

Sutton CofE VC Infant School

Denise Close, Off Laxfield Road, Norwich, NR12 9QP

Inspection dates 28–29 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.

- The executive headteacher, governors and senior leaders have brought about improvements in teaching and the curriculum. This has resulted in pupils achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. They use the school development plan well to measure the impact of the school's actions.
- The teaching of phonics is good and in Year 1 has been effective in closing the gap between girls and boys.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are now broadly in line with the national average. Pupils are well prepared for their next school.
- Children joining the Reception class adapt quickly to school life. They make good progress in acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics because a range of activities in all areas of learning support these well.
- Pupils make good progress because teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge and they are supported by highly effective teaching assistants.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make at least the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress, because of the well-targeted support they receive for their individual needs.
- Pupils and parents are confident in the school's good arrangements to keep pupils safe. The school is a caring and supportive community.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is stimulating; it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares pupils well for their next stage in education as well as life outside school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The skills of more-able readers are not fully developed, particularly in discussing in depth what they are reading.
- Opportunities for the Reception children to learn outside are not sufficiently well planned to ensure best use is made of activities.
- The attendance of a few pupils, including some of the most disadvantaged, has not been good enough to give them continuity in their schooling.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Most lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised and the information about their attainment and progress was analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority as well as governors and pupils.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View and considered responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector examined a range of documents including school policies, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools with Hickling and Catfield schools.
- The early years provision consists of one full-time Reception class.
- Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and every pupil speaks English as their first language
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, around one in eight, is below average. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, around one in 25, is well below the national average.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the most recent inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the good teaching by ensuring that more-able pupils are consistently challenged to apply and develop their skills in reading further and in particular the ways in which they can talk and think about what they have read.
- Extend the outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Reception class, so that they have similarly high-quality well-planned opportunities to learn as they do in the indoor environment and in particular to help them solve problems and develop their agility, dexterity and imagination through play.
- Raise attendance by developing further the ways that good attendance is promoted and continuing to support those families who need additional help.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and senior leaders have created a climate within which pupils can succeed, both academically and socially. Staff at all levels show a commitment and drive for improvement with a willingness to look critically at the school's effectiveness and take quick action to change things when necessary. Close working across the federation by sharing expertise has resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Strong leadership has led to a range of measures to improve teaching and provide a curriculum that motivates pupils. Senior leaders carry out frequent checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They scrutinise the work in pupils' books, talk to pupils about their work and visit lessons to see how well they are doing. In addition, regular meetings focus on the progress pupils are making. Together, these activities provide a comprehensive view of the quality of teaching. Any weaknesses or underperformance are tackled swiftly. Consequently teaching and pupils' achievement have improved significantly since the most recent inspection.
- The expertise of middle leaders contributes well to the overall leadership of the school. For example, the special educational needs coordinator supports teachers effectively in ensuring these pupils do well and are fully included. The early years leader provides effective support for staff in the Reception class, consequently this provision has improved. Well-focused staff training in English has improved standards in writing, across the school. This has been particularly effective in engaging the boys, whose progress is now accelerating.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teaching for smaller groups. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and reach standards similar to those of other pupils nationally and in the school.
- The primary sports and physical education funding is used effectively to pay for specialist coaches to lead lessons and extend the teachers' knowledge and confidence to teach games and dance. In addition, pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in sports such as yoga and Maypole dancing.
- The curriculum is good. It is taught through carefully organised themes that stimulate pupils' interest and extend their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well throughout the curriculum. Visits to different places engage pupils' interests and help them gain a better understanding of the wider community. The school council's views on how the school could be improved are genuinely embraced by leaders to help pupils develop an understanding of democracy. The various themes explored in assemblies help pupils appreciate values that are central to life in modern Britain and promote tolerance and respect for diversity.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective. They meet national requirements and take full account of the most recent guidance to schools. All pupils are given the same opportunities to succeed, all groups are respected equally and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Good relationships with parents have been established, and parents talk positively about recent changes. All the parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to others. The new federation website, which is currently under construction, is designed to provide comprehensive information to parents and share the common policies and practices of all three schools.
- The local authority has supported the school well since the most recent inspection. Through regular meetings and visits local authority representatives check the accuracy of the school's own judgements and hold the school to account for its performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. A recent review of the governing body has resulted in the appointment of new governors who bring appropriate skills and expertise to improve the school further.
 - Governors use school data well to gain an accurate overview of the school's performance and pupils'

attainment and progress. They understand how recent teaching appointments are improving the quality of teaching and the impact good teaching has on pupils' achievement. Due attention is given to staff performance in linking pay increases to the progress pupils make and priorities in the school development plan.

