

Acle St Edmund Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fletcher Way, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3RQ

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 has made good progress since the previous inspection. Leaders, managers and governors have improved teaching and achievement so that they are now good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make clear to pupils what they want them to learn. This helps pupils to achieve well.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They enjoy a stimulating range of learning activities.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They have a thirst for knowledge and work together extremely well.
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe at school. This is a view shared by almost all parents.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils embrace the school's deeply held values. A wide range of visits enriches their educational experiences.
- The governing body holds leaders to account well. Governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and where it could improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not always given demanding enough work to do in science, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- The school's system for marking and feedback in mathematics is not as effective as that in literacy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 18 lessons or parts of lessons, almost all jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The inspectors also attended a whole-school celebration assembly.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports and safeguarding records. They considered evidence of the school's partnership work and the information provided for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff. The lead inspector talked to the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and a representative from the local authority. He also held a telephone conversation with the National Leader of Education who has been supporting the school.
- The inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke informally to parents and received a letter from parents.
- The inspectors considered the 25 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are five single-age classes and two mixed-age Year 3 and 4 classes. Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The school has been supported by a National Leader of Education from St Mary's C of E Primary, Barnet.
- The deputy headteacher and the special needs coordinator have joined the school since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - the most-able pupils are always sufficiently challenged in science, especially in Years 3 and 4
 - the system for marking and feedback in mathematics is as effective as that in literacy in helping pupils to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully tackled the areas to improve from the previous inspection. As a result, overall effectiveness is now good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a culture where teaching is good and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Excellent teamwork has contributed substantially to the many gains to date.
- The headteacher has maintained very positive links with the local authority and established a close partnership with the National Leader of Education. This has enabled the school to make good progress in driving improvement. The partnership has been particularly helpful in advising on systems and structures that promote excellence, such as a highly effective tracking system to measure pupils' progress. Leaders have taken on board all external support very well, to the extent where the school has a good capacity for its own further improvement.
- The school promotes British values very well, closely aligned as they are with its own deeply held Christian values. Pupils talk with confidence about perseverance, determination, fairness, trust, forgiveness, respect and tolerance. Pupils ran a parallel general election, the outcome of which, interestingly, was a dead heat between the 'Fairness Party' and the 'Kindness Party'. They entered into discussions about a coalition with the 'Responsibility Party'. Such activities mean that the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has worked hard to create a curriculum that is unique to the interests and aspirations of pupils. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well. For example, Year 2 pupils took the Hindu motif of the lotus flower to create positive similes like 'as peaceful as the sunrise', which they wrote on lotus 'petals'. They arranged these to obliterate a 'swamp' they had made listing many of the world's problems. By such means, their understanding grew of the triumph of good over evil.
- Pupils go on a variety of residential visits during their time at school. These contribute well to their social development and give them the opportunity to try out new experiences. They have opportunities to excel through the 'Scholars' Programme' for the most able. This is a joint venture with both the University of East Anglia and Cambridge University, with the aim of raising pupils' aspirations. It included visits to both universities and a series of tutorials led by a PhD tutor. Pupils wrote 1,000-word essays on the theme of 'fairness'. The school is part of a cluster of schools that promote the creative arts through music and dance.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility and contribute well to the school's improvement by making regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They offer their colleagues helpful advice, and they follow up their suggestions for improvement to make sure that teachers are carrying them out.
- The pupil premium is spent effectively, enabling disadvantaged pupils to make good progress. The deputy headteacher leads this work extremely well and ensures that support makes a difference to pupils, both in terms of their academic and personal development. This is one example of how the school promotes equality of opportunity and does not tolerate discrimination.
- The school spends the primary physical education and sport premium effectively. It has engaged specialist coaches to teach pupils and to provide training for teachers in dance and gymnastics. The impact of this has been that teachers are more confident in teaching physical education. New clubs have been set up, including dodge ball. Pupils now take part in a wider range of tournaments with other schools and are beginning to enjoy success; for example, in netball.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They find staff approachable and feel their children are doing well. Parents of Reception children comment on how easily their child fitted in when starting school. Parents of pupils facing particular difficulties say they are kept well informed and that the new special needs coordinator involves them very well.

- The school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements and are highly effective. Leaders keep meticulous records of any concerns and ensure that training is thorough and regular. They carry out all checks on new members of staff and make sure that the school site is safe and secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Governors have a clear understanding of data and how pupils are doing compared with other pupils nationally. They know all about the quality of teaching and make regular visits to keep themselves informed about the school's work. Governors understand how the management of teachers' performance works, and make sure that they do not award pay rises unless these are deserved through improvements in pupils' progress. Governors are not shy of tackling any underperformance. They provide a good level of challenge to school leaders and keep a close eye on the school's finances.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. This is evident in their high levels of engagement in class and their very positive attitudes to learning. These have a very strong impact on their progress in lessons.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in all subjects and with all members of staff. Pupils say, 'We enjoy all subjects.' Excellent relationships between pupils and staff, and with other pupils, contribute to a positive environment which motivates pupils to learn.
- Older pupils support younger ones in a variety of ways, including leading them in sport and as reading buddies. They take on responsibility readily. Pupils hand out achievement certificates in assembly. The school council has committees devised by the pupils called the 'lookout team' (well-being), the 'learning committee' (teaching and learning) and the aptly titled 'raising money and buying stuff committee'. Pupils show teachers and younger pupils how to use electronic devices effectively; for example, to do coding.
- The 'learning committee' has produced a video that shows the rest of the school what good learning looks like. The pupils identified what they considered to be good learning and then went out and filmed it.
- Attendance is above average this year, reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel completely safe at school. They know how to keep safe and how to keep each other safe, including through e-safety and the safe and responsible use of social media and mobile 'phones.
- Pupils say, and records confirm, that there is very little bullying in school. They know what constitutes different types of bullying, such as racially prejudiced bullying and cyber-bullying. Pupils have produced a video called 'Not in our school' about promoting positive ways of treating one another and not teasing.
- Pupils reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and understand how others may feel. They are very understanding of those who may struggle to behave impeccably at all times.
- The school council carried out a safety survey to find out how safe pupils felt in different parts of the school, both physically and emotionally. They took account of the views of all pupils, from the youngest to the oldest. They made recommendations, which the school has carried out, to make the school as safe as it can be for pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they want from them and they succeed in making learning interesting and enjoyable. They use questioning well to

draw out pupils' thinking and to check on their understanding.

