

# Wimbotsham and Stow Community School

Chapel Lane, Wimbotsham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3QH

## Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has improved the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- The majority of teaching is good and therefore pupils make good progress in learning both across year groups and across the curriculum.
- All teaching staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and their feedback helps pupils to learn well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about how they are challenged to develop successful learning skills. They respond positively to teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Governors know the school well and challenge leaders effectively to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Sometimes, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make fast progress because some staff do not have consistently high expectations or show enough initiative in challenging them.
- There are some gaps in pupils' attainment between the different areas of learning in the early years.
- Disadvantaged pupils get the help they need, and as a result they make similar progress to other pupils nationally who have similar starting points.
- Children settle quickly into the early years and are happy and positive about learning. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils are well behaved both in the classroom and around the school. They are confident, polite and eager to be in their school and are prepared well for the next stage of their education by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils feel safe. Adults provide effective care and support throughout the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Although pupils' work demonstrates good progress in a range of subjects, teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress is less systematic across the curriculum than in English and mathematics.

## Full report

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

- Extend the effective practice for monitoring progress in English and mathematics to cover all subjects across the curriculum.
- Refine short-term planning to meet the specific needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
  - defining more clearly the roles of all staff engaged in working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that staff are confident in using their initiative to promote pupils' progress
  - developing individualised plans to make sure that the full range of pupils' special educational needs is met more rapidly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and other senior leaders know the school well and have identified the school's strengths and areas for development. Effective action is taken to address any weaknesses. Leaders have created a culture where staff are ambitious for all pupils.
- The executive headteacher has developed leadership capacity across the federation of small schools so that curriculum expertise is shared and fostered. Leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This means that the school uses its leadership resources well to target key areas for improvement. For example, the head of school fully understands the strengths and areas for improvement for the teaching of mathematics she is leading across three schools. This has enabled her to provide useful feedback to teachers, which has helped them to improve pupil progress.
- Leaders also take a full part in leadership of two clusters of local schools around two secondary schools. This means that staff receive high-quality shared training, and are able to work collaboratively to check that teacher assessments are accurate. It also supports pupils to move smoothly to their next stage in education at the end of Year 6.
- Staff performance management is appropriately aligned to the school's priorities and the progress in learning of pupils in their classes, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. Staff training is regular, linked to individual teachers' needs and provided at different levels so that all staff are able to improve their knowledge and skills. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is effective and varied. Topics are carefully chosen which engage pupils in learning about both the local and wider world; for example, learning about Fenland traditions through stories and dance, and exploring a wide range of African cultures and traditions. Leaders are reflective about the curriculum and in the last academic year, for example, introduced an effective strategy for learning science across subjects. For example, Years 5 to 6 pupils developed English comprehension skills while learning about Isaac Newton.
- Writing is taught consistently well across subjects, and all pupils gain a good understanding of language diversity. This was seen with pupils in key stage 2 learning simple French phrases well, encouraged through their keen participation in the annual modern foreign languages day.
- The school is clear about its core values and communicates them well to pupils, parents and staff. Pupils demonstrate this through respectful relationships with others, and showing that they are part of a reflective and successful learning community. Pupils are constantly encouraged to reflect on how they learn well. This results in pupils progressing well in their learning.
- British values are taught well across the curriculum and encouraged, for example through the democratically elected school council. All staff have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve, and consider that the school is well led and managed. They feel that they are well supported and treated fairly and with respect.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are met through a wide range of opportunities. Leaders understand that the school is located in a rural and mainly White British community, and adapt the curriculum and wider activities to prepare

pupils well for life in a diverse modern Britain.

- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that the small number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum from their varying starting points. This includes the most able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are eligible for the pupil premium. The effectiveness of interventions is monitored and this makes sure that they provide good value for money. The most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also provided with effective support, leading to good achievement.
- Leaders use the additional sport premium funding appropriately to enhance the provision of sport and physical education. For example, it is used to offer after-school sports clubs run by qualified coaches shared across the local cluster of schools, and all pupils take part in an annual 'Olympics' across the federation. A high proportion of pupils take part in extra sports activities and local 'cluster' competitions.
- The before- and after-school provision supports working parents well and provides a good start to the school day for disadvantaged pupils. One parent commented that she knows her daughter is 'well looked after and taught well in all subjects from 8am until 4pm'.
- The capacity of the school to improve has been increased by working closely with the local authority as part of its 'better to best' school improvement programme.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school is effective.
- The governing body is made up of members with diverse professional experience, which is used well. For example, skills in analysis and statistics are used to review and challenge on pupil outcomes information, so that the governing body is stringent in holding the school to account on how well pupils learn.
- Governors make planned visits to classes, look at examples of pupils' learning in their books, and talk with pupils and their parents about their views. This means that governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what will make it even better. Governors make use of a detailed evidence base, which is used effectively to check that funding is used well.
- Governors are highly trained and challenge each other to enhance their skills. Governors focus their activities and visits to include visiting federation schools which they are less familiar with, to provide them with more challenge and 'a fresh pair of eyes'. As a result, the governing body is highly reflective and has a better understanding of the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe and happy because safeguarding is taken seriously by all leaders and there is a caring culture across all aspects of the school.
- All parents say that their children are happy, safe and secure.
- The school is rigorous in ensuring that pupils are protected on the internet. This is both in school through effective online filters and teaching and at home by guiding parents about safe internet use.
- Pupils are safe because leaders ensure that all staff are well trained across all aspects of safeguarding, with expectations that safeguarding is a high priority.

- Pupils are safe on school visits and out-of-school activities because leaders carefully assess risks and take appropriate actions.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm to sustain pupils' interest in learning. Eagerness for learning is fostered by the school's focus on developing pupils' behaviour, helping them to reflect regularly on how they learn best. As a result of teachers' focus on how their pupils learn best, pupils make good progress. For example, in a Years 5 to 6 mathematics lesson, pupils responded well to being encouraged to become even more resilient when carrying out mental calculations.
- Staff are clear about their expectations, challenging pupils and encouraging them to stretch themselves to learn as well as they can. Pupils' books show examples of this, where pupils have initially chosen a low challenge level, but have been encouraged to achieve successfully at a higher level. Pupils help each other well in their learning.
- There has been an improvement in the systematic teaching of phonics, which has raised outcomes in reading by the end of key stage 1. Leaders have clear expectations of how phonics should be taught and are rigorous in addressing any gaps in teachers' knowledge and skills, including those of support staff teaching small groups. The current teaching staff in key stage 1 are new to the school, but leaders have quickly set up a programme of support to model the way that the school expects phonics to be taught across the federation.
- Teachers use a wide range of reading resources, and pupils value the school library and class libraries. Teachers plan opportunities to transfer pupils' reading skills into developing their writing skills across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are progressing well in writing, but the leaders recognise that there is room for even more improvement.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well supported by the mathematics leader. Pupils are encouraged to think about how they learn best and to apply their learning to problem solving. Pupils were seen demonstrating a high level of challenge when solving mathematics problems in a Year 3 lesson, reaching a target four-digit number by creating a series of calculations aided by a dice.
- Teachers make sure that pupils know how to improve their work, using assessment information to plan pupils' next steps in learning. Written and verbal feedback is given in accordance with the school's policy, which helps pupils to address any misconceptions.
- Teachers mostly use support staff well to ensure that pupils make good progress and that the specific learning requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met. Support staff generally use questions appropriately to extend pupils' learning and encourage pupils to become independent in learning, but there are occasions when support staff do not intervene quickly enough to support understanding.
- The school develops displays around the school to reflect current learning. An example of where this is effective was seen in a Years 3 to 4 mathematics lesson where pupils recapped how they had calculated a division sum the day before by using their 'working wall'.
- Provision for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is

good. The school's planning for levels of challenge in all lessons means that the most able have clear expectations and opportunities to excel. As a result, the majority of the most able pupils progress well. Parents commented that their children receive the right level of challenge.

- Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. They are informed of the half-termly homework targets across the range of curriculum areas. For example they received guidance on how to help their children with mathematics, leading to improved outcomes in the classroom. The vast majority of parents think that their children receive appropriate homework for their age.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All parents feel that their children are safe, happy and secure in the school. One parent commented that the school has supported her child with 'flexibility and also ensuring that he receives the right level of challenge'. Pupils also agree that they feel safe and that they know who to go to if they have any concerns. All staff have comprehensive and regularly updated training on all aspects of child protection. They are confident about noticing any signs that a pupil might be at risk.
- Neither pupils, parents nor staff have concerns that there is bullying in the school. Some pupils talk of historic bullying, but are confident that this has been fully addressed by the new leaders in the school. Pupils think that any incidents are addressed quickly by adults. Pupils are able to explain clearly what bullying is and do not consider that there are any prejudice-based incidents. This aligns with what is evident from the school's own comprehensive record-keeping.
- Pupils are encouraged to be responsible and take care of each other. For example, in the breakfast club pupils mix well across all ages and genders and support each other to complete activities. Pupils mix well in classrooms, but the organisation of unstructured activities in the playground leads to the less robust children being unable to take full advantage of resources such as the climbing frame.
- Pupils take pride in their school and are confident and self-assured when talking about what they value about it.
- Pupils benefit from shared activities and sports across two clusters of primary schools around local secondary schools and their own federation of three schools. They are confident and well prepared for transfer to secondary education.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know what behaviour expectations are and can explain how the behaviour policy works. They particularly like the 'behaviour zones' which provide them with a visual reminder of how well every pupil is behaving each day in the classroom. As a result, there are improvements in the behaviour of individuals or groups with particular behaviour issues. This is further supported by the pastoral support adviser working alongside families. Most parents and staff think that behaviour is well managed in

school.

- Where pupils have behaviour issues related to specific social and emotional needs, the school quickly puts support in place to help pupils improve their behaviour. This includes working effectively with families to learn what works best for their child.
- Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. The school ensures that their induction process helps new staff to quickly develop a thorough understanding of how the school addresses behaviour as a priority. As a result, behaviour around the school is good. Play- and lunchtimes are appropriately supervised.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous. Parents support the view that this is the case. Expectations of behaviour are modelled by all adults in the school and are built on strong relationships and listening carefully to pupils. There is an expectation that the environment is orderly and this contributes to pupils' good behaviour across the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved since the last inspection through the development of the school's policies and the relentless daily focus on how good behaviour helps pupils to improve their learning in each subject.
- The attendance of pupils has improved since the previous inspection, so that it is broadly in line with national figures. The school has a comprehensive system to monitor the attendance both of groups of pupils and individuals, so that attendance patterns are identified and addressed. Where there is poor attendance of vulnerable pupils the school has acted quickly to support families through its pastoral support adviser. As a result, there has been improved attendance of individuals and better engagement of families in the work of the school.
- Parents commented on specific cases where the pastoral support adviser has helped their children well during difficult circumstances. The few cases of persistent absence have been addressed appropriately.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Leaders have secured further improvements in outcomes since the last inspection, and pupils make good progress across the school.
- Results in the national phonics screening check, in Years 1 and 2, have improved over the last three years. Most pupils who struggle to achieve in Year 1, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive effective additional support and achieve well in Year 2. In-school information shows that for pupils who do not perform well in reading in the early years there is a marked improvement by the time they reach the end of Year 1. This is linked to effective and systematic teaching of phonics.
- Standards in reading across the school are broadly in line with national results and have been improving over time. Outcomes in key stage 2 in reading are higher than for writing and mathematics. As a result, the school has been focusing on the development of writing. In-school assessment information shows that pupils are responding well to writing activities, such as the school's 'hot and cold writing' initiative, and this has improved progress in writing within year groups.
- The school has focused on increasing the level of challenge in mathematics and as a result in-year progress has improved. The most able readers are able to explain clearly

