

Fakenham Infant & Nursery School

Norwich Road, Fakenham, NR21 8HN

Inspection dates 4–5 June 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 headteacher's drive and ambition for the school provide a firm foundation for school improvement. She is well supported by a good staff team and strong governing body. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good.
- Pupils' attainment has improved year on year; it is broadly average in all subjects but a little lower in writing. From low starting points, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers make learning interesting because they know the needs and interest of pupils well. They mark pupils' work with constructive comments and make it clear to pupils how they can improve.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make good progress because their learning and personal development are managed well. From the time they start in the Nursery, they are taught to listen carefully and respect each other.
- The school keeps pupils safe and makes sure that they know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils behave well. They are friendly considerate and helpful and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. It ensures they are prepared well for the next steps in their education and for their future lives as British citizens.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and effectively. They have acted decisively to put systems in place to keep a close check on pupils' progress and make sure that any pupils who need extra help are swiftly identified and supported.
- Governors have made good use of the external review that followed the previous inspection. They know how well the school is doing. Clear priorities have been identified for further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing, although good, is not as fast as in reading and mathematic, partly because there is not always sufficient focus on providing good writing opportunities in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always insist that pupils present their work as neatly as they should or ensure pupils develop good handwriting skills.
- The school's work to ensure regular attendance has not been successful enough with some families.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils at work in all year groups and in different subjects. On some occasions, they were accompanied by school leaders. They looked at pupils' written work in all years and checked the records of children's learning in the early years.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school and looked at their work in detail. They spoke informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtime. Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors examined several school documents. These included the school's evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of governors' meetings, information about pupils' progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took note of the views expressed informally by parents as they arrived at school. The team analysed 23 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Rudman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There are three classes for each of Years 1 and 2.
- The Early Years provision is in a Nursery class and three Reception classes. Children of Reception age attend full-time; children in the Nursery attend in the morning or the afternoon.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is lower than average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils; those who are eligible for free school meals and looked after children; (There are currently no looked after children in the school).
- Most pupils are White British.
- There is an on-site children's centre managed by the governing body. It will receive its own inspection report which will be available on the Ofsted website.
- There have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher, since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve attainment and progress in writing by;
 - increasing expectations of the quality and quantity of writing in all subjects, including children in early years
 - ensuring teachers consistently help pupils to form their letters properly and write neatly so their handwriting improves.
- Improve attendance by working even more closely with those families whose children are frequently absent.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the calm and determined leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders, supported by an effective governing body, have brought about significant improvements. The high expectations of staff and governors and the school's statement of 'Together we can', underpins the work of the school, in which teaching has improved and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good.
- Teaching is well led. Leaders visit classrooms formally and informally to check teachers' work. They look at work in pupils' books and hold regular meetings with teachers to see how well pupils are doing. This gives them a clear picture of where teaching is strong and where further support might be needed. Staff have access to high quality training to help them improve their skills. They feel valued and morale is high.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and share leaders' ambitions. They have benefited from training that has enabled them to start checking colleagues' work. They visit classrooms and make helpful suggestions about how colleagues can improve their skills.
- Leaders are ambitious and provide a clear direction to the work of the school. A successful focus on reading has raised standards in this subject. The school now rightly recognises the need to raise the profile of writing to ensure pupils' attainment is as good in this as in other areas.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Their progress is tracked carefully and small group and one-to-one tuition has ensured that they receive extra help when this is needed. Consequently, any gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils are quickly closing.
- The school rightly prides itself on being inclusive and all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Consequently pupils from all backgrounds feel valued and safe in school. Pupils understand that they should be kind and respectful to others who are different to themselves. From an early age, they are gaining a good understanding of British values such as tolerance and respect.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress well from their respective starting points. This is because leaders ensure that their progress is closely checked and that support is appropriate and high quality to address their particular difficulties.
- The school is implementing the new National Curriculum requirements through well-planned links between subjects. All learning and topics capture pupils' imagination and interest. Their awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is successfully developed both through lessons and a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Extra funding for primary sport is well spent on specialist coaches who introduce pupils to new sports, run after-school clubs and help teachers to improve their skills. Consequently, pupils' enjoyment of school and sports has improved and they actively take part in a wide range of physical activities that keep them fit and healthy.
- The school has improved quickly owing to the good support provided by the local authority, particularly in reading and from the local authority adviser who gives advice on, for example, school self-evaluation and data analysis. Recently, the local authority has reduced the level of support it provides as its checks on the school's performance show that the school is improving.
- The school meets all statutory requirements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and staff. Its policies and procedures are effective.
- The school has developed some good links with parents. However, the school does not work well enough

