

Hillside Avenue Primary and Nursery School, Thorpe

Hillside Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0QW

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- Since the school's previous inspection, leaders, including governors, have successfully improved provision and raised pupils' achievement.
- Governors have responded very positively to the recommendations given to them in the recent review of their work and are now much more effective.
- School leaders have put key priorities in place. For example, they are much more effective in organising the extra help given to individuals and groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Subject leaders are a significant driving force behind many innovations in teaching and learning.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel very safe. The school is a harmonious community where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Teaching is good because staff have responded positively to high-quality training and provide challenging activities that motivate pupils.
- Pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6, the vast majority reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and some exceed them.
- Effective teaching means that children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well and are very well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils, particularly the most able, make more rapid progress than expected and reach higher levels.
- Marking does not always give pupils clear pointers to help them improve their work. Not all teachers check that pupils understand their advice and make the improvements needed.
- School leaders sometimes do not check that teachers understand and follow the advice they give them.
- Although pupils are taught good habits to help them learn, many will choose the easier of two options, when given a choice, rather than challenge themselves to do the best they can.
- Parents are positive about the school but are not made fully aware of the school's homework policy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 36 lessons, including all year groups and in a range of subjects. Some observations were carried out jointly with a senior leader and nearly all teachers were seen.
- The inspectors met with: the headteacher; other senior leaders; members of the governing body; other members of staff, including subject leaders; parents and pupils; and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard a group of pupils from across the school read.
- Inspectors considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents in discussions and the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Opinions shared through the responses to a questionnaire returned by 25 staff members were also considered.

Inspection team

Bob Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kevin Sadler

Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school runs two part-time Nursery classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In the Reception year there are two classes where children attend full-time.
- An independent before and after school provision operates on the school site and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate progress further by making sure that:
 - learning activities always challenge the most-able pupils so they reach the higher levels of which they are capable
 - teachers' marking always guides pupils in how to improve their work, and that teachers check that pupils understand and follow the advice they are given
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure that they readily accept the challenge to do harder work so that they make faster progress and do the best they can
 - teachers fully understand and follow the good advice and guidance they are given by school leaders
 - parents and carers fully understand the school's homework policy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, other staff and governors share the same vision for the school so they all work together towards common aims. They have created the conditions in which teachers can be effective, and in which pupils' understand why it is important they behave well.
- Equality of opportunity is at the heart of everything the school does. Should any form discrimination arise, the school has clear policies and procedures to take effective action and eliminate it.
- The school has responded very positively to the previous inspection report. School leaders have implemented many important and necessary changes. For example, pupils' progress is tracked much more accurately so that any pupils falling behind are quickly identified and given extra help. This has been fundamental to the way the progress of groups such as disadvantaged pupils has accelerated.
- High-quality training since the previous inspection has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. Training is often tailored to each teacher's specific needs so that impact is significant. School leaders do not always check that the advice they give to teachers has been understood and followed.
- The early years provision is very well led and managed. As a result, relative weaknesses in some aspects of boys' learning have been successfully addressed.
- Subject leaders make a significant contribution to the school. Collectively, they form a very strong team driving school improvement. Individually, they benefit from the support, training and opportunities given by the headteacher and governors that have enabled them to have an impact on teaching and learning.
- The new curriculum gives pupils opportunities to study topics in greater depth and to answer in detail the enquiries they raise themselves. It successfully meets the learning needs of pupils and stimulates their curiosity to learn. Many visits and numerous extra activities enrich and extend it further. For example, many pupils learn a musical instrument and all enjoy participating in music and sport.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Links with schools overseas are beneficial and pupils are keen supporters of various charities. Rules are applied consistently so pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they are taught the values of respect, tolerance and other important attributes. Day-to-day activities extend their knowledge, for example, they 'role play' events from the suffragette movement and participate in democratic hustings and elections for the school council.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Funding is also used appropriately to provide extra opportunities such as in music.
- Primary school sport funding is used very effectively. Additional staff training has raised standards and widened the range of activities on offer. All pupils benefit. For example, a club specifically aimed at those who dislike physical exercise offers a range of energetic fun activities. As a result, all pupils exercise vigorously, stay fit and understand the benefits to their health.
- The partnership with the local authority enables staff to access many training events that are beneficial to school improvement. The headteacher has extended this by seeking out outstanding schools and enabling staff to visit them and see excellence for themselves. Many ideas have been brought back into the school.
- Partnership with local schools has also been very beneficial. It supports staff because expertise and resources are shared for the common good. The partnership supports pupils' social development because they participate in a wide range of activities with pupils in other schools they will meet at high school. It

supports parents because common policies, such as attendance, mean everyone is clear about schools' expectations.

