

Freethorpe Community Primary and Nursery School

The Green, Freethorpe, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3NZ

Inspection dates 19–20 January 2016

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have established a positive ethos in which pupils feel valued, have confidence to achieve and make good academic progress.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and make learning activities interesting and engaging.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive extra support to help them gain skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders ensure a very broad and balanced curriculum with many enrichment experiences for pupils to enjoy. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Children and pupils feel and are safe. School leaders ensure that staff are effectively trained and follow both statutory and school procedures meticulously.
- Pupils are proud of their school, behave well and have good relationships with adults and each other. Pupils learn in a happy and purposeful environment.
- Children enjoy their learning in the early years from the age of two. They are well cared for and adults provide for their individual needs.
- Senior leaders ensure that the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. They focus on providing for the individual needs of pupils so that they can achieve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers accept work of the same standard rather than ensuring that these pupils deepen and extend their thinking and skills even further.
- Not all adults in the early years contribute as well to the teaching of core subjects so that children have a secure understanding of number. This leads to gaps further in their school life.
- Governors do not systematically ensure that all their statutory duties are met in a timely way.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are challenged further in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- improve Early Years by:
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their skills and understanding of core basic skills so that more of them exceed expectations at this age.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors focus more systematically on the statutory aspects of their roles and responsibilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher, ably supported by senior school leaders, has created a purposeful environment where pupils can thrive and learn well. Together, leaders successfully ensure that there is a constant focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that every child can succeed, whatever their starting point.
- Leaders track the progress of every pupil regularly, identifying gaps in their learning so that a precise approach can be given to pupils who may be falling behind. Leaders organise support for pupils flexibly, with many pupils receiving teaching in small groups. For example, in mental mathematics lessons, pupils are taught in small groups, of differing abilities, so that they can either be supported or challenged appropriately.
- School leaders ensure that a very broad and balanced curriculum is provided, which interests and enthuses the pupils, preparing them well for the next stage of their education. The core curriculum is enhanced by trips and experiences to further develop pupils' confidence and skills. For example, Year 6 pupils attend and perform part of a Shakespeare play at a large theatre each year. Adults consider carefully who will perform, allowing equality and choice to the pupils. This results in often the most vulnerable children challenging themselves to take on difficult roles so they can experience success.
- Themes around equality, tolerance and healthy lifestyles are well woven into the curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils are well equipped in making positive decisions regarding their own lifestyles. Adults provide lessons that focus on children and pupils discussing their views, feelings and opinions in a safe and secure way. Consequently, pupils are very confident and share their views easily and effectively.
- The executive headteacher has ensured that the senior leaders are well trained. They are effective in leading when she is at the neighbouring school. These senior leaders accurately identify the needs of the school and are relentless in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that it continues to improve and pupil achievement remains a focus.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive and proud to promote the school ethos of individualised learning. They use the feedback they receive from leaders well to improve their teaching practice. Teachers are clear about how leaders help them develop and progress in their careers.
- The coordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has ensured that the needs of individual pupils are met consistently. Adults are appropriately trained and these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- School leaders plan for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils exceptionally well. In a whole-school assembly seen, adults were helping pupils develop their tolerance of people from different races and cultures through explaining the work of famous people such as Martin Luther King. During a period of reflection, the pupils were respectful and thoughtful.
- The skilful use of the small amount of pupil premium the school receives ensures effective support and assistance for disadvantaged and looked after pupils. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their learning, both academically and socially. Disadvantaged pupils make progress in reading, writing and mathematics at a similar rate to those nationally and are well prepared for their start at secondary school.
- Sports premium is used very effectively at the school. Pupils experience a wide range of sporting activities, both within school and through extra-curricular activities. They appreciate the opportunities they receive to compete with other schools. Some pupils spoken with during the inspection showed great sportsmanship by stating: 'We don't always do very well but we very much enjoy taking part.' Attendance at the large variety of after-school activities is very high.
- School leaders take advantage of working in partnership with neighbouring schools so that pupils' achievement can be moderated and verified. The school commissions support from the local authority when required. The local authority recognises the strength of the school's work and the efforts taken by all staff to continually improve. They provide suitable support when needed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are effective because they are knowledgeable about the school's work and provide an increasing amount of challenge and support to the leadership. They have an accurate understanding of national data information and ask relevant and challenging questions around the performance of children and pupils.

