

Mulbarton Community Infant School

The Common, Mulbarton, Norwich, NR14 8JG

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Effective and very determined leadership by the headteacher, ably assisted by other school leaders, has improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement so they are both now good.
- Governors play a full and active part in shaping the direction of the school and checking that school leaders' decisions are the right ones.
- School leaders regularly and rigorously check the quality of teaching and learning, so weaknesses are identified and effective changes made.
- Pupils are well behaved and take great pride in their school. They have a good work ethic.
- Pupils feel safe in school because staff do all they can to ensure pupils' safety.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Staff and pupils alike live the school's values such as tolerance and respect in their daily actions.
- Teaching is good because underperformance is tackled. All staff benefit because high priority is given to training that is carefully matched to their needs.
- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress, and the vast majority reach or exceed the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Early years provision is good. Children make good progress in the Reception classes and are well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers do not check that pupils fully understand what they are expected to do, so some pupils' progress slows.
- Some mathematics lessons are too easy for the most able pupils so they do not learn as much as they could.
- Pupils are not always expected to use their good writing skills when writing in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants are not used to best effect when the teacher is talking to the whole class, so they are less effective than at other times.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons, including all year groups and in a range of subjects. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, members of the governing body, subject leaders, other teachers, parents and pupils. An inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard a group of pupils read.
- The inspectors considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents in discussions and in the 67 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspectors also took account of the 26 responses to the questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Henry Weir

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception children attend full time. There are two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of girls is smaller than average, especially in Year 2.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The headteacher took up her current post in a temporary capacity in January 2014 and permanently from April 2014.
- The school is part of an informal group of local schools that remain independent of one another but work cooperatively.
- Since January 2014, the school has received support from a Local Leader in Education, the headteacher of West Earlham Infant and Nursery School.
- The school runs a breakfast club every week day.
- An independent after-school club operates on the school site. This is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - teachers check pupils fully understand what they have to do during lessons to secure pupils' consistently good progress
 - all tasks are of sufficient difficulty to enable the most able pupils to make good progress in mathematics lessons
 - pupils are expected to use their good writing skills equally effectively across all subjects
 - teaching assistants are used effectively at all times, particularly when the teacher is addressing the whole class.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has changed the mind-set of the school. One governor said, 'It has always been a nice school, now it is a nice school where children do well academically.' At the core of this is a culture that promotes effective teaching and good behaviour.
- The school is a harmonious community in which pupils are quick to praise each other's efforts. Staff do all they can to see there is no discrimination and that everyone is respected and treated equally.
- Leadership at all levels is effective and a very significant factor in the school's improvement. School leaders form an effective team with complementary skills and identical high ambition for school and pupils.
- Subject leadership is effective. Leaders use their expertise well. For example, the mathematics leader has ensured that the new calculations policy is displayed in every classroom and referred to regularly by teachers to check they use the right approach.
- Everyone, including teachers, governors and parents, say teaching has improved since the appointment of the headteacher. They say there is a much greater emphasis, through rigorous and regular checks, on improving pupils' learning and the effectiveness of teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies help give pupils a sense of their own place in the community, what is expected of them, and what they might expect of others.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They understand the democratic process through elections to the school council, and how representatives gather their views and feedback decisions about matters of importance to them. The school's values, such as 'respect' are promoted well.
- Pupils are enthused by the wide range of stimulating learning opportunities they experience, regularly extended and enriched by visits and visitors. Special days – for example, about science – give pupils the opportunity to undertake practical problem solving with their parents.
- Additional pupil premium funding is used well. The school carefully analyses each pupil's individual learning needs and seeks to provide extra help to overcome these challenges.
- Primary school sports funding is used effectively. Extra staff training means pupils have more activities at lunchtime, sometimes helped by pupils from the neighbouring junior school. Funding ensures that pupils participate in greater numbers and in a wider range of activities than previously. Pupils understand the importance of sustained vigorous exercise to their health and well-being.
- Parents and staff enjoy a positive relationship, working closely together to benefit Mulbarton's pupils. Four in every five parents would recommend the school. Parents support their children's learning out of school; for example, with extra visits to places linked to topics studied in school. Parents appreciate the good and immediate communication from school.
- The local authority has given plenty of good quality support to the school. Good training arranged by the local authority has contributed to the many improvements in the quality of teaching. Staff draw on the expertise of the Local Leader in Education to support the implementation of the many improvements recently introduced.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. Staff understand and adhere closely to all statutory requirements and school procedures. Pupils overwhelmingly say they feel safe in school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective because governors contribute fully to school improvement. For example, they meet as a group for 'deep dive day' when they analyse and interpret information from a wide range of sources to check on pupils' progress and that school developments have the expected impact. They have clear long-term plans to improve the school further.
- Governors have high expectations of themselves. They undertake training to fill any gaps in their knowledge.
- Governors have an excellent knowledge of performance data and understand what it means. They compare it with what they see in school and ask searching questions of school leaders if they in any way differ.
- Individually, governors bring an excellent range and quality of skills to their decision-making.
- Governors have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching at the school. They make sure that teachers' pay rises are dependent on their pupils making good progress. They know how staff are managed and that underperformance is tackled.
- Financial spending is checked carefully and governors know the positive impact on pupils' achievements made by the spending of additional funds, such as pupil premium and sports funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost all parents responding to Parent View agreed that behaviour is good. Pupils arrive each day with a thirst for knowledge. They immerse themselves in the day's activities. Those pupils who spoke to inspectors said they like the way learning is explained more clearly to them now.
- Pupils respond very positively to the responsibilities they are given in school. Individuals, when it is their turn to be the day's 'special pupil', perform all the tasks given with pride and to the best of their ability.
- Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy receiving accolades from other pupils, staff and their parents. Equally, they give thoughtful words of praise to others. This clearly raises their self-esteem.
- There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection. The very small number of pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their behaviour receive good support and quickly return to learning.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils are punctual to school, too, because they look forward to each day's new learning. The well-run and popular breakfast club contributes to good punctuality, too.
- Pupils look forward to the next stage in their education because they are well prepared. Transition from infant school to the neighbouring junior school is good. They have many visits and enjoy activities such as gardening.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements to ensure that all adults are checked thoroughly are applied fully. Pupils say they feel safe and secure, and the vast majority of parents agree.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are very rare, and they are confident that staff would quickly resolve any concerns or worries they might have.
- Pupils use computers confidently and know that the internet brings with it potential dangers. All pupils who spoke to inspectors knew what to do if anything worried them.
- Pupils have good awareness of potential dangers around them and their classmates, and have ideas about how to limit hazards. Some come to school by bicycle and can explain how they ride safely.