with some parents to ensure they understand the importance of regular attendance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors share leaders' ambitions, regularly visit the school, including classroom lessons. They use their expertise to monitor the school's work closely and they ask searching questions to satisfy themselves about the accuracy of information provided by school leaders.
- They have a good understanding of school performance data and the quality of teaching. They are clear about how staff performance is managed and know how good teachers are rewarded and how weaknesses are put right. They make sure that all pay awards for teachers are justified and that they are linked to pupils' progress.
- Finances are well managed and the school is made accountable for how it spends extra funding such as the pupil premium and sports funding.
- Governors ensure that all arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection, are met and that they follow safer recruitment processes when appointing new staff.
- The governing body responded quickly to the previous inspection recommendations and, following a review of governance, reorganised itself into a leaner and more effective body. This has enabled governors to collect and analyse school performance information and challenge the school to do better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, sharing and discussing their ideas and learning from each other. They are confident that everyone in their class will listen carefully to what they have to say.
- Relationships between pupils and the adults are very positive. Pupils get on very well together both in classrooms and in the playground. Senior leaders have ensured there is a consistent scheme of behaviour management and teachers, support staff and pupils apply this system.
- Behaviour is good in most lessons, but not outstanding. This is because, very occasionally, some pupils are off-task and behave in a way that requires careful management. However, this aspect of behaviour has improved, as pupils acknowledge, so that learning is rarely interrupted. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn. Most pupils look after their books and keep their classrooms tidy. However, some pupils do not take enough care with their handwriting.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including that relating to internet and social media use. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that although there are occasional behavioural incidents outside the classroom, staff deal with them effectively and pupils do not see bullying as an issue.
- Following a dip, attendance rates have improved this year and are currently in line with national averages. However, persistent absence, although reducing recently because of the decisive actions taken by the school, is still above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils report they feel safe and well cared for in school. This is particularly true of the nurture group, which gives very individualised care to some pupils during the lunch hour.
- The policies to keep pupils safe are applied consistently and related staff training is up to date. Procedures for the safer recruitment of staff fully meet requirements.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm both inside and outside the school. They can explain the routines and guidance they follow whenever they use computers and mobile technology.

