

St William's Primary School

Williams Loke, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0AJ

Inspection dates

20–21 April 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher, together with her strong leadership team, has transformed the culture of the school. Her high aspirations and determination to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well has united staff and governors in a common vision and secured significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and pupil achievement.
- The governing body are highly focused and effective. They rigorously evaluate themselves and the school with a clear focus on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy learning because teachers plan lessons which are engaging and use resources which will capture pupils' interest and enthusiasms.
- The school has a highly inclusive ethos and strong values are promoted through the 'St William's way'. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to come to school.
- Leaders have created a learning community where there is a commitment to learning at all levels – pupils, staff and governors – and a readiness to draw widely on best practice.
- Parental support for the school is high because leaders have effectively engaged with the whole school community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Assessment within some lessons needs to be more precise so that teachers more rapidly provide support for those pupils who are struggling, and opportunities for the most-able pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and keen to develop their subjects, but are only beginning to develop their roles in monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement.
- Teaching and learning in some subjects, such as art and history, are not of the same high standard as in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers use assessment more precisely within lessons to check pupils' understanding so that the most-able pupils are challenged and those who are struggling are supported more rapidly.
- Further develop the role of middle leaders in monitoring achievement and in planning and implementing further improvements in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- Ensure that the strategies for good teaching used in English and mathematics are applied to all subjects more consistently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership for the school. Together with her leadership team, she has transformed the school's culture, ensuring that all staff and governors share her ambition for every pupil to achieve well. Leaders draw widely on best practice, identifying examples from schools locally and beyond and using these to develop the school further.
- Leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on the careful checking of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement carried out by the leadership team. Formal checks are carried out through lesson observations but sometimes these are informal: for example, through drop-in visits to lessons or by senior leaders teaching classes to release staff for professional development. Leaders have used this detailed information to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is now good.
- Plans for improvement identify and address the correct areas for improvement. The pace of improvement has been rapid but leaders have also ensured that each new development is firmly embedded before introducing new initiatives. They continually evaluate and alter plans so that further improvements are made. They regularly collect the views of parents, pupils and staff, and act on the feedback received, publicising through their 'You said, we did' reports.
- Staff value the professional development provided for them and welcome feedback to improve their practice. Staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were unanimously positive about the support they receive from leaders. They feel valued and appreciated. One member of staff wrote, 'I feel honoured to be part of the school.' Leaders' focus on improvement has successfully created a learning community where staff and governors share a passion for learning and are determined to continue to improve further.
- Parents are highly positive about the school and the impact of leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school. One parent spoken to during the inspection told inspectors that the school had been 'turned around' by the headteacher and this view was echoed by many others. Parents particularly value the time teachers take to talk to them about the progress that their child is making during the six-weekly pupils' progress meetings that are held for every pupil.
- Sports funding has been well used to increase participation in sports within school and by increasing participation in competitions with other schools. During the inspection, one of the girls' football teams returned joyfully after coming first in an inter-schools competition for the first time. Sports and fitness have a high profile in the school: for example, key stage 2 pupils take part in fitness activities every morning which they told inspectors they enjoy and feel has helped them become fitter.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used appropriately: for example, to develop the role of a pastoral support worker to ensure that disadvantaged pupils take part in out-of-school activities and to provide additional support, particularly in key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress by the time they leave the school. However, this funding has not been sufficiently focused on supporting pupils in key stage 1 to ensure that they make more rapid progress and to improve the attendance of the very small number of disadvantaged pupils who are absent too frequently.
- Middle leaders are very enthusiastic about the subjects they lead but have yet to develop their role fully. Some have had too few opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subject through lesson observations. Some middle leaders do not have a clear picture of standards in their subjects because assessment systems are still being developed. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning in some subjects, such as art and history, is not of the same good standard as in English and mathematics.
- Teachers receive clear and appropriate feedback from lesson observations which helps them to improve their practice. Sometimes this feedback is focused too closely on the individual lesson seen and does not reflect sufficiently on the impact of teaching on learning over time.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors provide a high level of challenge and support for the school. They responded to the recommendations made at the previous inspection, commissioned a review of their work and have acted effectively to improve their practice.
 - Governors, ably led by the chair of the governing body, keep a strong focus on teaching and learning, and on evaluating provision for pupils. They invite pupils to present to their meetings so that meetings remain child-centred. Meetings end with all governors responding to the question, 'How has this meeting added value to outcomes for children?'

