

Catfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane, Catfield, Norfolk NR29 5DA

Inspection dates	2–3 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, fully supported by governors and staff, has established a positive climate for learning, with high expectations of all. The school is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and pupils do well. Teachers plan activities that draw pupils into the learning.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are taught well so pupils are ready for high school.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils thrive because staff know and successfully meet each pupil's individual needs.
- Pupils come to school ready to learn, inquisitive and keen to try their best. They behave well.
- Catfield is a caring community. Pupils feel safe. Parents agree their children are safe and nurtured.
- Pupils' interest and curiosity to learn is fuelled by the stimulating curriculum activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is good; staff use children's ideas to create outstanding learning opportunities. Progress is good so children are fully prepared for Year 1.
- Staff form a very effective team, sharing expertise and ideas to the benefit of all pupils.
- Governors want the best for pupils. They work closely with the headteacher to provide high quality education for pupils.
- The Federation benefits pupils and staff alike, both enjoy working and learning with others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always recognise when pupils understand and are ready to move on with their learning.
- Questions are not always sufficiently probing for staff to help pupils improve.
- Skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not good enough, and some older pupils have limited knowledge of how to use phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to help them.
- Older pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is not always good enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure greater consistency of high-quality teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers regularly check and adjust their teaching during lessons, according to how well pupils are doing, so all make good progress
 - adults use suitable questions to extend pupils' understanding of what they are doing
 - grammar, punctuation and spelling skills receive sufficient attention for pupils to reach or exceed age-expected levels
 - gaps in older pupils' phonics knowledge and understanding are identified and resolved
 - teachers always expect older pupils to write legibly and present their work neatly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders acted decisively to tackle all weaknesses highlighted by the previous inspection report. They are highly focused on ensuring pupils do well in their personal and academic development. In particular, their very strong promotion of the importance of positive relationships, an interesting curriculum and effective teaching results in good outcomes for pupils.
- School leaders' accurate view of the strengths of the school enables them to set very clear priorities for improvement. They have established a very clear climate of ambition and high expectations that all staff, pupils, parents and the community share.
- Leaders' clear arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching accurately identify how teaching can improve. This enables them to organise high-quality training, which has improved teaching where it was most needed, for example in mathematics. All staff benefit from training tailored to their needs, identified by rigorous performance management.
- Staff form an effective highly motivated team. Leaders value each individual's strengths and encourage them to contribute fully to the life of the school.
- Highly skilled senior leaders strongly impact on important areas, such as provision for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. Well-trained staff give extra help in the right areas so that these pupils thrive.
- Subject leaders clearly understand their roles. They observe lessons to check that pupils make good progress, and use information gleaned from this and other sources, such as talking to pupils about their learning, to write subject action plans.
- The good range of stimulating learning activities enthral pupils and contributes well to their love of learning. Pupils gain a wider perspective because subjects are linked together, so new learning in one practises skills already learnt in another. Visits, visitors and 'clubs' enrich learning further.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is effective because values such as 'compassion' are taught well and practised in the everyday life of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted highly effectively. Leaders and staff use assemblies to set the tone for the school day. Staff give pupils many opportunities to reflect on thought-provoking questions, such as how they can improve their work and the school as a community. Pupils celebrate their own spirituality and learn about other world faiths.
- Additional funding effectively promotes sport. Sports coaches improve pupils' techniques so that they achieve well. The increased range of activities, including basketball and yoga, engages pupils' interest and involvement. Pupils' good understanding of the importance of exercise to health fuels their interest and involvement. They enjoy competition.
- The school uses the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders deploy extra staff and resources effectively, enabling these pupils to achieve well, many as well or better than their peers. Funding also enables pupils to access enrichment opportunities.
- The school works effectively with the local cluster of schools, for example to develop the new assessment system. Pupils, too, get to know and work with those they will next meet at high school.
- The federation is beneficial. Staff learn from one another, an improvement since the previous inspection. The school successfully meets its aim to 'bring the children together to widen their learning opportunities', through events such as 'science day'. Parents say that their children benefit from working with a wider range of children and adults.
- The school benefits from expertise provided by the local authority, particularly in the recent past, to improve areas of weakness identified by the previous inspection report.
- Parents speak very positively about the quality of education provided by the school. They like that staff quickly resolve any concerns they have. One typical parent commented, 'This is a fantastic school'.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff to maintain the impetus of improvement and provide a good education for all pupils.
 - Governors visit regularly, so they know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. This, and their thorough knowledge of assessment information, enables them to check that pupils do well, and to question and challenge if they do not.
 - Governors manage the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions and pay

increases are based on a broad range of evidence.