- The impact of teaching on learning and achievement in reading is good. An emphasis on improving the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) has increased pupils' confidence at tackling new words.
- Teachers choose texts carefully to engage pupils in their reading and make them relevant to their other learning. For example, Year 5 pupils have been studying Michael Morpurgo's *Kensuke's Kingdom* as a stimulus for a wide range of related activity. This has included writing an adventure story about discovering their own island, and work on Japanese landscapes and landmarks.
- Pupils' books show that writing is taught well over time. Pupils apply their literacy skills across different subjects. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils wrote diaries, letters and stories linked to the First World War. Teachers have done much to improve pupils' spelling and punctuation this year. Pupils regularly redraft and improve their writing to produce good-quality work.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers encourage pupils to reason about their mathematical understanding and go deeper through investigations and problem solving. This generates much useful discussion. For example, Year 6 pupils were working out the permutations and combinations to crack a code in a logical way.
- Teams of teachers plan together well to produce activities that challenge pupils and interest and engage them. Teachers regularly check how pupils are getting on and deal promptly with any misconceptions. They encourage pupils to make links in their learning and explore their ideas. For instance, in Year 2, a pupil wanted to find the opposite to 'create' and came up with 'discreate'. The teacher encouraged the pupil to define what was meant, and what alternatives might be available.
- There is a good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants. They deploy teaching assistants well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' good progress through the support they give them, both individually and in small groups.
- The marking of pupils' work is regular and effective in showing pupils what they do well and what could be improved. In literacy, there is a useful dialogue between teachers and pupils that help pupils to move to the next stage of learning. While marking in mathematics shows pupils what they have done well and indicates in places how they can improve their work, the guidance for pupils is not as thorough as it is in their writing books. Teachers do not always follow up with the same rigour how pupils have responded to their marking. The school is reviewing its system for marking and feedback in mathematics to ensure this becomes as effective as it is in literacy.
- The most-able pupils are generally challenged well. At times, however, they are not given sufficiently demanding work to do in science, especially in Years 3 and 4.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age, but a little below in language and communication and in number. They make good progress in the Reception Year. Children benefit from a wide range of stimulating experiences that develop their early literacy and numeracy skills well.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics. In the 2014 Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of pupils that reached the required standard was above average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. In 2014, Year 2 pupils achieved well from their different starting points to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The current Year 2 pupils have made good progress and are on course to reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- While progress is good overall in Key Stage 2, it is stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. This is because teachers in Years 5 and 6 have very high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, and this accelerates their progress.
- In the 2014 Year 6 tests, standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The published data show that, over the course of Key Stage 2, the progress of this cohort of pupils was above national expectations from their starting points at the end of Year 2. They did particularly well in writing.
- School performance information shows that the current Year 6 pupils are achieving well and are on course to reach above-average standards in all three subjects. The rate of progress has been faster this year because of changes to the teaching of English and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Their specific learning needs are identified promptly and they receive well-targeted support from teaching assistants that have been trained effectively. This has enabled these pupils to achieve well, especially in reading and writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good, like their classmates. In 2014, there were only eight eligible pupils in Year 6 and several of these had significant learning difficulties. The data relating to gaps in their attainment with others in the school and nationally, therefore, should be treated with caution. In 2014, in mathematics, these pupils were three and a half terms behind others nationally and in the school; they were three and a half terms behind others nationally and three terms behind others in the school in reading; and they were just over two terms behind others nationally and two terms behind others in the school in writing. Because these pupils had starting points well below what is typical, most of them still made good progress.
- Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are achieving well because they benefit from good-quality teaching support and specific help tailored to their individual learning needs.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. They made good progress in 2014. A greater proportion than nationally reached the highest Level 6 in mathematics. Across the school, the most-able pupils are doing well this year and their attainment exceeds national expectations. In science, however, on occasions, all pupils are given the same work to do, especially in Years 3 and 4, and this slows the progress of the most able.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is well led and managed. Adults know the children very well as individuals and make sure that activities are adapted to suit the children's particular learning needs. Staff track children's progress very carefully and this enables them to plan activities at the right level for their abilities. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching is good. A strong team of teaching staff works very well together to provide children with interesting experiences that feed their natural curiosity. For example, children used the 'mud kitchen' outside to create wild creatures' faces from natural objects.
- There are close links with parents, who have positive views of the early years. They contribute 'wow moments' to the class to celebrate their children's particular achievements. They appreciate the detailed and attractive 'learning journeys' that tell the story of their children's progress throughout the Reception Year.
- Children have embraced classroom routines readily and they behave well. They sustain concentration, take turns and support one another. They are kept safe and learn how to manage risks on the extensive climbing apparatus outside.
- Attainment has been improving. In 2014, children reached above-average standards by the end of the

Reception Year. They are well prepared for Year 1.

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	121024
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462068

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Johns
Headteacher	Paul Henery
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2013
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