- Pupils show a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name-calling and physical bullying. They say they would have no hesitation in telling an adult should they have any concerns. The school's records of incidents confirm that bullying rarely happens. There are good procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, including bullying.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved strongly since the previous inspection, and it is now typically good in all areas of the school, including in the early years. Teachers have responded well to leaders' advice and have taken full advantage of the training opportunities provided to improve their practice. They are consequently able to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school.
- Teachers know pupils well. They give clear explanations and introductions so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Classrooms are well organised and contain helpful displays of pupils' recent learning. There are plenty of well-chosen resources to support pupils' learning and books are used effectively to increase pupils' vocabulary. Pupils have opportunities to discuss their work and share their ideas, and this helps them to progress well. Teaching assistants are well-trained and deployed carefully. They provide good support to individual pupils so that they keep up with their classmates.
- As a consequence of improved teaching, pupils are making better progress in mathematics and reaching higher standards. There is a strong focus on developing number skills and learning the correct method for calculations.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has improved through staff training and regular assessment which allows staff to match activities better to pupils' levels. Teachers have successfully raised the profile of reading in school. Reading areas are more exciting places and now contain high quality books and this has encouraged pupils to read regularly, with enjoyment.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly to plan further learning opportunities and to identify any pupils in danger of slipping behind. When they mark pupils' written work they state clearly what pupils have done well and indicate where mistakes have been made. Teachers give precise guidance on how pupils can improve their work, and this helps pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because staff are skilled at recognising where they need extra help and ensuring this is provided. This enables them to take a full part in all activities and achieve well.
- Wherever possible teachers try to link different subjects together to deepen pupils' understanding. This was particularly evident in a literacy lesson. Children were writing facts they had learned first hand about the life cycle of the butterflies reared in their classroom. They had seen chrysalises hatch into butterflies and were thrilled and awed with the transformation. This activity combined science with literacy and inspired a lively debate about what food butterflies needed to survive, how fast they could fly and where their brains were.
- Teachers teach writing well in English lessons, as is evident in the range and quality of writing in pupils' literacy books. They have improved pupils' ability to spell and punctuate correctly. However, sometimes pupils do not demonstrate the same writing skills in topics outside English lessons and pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their writing skills by writing longer pieces. Additionally, a few teachers do not teach handwriting skills carefully enough and, as a result some pupils do not form their letters correctly. This prevents them from writing more clearly and fluently.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Improved teaching is making a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school. Children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age. Their literacy skills are especially weak.
- Achievement has improved during the past two years and is now good. The 2014 results were an improvement on the previous year's results, showing broadly average and rising attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Overall, Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve even higher standards than last year in all three subjects. Records kept by the school and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils across the school make good progress.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics and they are given plenty of opportunities to investigate numbers, carry out practical activities and apply their number skills to solve problems. Mathematics is a particular strength, but attainment and progress have also improved in reading and writing for most pupils, although there is more variability in writing progress.
- The results last year in the Year 1 phonic screening check (checking pupils' awareness of letters and the sounds they make) were disappointingly below expectations. The leadership has tackled these areas of inconsistency and variability; for example by giving some pupils additional support in their learning. The result has been rapid improvement, and currently, pupils are making good progress in phonics and are learning to read well.
- The work teachers set for the most-able pupils is generally challenging and pushes them to reach higher standards. Overall, their achievement is good and data held by the school suggests that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of this year is on track to rise in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Through early identification of their needs and well-focused additional support, most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress, and are sometimes progressing faster than their classmates. This is because staff carefully plan and constantly review learning in order to fit the particular needs of these pupils.
- The effective extra support provided for disadvantaged pupils ensures that they, too, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school makes good use of the pupil premium to provide one-to-one tuition from trained staff. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is closing rapidly.
- Pupils' writing is improving and pupils use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and use a range of increasingly complex ways to join two sentences together. However, progress in writing is not quite as rapid as other subjects because pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to write at length and the standard of presentation of work in books is not always high enough, particularly in the quality of their handwriting.

The early years provision**is good**

- The early years is led well and has improved since the previous inspection. The early years' leader, along with the other school leaders, has created a strong staff team who work extremely well together to make sure that learning is interesting and motivating. Priority areas where improvement was needed have clearly been identified and decisive action taken to make improvements.
- Children achieve well because the teaching in Nursery and Reception classes is much improved since the last inspection. There is clear evidence in the pupils' 'Learning Journeys' and in classroom displays that children make good progress from starting points which are below those typical for their age. There are particular weaknesses in children's literacy and emotional development. In 2014, just over half of the children reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

- Well-planned, interesting activities, both indoors and out, allow children to develop their skills in all areas of learning. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed working together in a very creative way to make a 'bus' out of crates on which to go on a trip to the beach. The teachers are very effectively supported by the strong team of teaching assistants. All adults know the children well and children's progress is carefully tracked and work is matched to their needs. Children are welcomed into a bright attractive environment that is very well resourced with good quality books and equipment, both indoors and outside.
- The behaviour of children is good overall. Most happily work and play together. There is a very small minority of pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour but, due to the kindness and patience of staff, they are making good progress in learning and adapting to the school's expectations of their behaviour. Children feel very safe in the early years because teachers establish a very calm and supportive learning environment where routines are well established. Safeguarding procedures are thorough. There are good links with early years staff in other local schools and in the on-site children's centre.
- The development of children's reading skills, particularly phonics, is well organised and structured and children make good progress in reading. They make good gains in working with number and solving basic problems. With clear guidance and direction from adults, they make good progress in early writing skills, although sometimes, opportunities are missed to develop children's early writing skills more quickly.

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	121005
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462067

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Langley
Headteacher	Sarah Gallichan
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2013
Telephone number	01328 864511
Fax number	01328 864511
Email address	office@fakenham-inf.norfolk.sch.uk

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