- Governors ensure that financial arrangements are well documented. They set targets for the headteacher’s performance management in line with statutory expectations.
- Recently governors have become overinvolved in the operational aspects of the school and are at risk of not checking other statutory practices in school well enough. For example, governors do not ensure that the school keeps the website fully compliant at all times. Swift action was taken during the inspection to correct this aspect and it is now fully compliant.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have ensured that the school is a safe and secure place for pupils and staff. Statutory safeguarding arrangements are in place and staff are well trained. They follow procedures well and clearly know how to raise concerns. The leadership team work effectively together to go above and beyond what is expected to keep children safe within their school. Parents who receive support from the school are highly positive about the care and provision they receive. External agencies have a similar view and commend all adults at the school for their accuracy and the quality of advice and attention given to individual pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching continues to improve and develop, and over time is good. In the best lessons seen, teachers have high expectations of what individual pupils can achieve. Teachers explain the learning and challenge tasks clearly and effectively. Consequently, most pupils are able to present their work neatly and make good progress.
- Teachers plan learning that allows pupils to deepen their understanding and practise their skills appropriately across the curriculum. Through the thoughtful planning of activities or ‘challenges’, teachers help pupils to systematically and confidently attempt more difficult work that requires pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. For example, in a spelling lesson seen, there were three different challenges set for exploring the use of words and spelling rules. Pupils were able to choose which task they completed or interested them most. The result was that the pupils settled quickly and enthusiastically to their activity, discussing and grappling with root words and challenging each other to unscramble mixed-up words.
- Teachers consistently have good relationships with the pupils that are built on mutual respect. This allows lessons to flow without the need for stopping to deal with behaviour issues. Teachers skilfully bring the pupils back to listening after a time of learning using a range of effective strategies, so pupils respond swiftly to instruction.
- Through planning interesting topics for pupils to learn, teachers develop pupils’ knowledge and skills in other subjects effectively. For example, in one art lesson seen, pupils were expressing their views and opinions about their own beliefs of God through painting. Pupils were taught the skills of mixing colours as well as responding appropriately and with tolerance to the views of others. Consequently, through the effective artwork they produced, these young pupils sympathetically and respectfully listened to each other’s interpretations, asking questions and debating maturely and sensitively.
- Teachers carefully use the information from regular assessments to determine gaps in learning particularly in subjects such as mathematics. From finding out what pupils do not know, teachers then ensure that they precisely match their teaching to ensure progress.
- Pupils achieve well when learning to read. This is because the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is precise and meticulous. Younger pupils use their knowledge of sounds to help them with early reading skills. Older pupils demonstrate a love of reading and are encouraged to read more challenging texts by Year 6, to ensure readiness for secondary school.
- Pupils benefit from a large number of adults and volunteers who help them to learn either in small groups or individually. These adults provide care and support so that pupils gain confidence and a willingness to try new activities. At times they give the answers too quickly to pupils rather than allowing time for investigation. The progress of some of the more-able pupils slows as a result.
- In subjects other than English, at times the more able are not expected to produce the same level of writing of which they are capable. As a result, these pupils do not extend their own skills and abilities as quickly as they could.