- Governors’ oversight of the school’s finances is thorough. With the headteacher, they check value for money closely. Governors also carefully check that additional funding is used effectively.
- The governing body manages itself very efficiently. Everyone’s role is clear and individual expertise is used effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks are meticulous, policy and procedures clear. Staff are well informed, and training in how to keep pupils safe is up to date. School leaders and governors see this as paramount.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teaching is good throughout the school. Information such as the school’s rigorous checks of teaching, regularly moderated by the local authority, shows that it has improved since the previous inspection.
- Staff share positive relationships with pupils, so lessons flow smoothly and no time is lost, for example when pupils move from one activity to another.
- Teachers typically plan tasks of several levels of difficulty, and invite pupils to decide which to do. As a result, pupils begin to develop a better understanding of themselves as learners.
- Reading is taught well. Staff in the youngest class take every opportunity to practise pupils’ phonics whenever they can. Older pupils, however, often lack the skill and confidence to use this approach because they have not been as thoroughly trained.
- Creativity in writing is taught effectively, an improvement since the previous inspection. Typically, teachers use a variety of approaches, such as drawing a picture storyboard, to encourage talk. Pupils rehearse and refine their thoughts and the words they will use. As a result, their writing is generally of good quality. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught effectively in Years 1 and 2, so these pupils make a good start. In older classes, however, pupils are often unsure because these skills are not taught and practised sufficiently.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils respond very positively to problem-solving. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson during the inspection, they figured out answers to a number of problems, working cooperatively and sharing ideas. The teacher created a purposeful lesson with a ‘buzz’ of learning. Pupils welcomed hard challenging work and showed resilience when answers were difficult to find.
- Teachers’ marking of pupils’ work gives a clear explanation of what they have achieved and what they need to focus on next. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils’ first job each morning is to check their teachers’ marking. They read it carefully and follow up any extra examples teachers have given them, to check that they understand now. Pupils say that this is beneficial to their learning. It is another improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching assistants generally contribute well to pupils’ learning. Leaders provide effective training, often with other federation teaching assistants, so they know how to help pupils, particularly those who are struggling.
- Home learning is highly effective; staff provide a wide range of interesting activities. Pupils select those that particularly interest them, and figure out for themselves what to research and how to present their work. Parents speak enthusiastically, and a typical comment was, ‘It is a fantastic idea, my children have really benefited. They really take pride in presenting their work in their special homework book.’
- Staff generally use questioning effectively and for a variety of purposes. However, some questions ask very little of pupils and do not glean the information needed to extend learning or clarify misunderstandings.
- Some lesson time is used less effectively because teachers fail to spot when pupils understand, or find the work too easy, and are ready to move on.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils clearly understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve further, an improvement since the previous inspection. They enjoy challenging work and come to school ready to

learn. Positivity is displayed all around them in examples of their good work. This helps create a 'can do' attitude.

- Pupils work well with staff. They respect them and have confidence in their teaching. They want to do well and please their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils work well with one another. In discussion, they will listen to other pupils' opinions, and respond appropriately.
- Leaders offer many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school in very meaningful ways. Pupils see 'democracy' first hand when voting for candidates for important roles, such as on the school council. This reinforces their knowledge of British values.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and their parents agree. Pupils know what bullying is and that friends occasionally fall out. They know how to stay safe when using the internet. Lessons such as cooking are used to reinforce health and safety. Pupils are confident that they can talk to someone at school if they are worried or have concerns, and are clear that staff will help them.
- Pupils have a good and growing awareness of other cultures, as a result of excellent learning across subjects such as 'Multicultural Day'. Their clear memories testify to the high quality, stimulating learning.
- Pupils adopt healthy behaviours because they learn about a balanced diet in their regular cookery lessons, and about the importance of exercise in physical education and games.
- Staff create a positive welcoming atmosphere in before-school care. Pupils of all ages play and talk harmoniously. Fully trained staff are vigilant to pupils' safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The small number of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour receive very good support from staff who are particularly skilful at de-escalating and re-directing pupils. Staff work very closely with specialist agencies to benefit pupils.
- The school is orderly because pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. Lessons flow because pupils want to learn. Movement around the school is smooth. Pupils' pride in their school is clear.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Parents say that their children want to come to school and look forward to each day's new learning.
- Parents say that the school manages behaviour well and deals with the rare cases of bullying effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has generally improved since the previous inspection because of good teaching and more relevant learning activities, for example in writing. However, concerns expressed then about pupils' handwriting and presentation of work in their workbooks remain.
- Very small year groups, and fluctuating numbers, means caution need to be taken when interpreting published achievement information.
- Pupils' workbooks, and the school's checks on progress, show that pupils currently in the school make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. This is for many reasons; good teaching, relevant and interesting learning activities, small class sizes and the pupils' own readiness for school.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level in their knowledge of phonics is above average because of effective teaching. Pupils like to read and older pupils can explain why they like particular authors.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they receive extra help tailored to areas in which they struggle. This is paying dividends. The number of disadvantaged pupils in any one year group varies greatly, and can be very low. In each year group, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are similar to those of their peers.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress, too. The school's approach, giving them the opportunity to choose to tackle harder work, enables them to challenge themselves more. However, sometimes when the teacher has the whole class together some still find themselves held back when the teacher does not recognise that they are ready to move on.
- The progress of pupils who need to catch up is good because they benefit from being able to select the