- Governors visit the school regularly with a very clear agenda for each visit. They meet with leaders and look closely at pupils’ assessment information and so have a very accurate understanding of where the school currently is on its improvement journey.
- Governors track financial decisions carefully. They make difficult decisions regarding where funding should be used and are fully able to articulate the reasons for decisions, and the positive outcomes from these. For example, governors agreed to invest in improving the school’s learning environment and were able to talk knowledgeably about how this improved behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Governors carry out their duties in relation to performance management with rigour. They expect strong evidence to justify any teacher moving up the pay scale and do not reward underperformance.
- Governors evaluate their own performance rigorously. They appointed an external governor who regularly provides them with feedback on their work upon which they act rapidly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school makes keeping pupils safe a top priority. All statutory requirements are met and staff at the school are checked appropriately. Careful records of concerns are maintained and these are acted on in a timely manner, liaising with external agencies as appropriate. Pupils say they feel very safe at school and their parents agree that this is the case. Staff are regularly trained and understand exactly what they should do if they have a concern about a pupil. As a result, pupils are kept safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This is because leaders have provided training and support to improve teachers’ practice. They have made their expectations clear and held teachers to account for standards achieved. Leaders have created a climate where teachers and support staff are determined to continually improve and act on comments and suggestions made to help them.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics in particular. For example, teachers are able to explain about different parts of sentences, and how figurative language is used by writers to create atmosphere for readers.
- Teachers take time to plan interesting lessons and to select the resources that they use so that lessons are engaging for pupils. For example, in Year 6, pupils were learning about grammar and the teacher had prepared pictures which captured pupils’ interest so that they completed the task well and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with the school’s policy. This is having a positive impact on learning as pupils respond to teachers’ comments and as a result improve their subsequent work. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective about their learning, and to assess their own progress and that of others. One pupil demonstrated this by writing in their mathematics book, ‘I wanted to try the harder method for calculating, but I got muddled so have gone back to using a number line for now.’ This information enabled the teacher to address the errors with the pupil in the following lesson and so move learning on.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, particularly where lessons are well matched to pupils’ needs. They willingly complete tasks given to them and are keen to learn.
- Support staff provide good support for learning. They ask questions and encourage pupils to think for themselves about their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported by teachers and support staff, and so make good progress.
- Where teachers provide opportunities for pupils to select challenges for themselves, pupils do so with confidence. This is because teachers have created an atmosphere where pupils feel able to say they are not yet sure about a concept and need more practice, or that they feel ready to move on to greater challenge.
- Homework is used to enhance learning, particularly in key stage 2 where homework tasks often require pupils to apply skills they have learned in school to different concepts. For example, pupils who had been learning about information texts were asked to research about an animal and present this information in a way that would appeal to younger children. This challenged pupils to think carefully about the language they used and best methods for presenting facts for the specific audience.

- By Year 6, pupils are competent and confident readers but leaders are aware that some boys are less engaged by reading and so are not achieving as well. As a result, developing a love of reading has been a key focus for the school and reading has a high profile. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading. The teaching of reading is good although some pupils in Year 2, who did not achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics assessment, have not been helped to acquire the skills they need to blend sounds to make words when reading. This is because assessment information in reading is not used as precisely by all teachers to identify next steps in reading as it is in writing and mathematics.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use assessment with sufficient precision to check pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils who are struggling are not always given support swiftly enough, and the most able are not given additional challenges when they are ready to move on.
- The quality of teaching and learning in some subjects, such as history and art, is not of the same good standard as in English and mathematics. This is because teachers sometimes focus lessons on activities rather than on the concepts that are being taught, and are not always planning lessons to meet pupils' differing needs.