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 are confident and aware of their own strengths and improvement areas because of the choice that adults give to them in choosing their challenge tasks. In one lesson, a teacher told the class that she had been impressed with the good vocabulary and language that the pupils used in discussion. Pupils looked proud and a pupil announced: 'That was me.'
- Pupils are very used to sorting out issues or friendship situations through the effective use of the 'turtle' puppet lessons, where they are encouraged to share their views and opinions sensitively and easily. This forms part of the school's approach to promoting positive emotional well-being. Younger pupils spoke confidently about their personal, social and health education lessons, especially those that promote their thinking skills. As part of a daily routine, pupils participate in giving compliments to another pupil who has been chosen as the star for that day. As a result, pupils generally speak well of each other, and work together with ease.
- Pupils of all ages understand different forms of bullying that could occur. Pupils spoken with knew what to do should any bullying happen at school or when using the internet. They are confident that any adult would sort out the situation. Bullying logs kept by school leaders show that situations are extremely rare and dealt with promptly and well. Parents spoken to during the inspection agree that this is the case at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning, together with their good relationships with each other, ensures that lessons proceed without interruption or distraction. Additional adults provide useful support for pupils, requiring additional assistance with behaviour choices. This results in a purposeful environment where all pupils can thrive.
- Adults make sure that the school environment is vibrant and well presented with suitable displays to help pupils learn. Extra-curricular activities are varied and pupils gain a rich experience by being part of their school community. As a result, pupils look after their school, taking care to keep their school tidy and litter-free.
- Pupils come to school wanting to learn. They walk around the school and speak proudly about their environment. They enjoy choosing their own level of challenge in lessons such as mathematics, together with participating fully in the exciting practical opportunities in lessons such as science. As a result, pupils often extend themselves in their learning.
- Attendance at school is in line with national expectations and school leaders are successful in working with parents to reduce persistent absenteeism for more-vulnerable pupils.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- From their individual starting points, most pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education. Scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of assessment information indicates that most pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children start the early years with skills that vary, but for the majority of children their skills and abilities are broadly typical for their age. Children make good progress, with most moving into Year 1 attaining at least the standards expected for their age, in all areas of learning.
- When they move into Year 1 pupils rapidly build on their knowledge of phonics already established in Reception. Pupils use their understanding of sounds to blend unfamiliar words quickly to help them spell words in their writing. Consequently, when pupils' phonics knowledge is checked in Year 1, they are more successful than other pupils of the same age nationally. School leaders expect this to be the case for this current academic year.
- In 2015, pupils at Key Stage 1 attained significantly above national expectations in all subjects and particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils receive precise and interesting teaching in their mixed classes. Adults ensure that the pupils make good progress and acquire good skills.
- The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. The proportion who made at least expected progress was above other pupils nationally in writing and

mathematics in 2015, with gaps closing on previous years.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because they receive appropriate help and support from trained adults.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils leave the school prepared well for the next stage of their education. In 2015, pupils left the school attaining above the national average for their age in mathematics and writing and broadly in line for reading.
- Progress in reading has been an area for improvement for school leaders due to a dip in results in 2015. Effective action is being taken to increase the results of pupils in this subject area. Pupils listened to during the inspection read fluently and well. They understand texts well and appreciate the new and more challenging books they are experiencing at school. Their progress is accelerating as a result.
- The achievement of the more-able pupils varies across the school. Adults do not consistently expect these pupils to achieve even more, so opportunities to extend their learning are sometimes not planned or missed. For example, pupils do not always have opportunity to extend their writing skills in subjects other than English. As a result, this limits their ability to practise their writing skills further.

Early years provision

is good

- From the moment children enter the school they are well looked after and cared for. This ensures that they settle quickly, listen well to each other and adults, developing their enjoyment of learning and self-confidence.
- In the new nursery provision, adults ensure that policies and procedures are followed so that every child is safe. Although attendance is not statutory for children at this age, staff work effectively with parents so that children attend regularly and are punctual at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Adults know the children well and provide a wide range of exciting activities to positively meet the needs of every individual. As a result, the children, from the age of two, are making good progress in the unit.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development for the children. Adults are skilled and kind in helping children develop good relationships with each other and with the adults in both the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, children learn well together, sharing and taking turns with increasing skill.
- The children have established good friendships and play comfortably together, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Parents spoken to confirmed that their children have made friends easily.
- Children leave Reception with skills and abilities that are above those expected for children of their age nationally, in all areas of learning. This is because adults plan lessons that build children's confidence so they are willing to take risks.
- The outdoor area provides a rich environment for the children to learn and develop their physical skills and abilities. Consequently, children achieve well in developing their gross motor skills and abilities.
- Although there is a great emphasis placed on acquiring vocabulary and developing speech, at times adults do not always rigorously evaluate the impact of their work in the core subjects. This results in some children not being challenged enough in some subjects such as mathematics, so that they can be even better prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	120808
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10009913

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kelvyn Read
Headteacher	Rachel Quick
Telephone number	01493 700215
Website	www.freethorpe.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@freethorpe.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with those who have education, health and care plans, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are significantly below the national average.
- Nursery provision is available on a part-time basis from the age of two. Reception children attend full-time.
- The school meets the government's minimum floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- The team held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior and other key leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, and looked at books to take account of the work and progress that pupils make over time.
- The team observed pupils during play and the lunch break, and heard some of them read. The quality of assemblies was also observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement documents. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress were examined.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils and arrangements for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were examined, including a scrutiny of the single central register.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents from informal conversations on the playground and letters received, as there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors analysed 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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