The quality of teaching is good

- All adults provide good role models, promoting the school's values and expectations to pupils. By their actions and demeanour, adults show they value pupils' ideas and thoughts. Pupils respond positively so that classrooms are safe and pupils are happy.
- Learning is purposeful because all lessons include a clear explanation of what pupils are expected to learn, and how they will know they have achieved it. As a result, most of the time, pupils know what they are aiming towards.
- Marking gives pupils clear guidance, particularly on how to make their work better still. Teachers usually go over their marking with pupils, to make sure they understand, and this has a positive impact on their learning.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted well. Pupils are encouraged to reply in full sentences, carefully explaining their point of view. They listen to one another, and share ideas well.
- Reading is taught well. Phonics is taught effectively so pupils use this skill when reading alone and coming across an unknown word. Pupils are taught well to use other methods too, such as the illustrations of the text. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and have positive attitudes about themselves as readers.
- Homework gives pupils opportunities to practise a skill learnt in school or to follow their interests. Out-of-class activities are used to introduce or extend work done in school.
- Writing skills, such as punctuation, are taught effectively. Equally, different types of writing, such as letter writing, are taught with clarity so pupils understand well. However, not all teachers expect pupils to use this knowledge and practise these skills when they write in other subjects. As a result, they miss opportunities to improve their writing further.
- Mathematics skills are taught well and pupils use a variety of well-chosen methods to practise and hone them. The most able pupils have well-taught extra lessons which offer the right level of challenge. However, tasks in their general mathematics class lessons sometimes lack sufficient challenge.
- In most lessons teachers observe pupils' responses to check they understand what they are expected to do. In a small number of lessons this is not the case and pupils struggle with the task because they are not sure what they should be doing.
- Teaching assistants are generally effective. They help and guide individual pupils and small groups very well, giving them extra support but always encouraging them to try for themselves. In some lessons, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, teaching assistants make an equally valuable contribution; for example, spotting when a pupil is stuck and explaining the task again. In other lessons, however, they are merely passive observers and make less impact on pupils' learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Across the school, the progress of the vast majority of pupils is good. This is shown by the school's accurate and regular assessments, most checked by the local authority, and evidence confirmed by inspectors.
- Pupils in Year 1 make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A good proportion go on to reach higher standards, particularly in reading and writing.
- The results of the Year 1 national screening check of phonics are good this year, with nine in every ten pupils reaching or exceeding the level expected. This is better than last year because staff training has improved the teaching of phonics.