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 enjoy their learning. They are given opportunities to reflect on their learning through the feedback they provide to teachers and receive from teachers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know whom to speak to if they have any concerns. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including when using technologies such as the internet and mobile phones, because the school regularly teaches them about these issues. Pupils also learn about safety in a range of different contexts such as road safety.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that any problems between pupils are resolved swiftly by staff.
- The school promotes positive values, including British values, through the '7 Cs'. Pupils were able to talk to inspectors about the importance of craftsmanship, for example, relating it to improving their writing and being proud of working to secure improvements. The 'St William's way', reflecting the school's values, is known and respected by all at the school.
- Leaders have put in place systems to help support vulnerable pupils and their families. The pastoral support worker speaks regularly with parents and identifies with them any barriers to pupils' learning, including family problems and attendance issues.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions and demonstrate respect for the views and ideas of others. Projects such as the Shakespeare project, where some pupils were learning the story about Romeo and Juliet, are used as vehicles for teaching about making decisions, and the consequences of actions. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their social skills. For example Year 6 pupils lead circle times for younger pupils. Some Year 6 pupils talked about this very positively, explaining how it benefited younger pupils because they developed bonds with older pupils acting as role models. They also reflected on the benefits for themselves as they develop a strong sense of responsibility.
- Occasionally, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as good because lessons are not well matched to their needs and teachers do not intervene quickly enough to help them when they do not understand.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. A small number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties are managed well so that they do not disturb the learning of others. As a result, pupils told inspectors that disruption to lessons is extremely rare. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, also agree that behaviour at the school is good.
- Attendance at the school is above national averages because leaders encourage good attendance through certificates and rewards. The pastoral support worker talks with parents to identify why pupils are absent or late and helps plan support where appropriate. However, despite this, leaders recognise that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent is still above that found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics has risen since the time of the previous inspection. In 2015 in Year 6, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above that found nationally. This is because the quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. By the end of Year 6, pupils make progress which is as good as, or better than, the progress of pupils nationally.
- Pupils in Year 2 also achieved better than pupils nationally in 2015 and the proportion of pupils who achieved above the expected standard increased. In Year 1, the proportion of pupils who met the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics assessment improved but remains below that found nationally. Leaders have identified reading as a priority for improvement and actions taken are having a positive impact on improving the standard of reading in Year 1 and across the school.
- The majority of pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work seen on inspection shows that feedback provided by teachers has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the vast majority respond and produce work of a good standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress particularly in key stage 2 because teachers identify their needs quickly and address them. Support in key stage 1 is not always as consistently planned and so a small number of disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not making progress as rapidly as they could.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported in the school and so make good progress from their starting points. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.
- Leaders identified that the achievement of boys has been below that of girls in reading and writing, and have successfully implemented strategies to address this. However, in writing some boys do not take enough care in their punctuation and grammar and so their writing is not always to the standard that they are capable of.
- Occasionally, the progress of the most-able pupils is not as rapid as it could be because teachers do not intervene quickly enough during lessons to provide additional challenges and to deepen understanding.
- In some subjects, such as art and history, pupils do not achieve as well as in English and mathematics because some lessons do not focus sufficiently on the skills and concepts that pupils need to learn.

Early years provision

is good

- The majority of children enter the Reception classes with skills which are broadly typical for their age. Improvements to provision in Reception have increased achievement significantly. Children make good progress throughout the year so that by the end of Reception the proportion achieving a good level of development is now above the national average.
- The Reception classrooms are attractive and engaging learning environments with a well-planned outdoor space which is well managed.
- Activities planned are appropriate and provide interest and challenge. There is a good balance of adult-led and independent activities which children enjoy.
- Children are confident and keen to talk with each other and with adults. They are sociable and play together sensibly. They are able to share resources and take turns. They respond readily to adults' directions. For example, when the teacher indicated it was time to tidy up, children quickly stopped their play and took responsibility for tidying up.
- Children are given encouragement to solve problems. For example, two boys were using drain pipes to make ramps for cars and grappling with how to make cars travel down one ramp and up the next. They showed persistence and resilience each time they encountered a problem.
- Adults intervene appropriately to extend learning. They ask questions and probe children's thinking.
- Children are kept safe in the Reception classes. Adults have a good knowledge of children's needs and care for children well.
- Learning journals carefully record children's achievements and are well used to plan further learning. Parents are encouraged to support learning through home learning tasks.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the good arrangements for transition into school and said that their children had settled well.

- The leader for early years has a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development that need to be addressed. She plans for improvement effectively.
- Some teaching staff are relatively new to the school. They now have a clear picture of the needs of each child and are using this information to ensure that the proportion of children who achieve beyond the expected standard for their age increases further.

School details

Unique reference number	120859
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10011838

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Gardner
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Sarah Shirras
Telephone number	01603 434128
Website	www.st-williams.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-williams.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability supported through a statement or education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in classes, assembly and at playtime. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning, and a range of school documents.
- Inspectors met with a selection of parents in the playground and with some pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors heard a small number of pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority and with two members of the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff, arrangements for e-safety (keeping children safe online when using electronic media) and risk assessments undertaken for educational visits.
- The views of 67 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into account and the views of 23 staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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