- Governors make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and check the impact of the spending on the achievement of pupils for whom it is intended.
- Regular checks by a nominated governor ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet requirements.
- Governors provide good support but also challenge leaders in order to hold the school to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Good behaviour starts in the Reception class where the school's expectations, rules and routines are quickly established. These continue to be respected as pupils move into and through Key Stage 1. Attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are attentive and work well in pairs and groups, concentrating and maintaining focus for sustained periods of time.
- Behaviour during playtimes is good. Pupils enjoy the open space and activities provided for them. Both parents and pupils are confident in the school's systems to address bad behaviour as well as reward good behaviour. Any incidents are recorded rigorously and, where necessary, parents are involved. These measures are effective. There are very few incidents requiring significant intervention.
- Pupils enjoy their responsibilities and take them seriously. For example, school councillors talked about the changes they had suggested to make the playground even better, such as more bikes and trikes for use when they don't have access to the school field. They are proud of their wildlife area and enjoy being 'nature detectives'. They have a good understanding of environmental issues, democracy and the responsibilities of life in modern Britain.
- Attendance levels, while lower than average, have improved. The school has some effective systems for promoting and checking attendance which have supported this improvement. However, not enough is done to reward good attendance and to support some pupils and their families so that attendance improves further.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The policies to keep children safe are applied consistently well and staff training is up to date. Staff are fully conversant with the school's procedures for safeguarding children.
- Governors actively monitor the school's systems for health and safety as well as ensuring that rigorous checks are carried out to ensure all adults are suitable to work with children. Senior leaders use the services of the local authority effectively when they require advice and guidance on safeguarding.
- Pupils know how to stay safe on the internet. They took great delight in performing their internet safety song to the lead inspector and talking about what to do if they were unsure about something on the internet.
- Discussions with pupils show incidents of bullying to be infrequent. The school's log of bullying incidents confirms that this is the case. Pupils say they would have no hesitation in telling an adult should they have any concerns. They are confident that if bullying occurs it is dealt with firmly. They think it is important to make sure everyone 'had a friend' and any differences should be respected.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils learn well because teachers have high expectations of what pupils could and should achieve,

particularly in writing and mathematics. They convey these well to pupils; consequently, pupils enjoy rising to the challenge and almost always achieve well.

- More-able readers say they enjoy reading and have clear views as to what sort of books they like to read. However, they are not always challenged to develop further their reading skills in inference and deduction by the tasks set or the questions asked; for example, reading homework does not always make clear to parents and carers how more-able readers should discuss the texts they are reading and in what depth.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which is used to plan and promote learning in contexts that interest and engage pupils. Good use is made of regular assessment results to ensure that activities mostly challenge pupils of all abilities and maintains their good progress.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is carefully monitored by the special educational needs coordinator. Good liaison with parents and well-focused work and support ensure that these pupils also make good progress. Effective support from well-trained teaching assistants ensures that any pupils needing additional support have just the right sort of help that they need.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is very carefully tracked and analysed. As a result, these pupils also benefit from individual support, small group teaching and lessons that are modified to help them to succeed.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good because the teachers ensure that pupils have a secure knowledge before introducing new ideas. Teachers often set mathematical problems in the context of the themes and topics they are studying in other subjects. More-able pupils particularly enjoy tackling these problems and have well thought-out strategies to find an answer.
- Improvements to the teaching of writing have been effective in engaging pupils' interest. Boys are particularly enthusiastic to act out their work before committing to print. This has accelerated their progress, so that it is now similar to that of girls. Teachers choose texts carefully to provide a clear structure so pupils understand the conventions for writing stories and information. The skills pupils learn in literacy lessons are also supported well when they write in other subjects such as in science or geography. This all helps them to consolidate these skills and to develop them further.
- The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) is effective, resulting in good achievement at the end of Year 1 in the national phonics screening check. A culture of reading for enjoyment and improving pupils' reading skills is established through regular reading lessons.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From overall below-typical starting points, children make good progress in the Reception class, although boys in particular often still have ground to make up compared with others nationally. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the time they leave the early years was lower than for other schools in 2014 but is improving year by year. This year it is set to improve further, because of the improvements in provision introduced by the new early years leader.
- The gap between girls and boys leaving the Reception class last year is now closing in Year 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's focus on improving the teaching of writing and the use of more 'boy-friendly' texts for reading has had a marked effect on accelerating boys' rates of progress.
- Achievement at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was above average in reading and mathematics and slightly below in writing. Observations of lessons and work in pupils' books show that standards are continuing to improve. In particular, the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching has had a marked impact on pupils' achievement in writing.
- Pupils have a real enthusiasm for learning, acting out their stories before they write, tackling mathematical problems with perseverance and sharing their enjoyment of reading. As a consequence, all pupils' progress is accelerating further. In Year 2 there is no significant gap between girls and boys.