- The school's partnership with parents and carers is good and most are satisfied with the school. Their views are sought by staff and governors, and whenever possible, acted upon.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors are thorough and all record keeping is meticulous. All necessary training is undertaken. The extensive school site is kept secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following the review of the governing body recommended by the previous inspection, it has implemented many improvements so that the governors form a cohesive and effective group. They have their own ambitious but realistic development plan to give a framework for their activities.
 - Governors support and challenge the school well and are a key factor in its improvement. They have a page of 'actions' that they use, with their visits and other information they are given including pupil progress data, to triangulate and question. They each link to a year group and a subject so, collectively, they have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of their school.
 - Governors challenge underperformance and question the headteacher if they feel standards are not as they should be. The governing body has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and ensures that pay increases reflect good or better performance.
 - Governors listen to parents and carers and understand their role in explaining the key decisions of the governing body to them. The governing body ensures that all the arrangements for safeguarding are in place.
 - The governing body makes sure that all funds, including additional funds such as pupil premium and the primary sport funding, are used wisely. Governors are proud of the improvement in the school's performance that these resources bring.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour towards one another is exemplary. They respect one another and form a very harmonious community. For example, they self-regulate lunchtime games. Even the youngest know it is fair to wait patiently for the trikes because everyone has agreed three laps each is fair.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good, partly because of the skills they learn and practise through the 'wheel of good learning'. They listen to staff and do as requested and help to ensure lessons flow smoothly with no time is wasted. However, a few pupils who are capable of harder work will choose to do easier tasks when given a choice, rather than challenging themselves to do their best.
- Pupils show respect for others and are polite and courteous. They have great pride in their school. Their good behaviour contributes to their good personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual to school. They say they enjoy school and want to come. They have an excellent attitude to attendance, saying good attendance is necessary because they want to learn.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The extensive school grounds are secure and all potential risks in school and on educational visits are rigorously assessed. Pupils and their parents say they feel very safe in school.
- The school thoroughly checks the suitability of staff and visitors to work with pupils. The care that staff provide for pupils is excellent and staff create a climate in which pupils thrive.

- The school ensures that pupils understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what to do if they are worried. Pupils and parents say bullying is very rare and, if any occurs, it is quickly and effectively dealt with by the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Classrooms are a hive of activity. The very positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the pace of learning because lessons flow smoothly and no time is lost through misbehaviour. The climate for learning in classrooms is purposeful and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers use questions skilfully, for example to provoke pupils' thinking and encourage well-reasoned discussion illustrating pupils' thought processes. Teachers are adept at giving pupils the time to think through their answer and be successful. Crucial to the good rate of progress, they also question to check pupils' understanding and modify the pace or depth of their teaching accordingly.
- Lessons are carefully planned and teachers use assessment of prior learning well to see that most pupils make good progress. When pupils are given a choice, however, some pupils, including the most able, will choose to do the easier task. As a result, they make good rather than outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good quality support because they are trained well. Whether giving 'catch-up' sessions or teaching particular courses, such as phonics (linking sounds and letters), they are confident and effective. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive help tailored to their needs so they do well from their different starting points.
- Mathematics is well taught, partly because policies such as that for calculation are known and understood by all staff so there is a consistency and coherence to pupils' learning as they move through the school.
- Reading and writing are equally well taught. All staff are trained in the school's approach to teaching phonics so pupils learn well, no matter who teaches them. Particular skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are often taught in separate lessons but then practised in pupils' writing across all subjects, giving a greater sense of purpose to writing than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are taught to speak in well-constructed sentences which they then use in their writing.
- Homework is used effectively in a number of ways, for example, to prepare pupils for work in school, to practise a skill recently taught or to research a topic of particular interest. Parental concerns expressed to inspectors are largely misconceptions caused because the school's homework policy has not been explained adequately to parents and carers.
- Marking has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Even so, while teachers regularly mark pupils' work and most marking is useful, some lacks the sharpness to show pupils, particularly the most able, precisely how to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers do not check that pupils understand and follow the advice given, so mistakes can be repeated.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress because the changes made as a result of the previous inspection are working well. Particularly, changes to teaching have accelerated learning. Assessment data is used regularly to identify pupils at risk of falling behind and to give them extra help to catch up. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to leave the school about two terms ahead of where they are expected to be nationally in reading and mathematics, and one term ahead in writing.
- Boys are making better progress than previously in writing. This is because tasks based on the new enquiry curriculum interest and engage them more so they want to write. This improvement starts in the Nursery and Reception classes, where boys now have an enthusiasm for mark making.
- Over the last two years, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 reached the nationally expected standard

in the phonics check than in most schools. The vast majority of pupils in Year 2 who repeated the check also exceeded the expected national standard. School data suggest that these favourable results are likely to continue this year.

- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make equally good progress as their peers. In the current Year 6, school data suggests these pupils will reach levels above those expected for all pupils of their age and similar to their peers. This is an improvement on last year, when disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were behind their peers in reading and mathematics by four terms, and in writing by nearly five. They were also behind other pupils nationally by about three terms in reading and mathematics, and nearly five terms in writing. This small group included a high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points because their needs are closely analysed and specific extra help is given to meet them. This extra help in turn is checked and changed if it is not working.
- The vast majority of the more-able pupils make progress at the rate expected of all pupils, rather than at the faster rate of which many of them are capable. As a result, the proportion reaching higher levels is only about half of the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Writing standards have improved greatly since the previous inspection because the present curriculum includes a wide range of purposeful writing activities across all subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- At the previous inspection, early years provision was good. The school has built upon this further and these classes are a strength of the school.
- Children enter Nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding broadly typical for their age. They settle quickly and make good progress because teaching is good. This good progress continues in the Reception classes and, in 2014, about three-quarters of the children reached a good level of development, above the national average. As a result, they were well prepared for entry to Year 1. Teachers are particularly skilled at using supportive questions to lead children to formulate and explain their own conclusions.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning. They are eager and inquisitive to learn and look forward to the wide variety of interesting activities that stimulate their curiosity. As a result, they persevere with difficult tasks and take pride in completing them.
- Children behave well. They cooperate and share willingly and build friendships. Activities and celebrations help them to begin to build an understanding of how we are alike and different.
- Good leadership has led to strong teamwork among staff who all know what is expected of them and receive the training to be effective. Children's progress is tracked closely to check none fall behind and all make the progress expected of them. The partnership with parents and carers is strong. They actively contribute to the record of their children's development.
- Staff see children's safety and well-being as paramount. Checks of equipment and accommodation are regular. Staff develop children's awareness of their own safety, and that of others, well.

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	120858
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462066

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lamble
Headteacher	Anita Gutteridge
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2013
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