how they have progressed well in reading because they have access to a wide range of books and are encouraged to develop their reading skills even more.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils from their varying starting points is mostly good. As it is a small school, there are few pupils from different groups in each year. There is no significant difference in the attainment or progress of disadvantaged pupils at any key stage over time. The most able disadvantaged pupils perform well.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved across year groups through well-targeted support, although the numbers in this group are very small. The school carefully monitors their progress, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to improve learning. However, not enough checks are made on the relative effectiveness of different interventions and leaders are not always clear about which strategies are the most effective across the school.
- There are very small numbers of pupils in each group, and so the school considers the very specific needs of individuals and the impact of actions to address them. As the school knows its pupils well, it is able to demonstrate that its strategies to improve the rate of pupils' progress are effective. Leaders can identify which groups are making more than expected progress.
- Pupils make good progress in science, history, geography and religious education. There is also evidence of good progress in the wider curriculum, such as in music.
- Outcomes information at the end of the early years, and in key stages 1 and 2, shows that pupils are being well prepared for their next stage in education. Any gaps in a particular curriculum area are quickly identified and rapidly addressed before the end of the next key stage. For example, the high levels of oral communication and language skills of children in the early years provide a useful stepping-stone to developing reading and writing in key stage 1.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Effective leadership ensures that children are quickly settled into the early years. Parents value the way that older pupils from Years 5 and 6 act as buddies and support their children to feel confident about their new environment. A parent of a new early years child stated that: 'The teacher and other staff in her class clearly care for and nurture each child, and the behaviour before and after school shows the nurturing environment continues throughout'.
- Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe. They listen carefully to each other and to adults. The children had only been in school for two weeks at the time of the inspection, but they had already settled into established routines and understood expectations of their behaviour.
- The early years leader plans teaching well, making sure that all adults work together and check regularly on how well children are learning. Activities are planned effectively and are well considered, but staff also respond capably to children's interests, ideas and learning. For example, when children created a spaceship out of packing crates and cartons, they were encouraged to learn the 'a' sound while following an astronaut theme and then move on to write a story about a spaceship. As a result, the children became highly engaged in their learning.
- Children's progress in all areas of the curriculum is closely monitored, and opportunities



are set up to help them improve. There are consistent experiences for children to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, although varying proportions of children achieve a good level of development in reading and writing due to fluctuating starting points, they make good progress overall. They are well prepared, in their literacy and numeracy as well as socially and emotionally, for the start of key stage 1.

- There is some variation in outcomes across the curriculum. Children attain a higher level of development in their listening and understanding than in reading and writing, although the school is addressing this through planning and developing its curriculum further.
- Children choose activities with care and are also guided well by adults, so that there is free movement between learning areas, including between the indoor and outdoor environment. Children have access to a wide range of experiences in the well-planned outdoor learning space. This encourages them to use literacy and numeracy skills in their play, as well as to develop their physical and coordination skills. Children are confident and eager to share and talk about what they have explored with adults.
- Adults support the development of children's vocabulary through effective questioning and modelling. For example, children were encouraged to describe what had happened when water was poured on beads to make them swell and to compare them after they had grown in size overnight. This support helps the children to think about their learning and to become increasingly inquisitive.
- Parents are encouraged to speak with early years staff about how well their children are achieving. One parent commented that, 'Staff know children very well and care is taken to care for children as individuals'. As a result, there is a strong partnership between the school and the children's families.

## School details

Unique reference number	120893
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10019606

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robyn Press
Headteacher	Alison Hughes (executive headteacher), Louise Arrowsmith (head of school)
Telephone number	01366 382 336
Website	<a href="http://www.wimbotshamstow.norfolk.sch.uk/">www.wimbotshamstow.norfolk.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@wimbotshamstow.norfolk.sch.uk">head@wimbotshamstow.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14–15 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is part of the Bridges Federation of three primary schools and one pre-school.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium is below average.
- Early years provision is full time for children in the Reception Year.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club on-site under the federation's governance.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons in all classes. All observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils and informal conversations took place with pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 16 responses to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. The inspector observed a parent information meeting. The questionnaires completed by 13 members of staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Linda Bartlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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