- The results of the Year 1 national phonics screening check were above the national average in 2014. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils are developing an interest in books and their authors because interesting texts are used in both reading and writing lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the support and extra teaching they receive are well structured and focused on their particular needs. Often support is given in short sessions followed by opportunities to tackle tasks without adult help. This bolsters pupils' confidence in their own ability and in 'having a go'.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from a comprehensive range of support and additional teaching. This results in them progressing at least as well as other pupils in the school. In 2014 at the end of Key Stage 1 there were too few disadvantaged pupils to make meaningful comparisons of any attainment gap between this group and that of other pupils nationally. However, by Year 2, disadvantaged pupils do attain as well as other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's recent focus on raising achievement in mathematics has been successful and pupils confidently apply the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to solve mathematical problems. More-able mathematicians competently tackle challenging tasks with enthusiasm and perseverance.
- The most able pupils make equally good progress as other pupils and achieve broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, pupils have secure strategies for tackling unknown words; they can discuss their choice of books, retell a story and discuss the characters. Able readers however do not always have the more advanced skills to show their understanding of authors' styles and how language is used for effect and this holds a few back from achieving even more.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter Sutton Infant School from various pre-school providers and are at different stages of readiness for school. Good relationships with parents and carers ensure that transition into the Reception class is smooth.
- Children's skills and experiences are below those typical for their age when they start school, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The new leadership of early years has brought about improvements in provision for children. These include well-planned opportunities across all areas of learning to develop a broader understanding of the world around them and good use of the school's wildlife area to cultivate an interest in scientific discovery. Trips, for example to the airport, have also helped to give children a sense of the wider world.
- The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development in 2014 was lower than the national average but an improvement on the previous year. This trend is continuing and pupils are now well prepared for the start of Year 1.
- Good teaching of basic reading, writing and mathematical skills has resulted in rapid progress on the part of both boys and girls. Contexts for work are carefully chosen to interest boys as well as girls so that they want to write; for example, in a lesson on capacity, boys and girls worked well together to develop a strategy to make water flow through pipes.
- Children's personal and social skills are developed well; adults create a safe and caring environment for them. Children who have recently joined the Reception class have quickly settled, engaging well with others as well as being confident in their own creative play.
- Activities within the classroom are planned to provide a good balance of adult-led learning as well as

choices for children to make on their own. For example, on the theme of 'vets', one group of children worked on an activity chosen by the teacher to experiment with straw and hay and choose the most suitable for animal bedding; while another group independently decided to make some 'medicine' for animal treatment, experimenting with water and toy syringes.

- Opportunities for learning outside are not as well planned as those in the inside classroom, to challenge children to solve problems and help them develop their imagination, agility and dexterity through play

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	121058
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462063

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Sheila Watts
Headteacher	Jo Nutbeam
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2013
Telephone number	01692 580608
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