with the re-structuring of the nursery and the day care provision. They are also advising on the imminent federation with the primary school. The local authority also supported the governing body when appointing the executive headteacher and the new associate governor. Support will continue particularly regarding the monitoring

of standards of provision and governance.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is effective. The governing body in its entirety is relatively new and due to the small numbers of governors this makes the role challenging. Governors are now holding senior leaders to account for standards and are using in-house data to pinpoint any areas of weakness and discuss how these are being addressed. This gives them an understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the teaching and how performance management is used.
- Governors are aware that they need to continue to develop their hands-on monitoring role so they are systematically holding the leaders and staff to account for standards.
- The governing body have taken the decision to federate with the local primary school. By doing this they have ensured that the governing body itself will continue to have the capacity to challenge senior leaders by increasing the number of experienced governors. The governors have appointed an effective executive headteacher with a tried and tested track record of school improvement particularly in the early years.
- Governors are fulfilling their statutory obligations with regards to the safeguarding of all children within the nursery.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Children have a confidence beyond their years and their self-esteem is raised because they are valued members of this very caring learning environment. Children are polite and well-mannered at all times. They are set good examples by all staff, who speak to the children and each other with respect.
- Children are enthusiastic about their learning. They join in cheerfully with a wide range of different activities. They play together cooperatively and share materials amicably. Children are often seen supporting each other's learning; for example, when two boys were using the computer to play a cause-and-effect game, one boy was helping his friend to use the mouse and showing him which area of the screen to click on to make the sausages for the monster to eat. Both boys were obviously having lots of fun playing the game and were able to count the number of sausages.
- No opportunities are missed for children to develop their personal and self-help skills. Snacks are excellent social occasions during which children choose their snack and drink. They sit with their friends and an adult discussing the activity and sharing opinions. Children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' and to be kind and thoughtful to their peers. As a result their personal development is very strong.
- Children who stay for lunch are taught good manners. For example, they sit at family-type tables, eating as well as they can with a fork and knife. Adults ensure that over time their social skills and behaviour improve well. For instance, the children cooperate by serving themselves and occasionally others with food, and take responsibility for passing out the cups and pouring drinks; they also take responsibility for helping to clean the table.
- Children's independence is developed exceptionally well. Children quickly learn to self-register and select and tidy away resources during 'sorting time' and to persevere when choosing activities for themselves.

#### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children say they feel very safe in school and parents who responded to Parent View were unanimously positive about their children being safe in school.
- Many opportunities exist for children to assess and manage risks while engaged in adventurous activities. Children sensibly climb outside on the large slide and climbing frame. They are encouraged to use tools,

such as small hammers, in the building area with some supervision. Children of all ages are encouraged to use equipment such as scissors on their own.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- A key strength in teaching is the way in which adults monitor children's play and judge when to intervene or join in to help learning. Teachers and practitioners make suggestions about how children can build on what they are doing, and question them skilfully to check their understanding and get them to think about what they are learning.
- There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The staff are determined to make sure that children have extended times to play; from this play children are adeptly assisted to explore and increase their own learning. Staff continually discuss how well children are progressing and change plans daily and often, as play develops according to children's needs and interests.
- The most-able children are given planned tasks which help them learn quickly and that are matched to their abilities. For example, children were encouraged to use a light box to investigate different colours and to use coloured shapes to make their own patterns and pictures. One child made a windmill shape, naming it and then with support from the practitioner took a photograph for her own 'special book'. Another child was looking at different colours and overlapped two colours making brown; the practitioner then took the learning further with questions about the different colours and how they were made.
- Children are given the opportunity to develop early literacy and mathematical skills through an assortment of engaging activities. Children are also encouraged to write for different purposes. One little girl was attempting to write her list for Santa using simple mark-making and one very young boy was ably drawing around his hand and then asked the inspector, 'What do you think of this?'. Mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than' is used in everyday conversations and opportunities for counting and number recognition are not missed.
- On some occasions children are not always sufficiently challenged and the activities are not always extended so as to develop the next steps to learning to its full potential. Occasionally children are ready to be challenged more to develop higher and more precise skills, such as the different properties of shape during a collage activity.
- The outdoor learning environment is very well equipped and there are several areas that appeal to the children's natural sense of wonder, like the large climbing frame and slide which is very safe and secure and the new water area. This provides children with particular delight and a great source for language development. The nursery provides wellingtons and wet play clothing for children and staff alike so that everyone can join in with the fun.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Most children enter nursery at a level which is typical for their age. Children learn well in their time at the school. The wide range of inviting activities stimulate their interest. In-house data show that children make good progress in the eight principles of the Emneth curriculum, which has been devised to develop the child all round, as well as to improve skills of literacy and mathematics.
- Individual children's progress is well tracked from entry to the end of the Nursery years. Evidence in all the principal areas is kept in a special book which the children share. Key workers make assessment notes on individual children which are then discussed with the whole team before final judgements are made.
- Transition, predominantly into Emneth Primary School, is particularly effective. Children spend time in the school, they get used to the environment and because of this they establish an easy rapport with their new teacher; this enables children to settle very quickly when they start school. Data from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage for children previously attending Emneth nursery who are currently at Emneth Primary School show that achievement is above the national average in all areas. It is fair to say

that children are ready for their next stage in education.

- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. This is because the school identifies their needs very quickly and puts in specific programmes to support them appropriately.
- The most able children, who show the highest skills and abilities when they start in the school, make good progress and continue to attain higher standards than their classmates. This is because work is well matched to their abilities and challenges them to achieve more.
- Most children are making a good start on learning to read. They are enthusiastic about stories and many will sit together and share a book. Children are not taught phonics (the sounds that letters make) as a discrete lesson; they are however encouraged to use letter sounds to read and write simple words and identify names.
- Although the rate of progress for boys' literacy has improved, this has been slower than in other areas and slower than that of the girls. The school is very aware of this and is providing boys with opportunities to enjoy literacy activities linked to their interests.
- The views of parents are an important part of the assessment process. Although most parents come into the nursery on a daily basis they do not routinely have the opportunity to have input towards ongoing assessment and are not habitually sharing children's experiences from home and nursery.
- Children show inquisitiveness about mathematics, particularly relating to shape and number. They were interested in some large colourful shapes, asking questions about whether shapes were the same or different, looking at the number of sides and matching shapes together.

## 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>	120765
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	448110

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Laura Lofthouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Townsend (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 582401
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