

# Exning Primary School

Oxford Street, Exning, Newmarket CB8 7EW

**Inspection dates** 8–9 December 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has established an aspirational vision and ethos for the school. All leaders and governors work effectively together to continually improve. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are encouraged to work together and challenge themselves to achieve more.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Adults are well trained and ensure that pupils make accelerated progress in their early reading skills.
- Subject leaders are highly effective. They are ambitious for their subjects and robust in checking the impact of their actions to improve the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. Their needs are exceptionally well catered for and monitored.
- Teaching assistants’ skilful and effective questioning skills enable the pupils they work with to make strong progress.
- Teachers plan lessons that inspire and challenge pupils. Pupils are keen to do well. They enjoy thinking deeply, and participate enthusiastically in activities.
- Pupils’ behaviour is outstanding. They are highly respectful and considerate towards each other and adults. This results in a happy and purposeful environment where pupils can learn well.
- Outstanding provision in the early years ensures that children make rapid progress. They acquire new skills quickly in all areas, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, and are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Governors know the school extremely well and are involved in school life. They provide strong support and challenge for school leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 2, more-able pupils are not always given precise information to improve their spelling and grammar across all subjects.
- The progress of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics is not planned precisely enough to enable all abilities to excel.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes for pupils even further by:
  - giving precise guidance to the more-able pupils to promote higher levels of spelling and grammar in subjects in addition to English and mathematics
  - accelerating the progress of all pupils across subjects, so they can excel.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has a strong and ambitious vision, and has created a cohesive learning community, built on the school's values of 'persevere, shine, be happy, value ourselves and others, be proud of our achievements, never, never, never give up!'
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They tackle areas for development with relentless energy, so pupils continue to make at least good progress. Consequently, the school is purposeful and focused on pupils developing skills and abilities that prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have very high expectations of staff and set robust performance management targets that focus sharply on raising the achievement of pupils in their class. School leaders provide quality training and support for teachers and other adults so they can continuously develop their professional skills. All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire are proud to work at the school and agreed that leaders encourage and challenge them to do well.
- Middle leaders are ambitious for their subjects and robust in checking that their actions are accelerating pupils' progress. They ensure there is creativity and fun alongside rigorous development of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, pupils develop a love of learning and the more-able pupils are increasingly stretched. For example, in one mathematics lesson seen these pupils were grappling with an investigation where they needed to reason with prime, abundant, square and deficient numbers. Their enthusiasm and explanations were infectious.
- Additional sports funding is used well, continuing to increase pupils' participation in a range of sporting activities together with training opportunities for staff to enhance the quality of teaching in physical education. Pupils appreciate the specialist coaching they receive.
- The leader for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is meticulous in ensuring the provision fully meets the needs of individual pupils within the classroom. As a result, these pupils make exceptional progress across the school and they have equal opportunity to access the same provision as their classmates.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used exceptionally well. Leaders provide for individuals and give careful thought to providing resources and experiences for these pupils. Disadvantaged pupils attend school very regularly and often make better than expected progress because of the quality of provision they receive.
- The school's safeguarding provision meets statutory requirements. The school collaborates well with parents, carers and external agencies in order to keep pupils safe, and follows concerns through to a conclusion. Staff are trained appropriately and regularly, following the school's processes and procedures robustly.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced, and gives pupils many opportunities for creative experiences. Topics begin with a 'sparkling start' that is often a visit to a museum, having a visitor to the class or another practical experience. These thoughtfully and well planned activities result in all pupils having similar starting points and create a sense of enjoyment and wonder in learning.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have a very secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They have taken the right course of action to ensure that statutory safeguarding procedures and processes are robustly followed
  - Governors are rigorous in questioning the school's leaders about the performance of pupils and check the performance of the school through frequent visits. As a result, the governors hold the school stringently to account for improving the quality of teaching
  - Governors make sure that the school's resources, including additional government funding, are used for pupils' benefit. They are vigilant, checking that funding is being used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils in their learning.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe and procedures and processes are robust.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The school's leaders have continued to improve and develop the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve throughout the school. They make learning fun, engaging and challenging. Pupils are often able to select their own level of challenge through their 'mild, hot or spicy' tasks, which they relish. Consequently, pupils are keen to do well.
- Strong and often better teaching over time is leading to good progress for most pupils. In Key Stage 1, the high expectations ensure that pupils are stretched and given challenging work to achieve well. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were asked to be self-critical of their own writing, and look for ways to improve their writing further. In this lesson, the more-able pupils thoroughly enjoyed this level of challenge, worked collaboratively and produced a very good outcome as a result.
- Teachers are adept at using a range of strategies so that every opportunity is taken during lessons, for pupils to learn. In many lessons seen, when pupils move around the class, teachers ask them to sing songs or recite familiar mathematical number patterns. For example, in one lesson, the younger pupils sang the months of the year, as they moved to the tables to begin work. Pupils focused and sat quickly in their places beginning their next activity with no time lost.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of pupils. They have received good-quality training and use their questioning skills effectively when working with individuals or in small groups. For example, in one additional reading lesson, the teaching assistant sensitively and skilfully supported a pupil for whom learning to read is a challenge. The pupil was given helpful and simple strategies to practise so she achieved well.
- Adults' secure subject knowledge is used increasingly effectively. Teachers have a good grasp of the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to acquire. They plan learning activities that will interest and inspire pupils to learn. Teachers provide 'toolkit resources' so that pupils can independently develop their thinking and reasoning skills even further.
- Teachers use verbal and written feedback effectively, so that pupils understand what is expected of them and how they can improve their work, in English and mathematics. Pupils are involved in developing their own success criteria for activities. They are increasingly able to identify their own successes and areas for improvement in their work. Time is regularly given for the pupils to improve and redraft their writing, and their progress is accelerating as a result.
- Teachers have very high expectations of how work should be presented. Pupils' work is carefully drafted and neatly presented. Inspectors saw very little evidence of work that was careless or unfinished.
- Teachers do not ensure that the high expectations and strategies observed in English and mathematics lessons are a feature of all subjects across the curriculum. Feedback in subjects other than English and mathematics is often not precise enough to move pupils on further in their skills and abilities. For the more-able pupils, at times, teachers accept less, resulting in some pupils producing work that does not demonstrate the same care in grammar, punctuation and spelling as seen in their English books.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive and proud of their school. They can discuss their achievements and areas for improvement in their learning positively and maturely. One pupil told one of the inspectors, 'we learn from our mistakes, it helps us to persevere'.
- Pupils who contributed their views to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire agreed that they are happy and well cared for at school. Parents and inspectors agree with them.
- The school's work to improve attendance is proving successful. Leaders work sensitively with pupils who have medical needs that affect their attendance at school. For the rest, attendance last year was in line with national expectations. Currently, this year, attendance is above