work that suits them. Over time, many are building knowledge of themselves as learners and are beginning to challenge themselves in subjects that they are more confident in.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good from their very varied starting points. Staff know these pupils very well so they tailor activities to each individual's needs. Parents are fully involved, so home and school work together and pupils receive consistency. In particular, highly trained teaching assistants give each one just the right level and type of help.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the wide range of subjects they learn. They feel visits help them learn because they see for themselves. They enjoy music, especially singing. A wide range of art and craft approaches are taught well and pupils demonstrate good skills in this subject.
- Creativity in writing is good and the school's approach is effective. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn, practise and understand the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is exacerbated because many older pupils are not confident in how to use skills such as phonics to tackle the spelling of words they do not know.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter Reception with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They are particularly strong in communication (speaking and listening) and the expressive arts. They are relatively weaker in personal, social and emotional development.
- Children's progress in the Reception year is good and they are very well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1. In 2014, all children reached a good level of development. Progress in 2015 was also above the proportion found nationally.
- Children achieve well because the planning of activities is based on clear and accurate assessments of each child's needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Children's progress is rapid because of a determined and effective focus on providing a wide range of learning opportunities, and staff taking every opportunity possible to reinforce and extend children's knowledge of phonics, reading, writing and number.
- Children learn and play together well, demonstrating good personal and social development from their low starting points. Relationships with staff are very positive. Behaviour is good. Most have an awareness of their own safety and that of those around them. Staff constantly reinforce safety rules.
- Children benefit from learning with and from older pupils. Children watch and listen and quickly pick things up from those older than themselves. They concentrate and persevere, even when activities are challenging.
- Staff form a highly effective team. The highly skilled teacher gives her colleagues good guidance and support. They, in turn, are very effective. All fully understand this age group and how to help them learn. They ask many open-ended questions that probe children's thinking and encourage them to practise recently acquired learning.
- Staff's response to children is outstanding. Typically, they 'plan in the moment', always open to the possibilities created by children themselves. For example, during the inspection, an activity was set up for children to make a model. Children started and then, in conversation, discovered it was someone's birthday. The children changed the activity to make a birthday cake. Bamboo trees became candles and children began counting to make sure the number of candles was correct. Staff seized on this and developed a conversation about number, leading eventually to the children recording different equations.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The leader uses her expertise in this area to very good effect. She ensures children are safe.
- Although the shape of the outdoor area is not helpful, it is as vibrant and interesting a learning area as the indoors, an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Transition from the pre-school is excellent because staff in both settings work closely together to give children the experiences that prepare them for Reception.
- Parents say that staff work closely with them and keep them well informed of their children's learning. They like the online school journeys, one father saying, 'I'm away from home a lot, so it helps me keep up to date with my daughter's learning'.

School details

Unique reference number	121103
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10001887

This inspection 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	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Watts
Headteacher	Jo Nutbeam (Executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01692 580568
Website	www.catfield.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@catfield.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- In September 2013, the school entered into partnership with Sutton Infant School and Hickling Infant School to form the 'Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools'. The headteacher is executive headteacher of all three schools and they share one governing body.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is broadly average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average, and currently none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- There are not enough pupils to publish whether the school meets the government's floor standards that set the minimum expectation of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates before-school care five days a week.
- A preschool shares the school site and is run by the governing body. It is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, seven of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector attended an assembly and observed pupils as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and governors. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to the online survey, Parent View. He also held informal discussions with parents. The inspector also took account of the views of 11 staff who completed an Ofsted survey.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documents and information, including the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of governors' meetings and behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at arrangements and records for safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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