- In 2014, pupils in Year 2 made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The vast majority reached or exceeded the expected level in the national tests. In mathematics, a smaller proportion made accelerated progress than in reading or writing.
- In 2015, Year 2 pupils were about half a term ahead of last year's national average in writing, level with the average in reading and about three-quarters of a term behind it in mathematics. School leaders attribute this to a legacy of previously ineffective teaching which limited these pupils' progress. School information about pupils' progress shows current pupils are doing much better.
- The relatively low proportion of girls in Year 2 do well because their teachers make sure they have equal opportunities to answer questions and participate in activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school carefully and accurately analyses their individual learning needs and provides the precise help they need. For example, some pupils benefit from a nurturing approach to build their self-confidence so they are more comfortable tackling problems and answering questions in class. Important to the good progress is the close and active involvement of parents, so pupils see home and school working closely together.
- The most able pupils make good progress in writing and, increasingly, in reading. Extra lessons, in all subjects, give them harder work. In mathematics, a smaller proportion of pupils reach above expected levels than in either reading or writing because some of the tasks they are given lack sufficient challenge to maintain consistently good progress. The harder work they are given in extra lessons does not always transfer to general class work.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school make good progress, although a high proportion have lower starting points because they have special educational needs that have an impact on their learning. As a result, their attainment levels at the end of Year 2 can be lower than their peers. In 2014, the small number in Year 2 were three-quarters of a term behind other pupils in the school in reading, a quarter of a term ahead in writing, and broadly the same as their classmates in mathematics. When compared with other pupils nationally, they were one-and-a-half terms behind in reading, a quarter of a term behind in writing, and half a term behind in mathematics. School information and inspection findings suggest that the small number of disadvantaged pupils this year in Year 2 have done better in reading and mathematics compared to their classmates, but not so well in writing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Children are ready for school, with positive attitudes to learning.
- Achievement is good. The proportion reaching a good level of development has increased in the last few years from about half in 2013 to three quarters in 2014. School information and inspection findings suggest it will rise further this year. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1. Progress in reading is particularly strong and children have the beginnings of a good understanding of phonics.
- Children behave well. They arrive keen to find out what the new day's learning is about. No time is wasted at the start of the day because children know the routines and expectations. They listen closely to adults and other children, and respond with thoughtful answers. They are very comfortable, sometimes choosing to play alone or with a group of friends.
- Teaching is good. Questioning is used effectively to draw thoughts and ideas from children, and often leads them to figuring things out for themselves. At different times, all adults will teach all children, so relationships are positive and all staff have a good understanding of all children's progress.
- Leadership is good. Staff form an effective and cohesive team with a clear sense of purpose and direction because everyone knows the priorities for improvement. Staff have clear targets based on observations of their teaching, and they are given the training needed to improve. There are good arrangements to help children to settle in when they start school because staff have good links to the various pre-schools from

which the children come.

- Children are safe and well looked after. Staff check equipment at the start of every day and ensure the perimeter is secure. Staff are well trained in first aid.

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	120990
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	461652

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Wright
Headteacher	Bev Theobald
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
Telephone number	01508 570326
Email address	office@mulbartoninfant.norfolk.sch.uk

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