average. Disadvantaged pupils have even higher attendance at school; these pupils achieve well.

- Pupils have a clear and appropriate understanding of internet safety. They know who to tell if they are concerned or have worries. The school's e-safety ambassadors meet regularly with adults in school to help develop school policies and make decisions on how best to approach this subject.
- The pupil health and safety committee regularly inspect the school building to ensure that all procedures are in place to keep children safe and secure. They take their responsibilities seriously and report their findings to senior leaders. Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe within school.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, enabling all pupils to learn without disruption or distraction. Not one correction from an adult or even a gentle reminder was necessary over the two-day inspection from Reception through to Year 6. The school's own information, comments from staff, pupils, parents and governors provide evidence that this is the norm at Exning Primary.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions used by the school to promote positive behaviour. Pupils say adults are fair and give them an opportunity to improve their choices and start again. They want to earn a school 'bonus 5' reward, and appreciate the school's communication with their parents to inform them of the reward.
- Pupils were adamant that any issues such as bullying, if they ever occur, are dealt with swiftly and well by adults. They are confident that should they ever need to use the 'whisper' button, the headteacher would listen to them and respond quickly.
- The school's strong ethos, coupled with a creative and engaging curriculum, ensures pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recent work on display around the theme of remembrance from Reception to Year 6 demonstrates pupils' mature and sensitive responses. In a singing assembly, pupils confidently sang their songs, changing musical key with ease, and were able to give meaning to the words that they sang. The result was of a very high quality.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- The majority of children enter the early years with abilities and skills that are broadly typical for their age in many of the areas of learning. From their individual starting points, most children have made at least good progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of children who leave Reception having achieved higher than national expectations for their age is greater than the national average, and is rising. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening tests remain a strength of the school, with pupils achieving above national expectations. Pupils who are not successful at this stage tend to catch up and pass their screening check by the end of Year 2. The school organises and provides a well-structured programme that teaches and promotes the use of phonics effectively from Reception and through Key Stage 1.
- By the end of Year 2, standards remain strong and pupils continue to make good progress. Results in reading, writing and mathematics continue to rise, and achievement was above average in 2015. Currently the work produced by pupils in their books confirms that this continues to be the case this year.
- The teaching of reading is a strength and is well established. Pupils develop a love of reading through having access to a wide range of texts. Adults follow a school-designed programme precisely so that all pupils are able to read library books by the end of Key Stage 1. Consequently, all pupils achieved the national expectation or above in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils often make better progress throughout the school than other pupils in the cohort and nationally. Published information shows that disadvantaged pupils have higher rates of attendance than others in the school. In 2015 at the end of Key Stage 2, they achieved the expected attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics, making above expected progress compared with other pupils nationally in reading and writing, and mathematics.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because the school meets their needs carefully and precisely. As a result, these pupils make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils with the same starting points nationally.
- The school has been a primary school for the last three years. The numbers at the end of Key Stage 2 continue to rise, with additional pupils starting at the school later in Key Stage 2. Until this year, numbers in a Year 6 cohort have been small. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been improving, because of the school's effective work with the more vulnerable groups. The progress of the higher-ability pupils remains a priority for the school as some of these pupils do not make as much progress as they could throughout all of Key Stage 2.
- Good and stronger teaching seen in upper Key Stage 2 is ensuring that this year a greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 are reaching the standards expected for their age. Lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions with pupils about their work confirms that these pupils are starting to make accelerated progress and standards are improving.
- The more-able pupils do not extend their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills and abilities as well as they could, in subjects such as science and topic. As a result, the rates of progress for these pupils can become slower across Key Stage 2.

### Early years provision

**is outstanding**

- Each adult in the early years makes a significant contribution to the outcomes of children. They take every opportunity, whether in the class or outside to skilfully question the children and extend their thinking and speaking skills. Everyone has high expectations of what this age group can achieve. In one lesson seen, the teacher was using targeted questions so the more-able children needed to think harder and extend their answers, showing their greater understanding of concepts such as 'more' or 'less', together with using her 'star words'.
- Children leave Reception with skills and abilities above those expected for children of their age. The proportion who achieve a good level of development is well above average. Where children have lower starting points they too make exceptional progress.
- Children know and follow well-established and highly effective routines. They independently take care of their belongings and lose no time in getting ready for learning. Well-used strategies such as reciting or singing rhymes ensure that children move around the classroom safely and with good humour.
- Adults are caring and have highly effective relationships with children. All safety and safeguarding processes and procedures are fully in place. As a result, the children are very happy and safe which contributes to them making rapid progress.
- Children behave impeccably. During lessons, they participate willingly and enthusiastically in a wide range of activities. Earning a 'bonus 5' is a highly sought after reward. An inspector was proudly told 'I got a bonus 5 because I was lining up well'. Children are proud of each other's achievement because adults encourage the children to show positive values to each other.
- The outdoor area is used exceptionally well so that children have opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills as well as other curriculum areas. Children enjoy the mud kitchen where they can explore and create during imaginary play. Children's learning journeys demonstrate a wide range of activities that cover the areas of learning.
- The curriculum is very well planned and organised so children receive a combination of quality adult-led sessions together with many rich experiences so they can choose and learn to take risks in learning for themselves.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124544
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001291

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jeremy Kirk
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Clark
<b>Telephone number</b>	01638 600123
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.exning.suffolk.sch.uk">www.exning.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@exning.suffolk.sch.uk">admin@exning.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3–4 February 2011

## Information about this school

- Exning Primary School is a rapidly growing primary school that is currently smaller than average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- Children attend Reception full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons, attended an assembly and carried out a joint learning walk with the headteacher. They observed the teaching of reading skills and listened to pupils read. Examples of pupils' work were scrutinised to gain a view of teaching over time. Pupils were spoken to informally during breaktimes.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body.
- During the inspection the views of parents were gathered through informal conversations at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of 57 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of 67 responses to the pupil online questionnaire and also 15 responses to the staff online questionnaire.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the most recent information regarding pupils' progress and attainment across the school, and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness together with plans for improvement. The minutes of the governing body and information relating to the checks on the quality of teaching were evaluated.
- The inspectors checked the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the processes and procedures for recruiting staff.

## Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Peter Sewell

Martin Beale

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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