

Nelson Infant School

Northumberland Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4EH

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Strengths in some classes and subjects are not evident in all, and not all teachers share equally high expectations of pupils' achievement.
- Many leaders are new to their role and have yet to take a lead in ensuring that teaching and learning are good in the area for which they are responsible.
- Governors have not been sufficiently insistent that improvements take place quickly enough.
- Not enough is done to improve the areas where children are weakest in the early years, especially through activities outside.
- The progress of some pupils, particularly the most able and some who are disadvantaged, is not rapid enough in English and mathematics.
- The attendance of some pupils is not high enough. Leaders in the past have not done enough to tackle pupils' absences, although recent steps taken to improve attendance are showing signs of positive impact.
- Progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is inconsistent because, in some classes, teachers do not know clearly enough what pupils have already learned and so cannot plan effectively to develop skills and understanding over time.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher brings energy and determination and has already begun to make effective improvements, which are wholeheartedly supported by the school community.
- Pupils' personal development is catered for well. Pupils are given particularly good opportunities to develop their social skills and to learn about how to take care of themselves and others.
- The school is a safe and caring place where pupils feel safe. Positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. The majority of pupils behave well and pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with social and emotional needs, are well met.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have equally high expectations of pupils in all classes and across subjects
 - more frequent opportunities for problem solving and reasoning are provided in mathematics
 - assessment is better used to plan lessons which meet all pupils' needs including the most able, and is used to move learning on within lessons
 - adults are used more effectively in some classes to support learning in whole-class time and during group work.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - lessons engage and interest pupils more consistently
 - learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is better used by teachers to plan subsequent lessons which better develop pupils' skills over time
 - activities in the early years classes, particularly those outdoors, are better focused on developing those skills where children are weakest so that progress improves further.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the role of new leaders is developed so that they take a lead in improving teaching and learning and pupils' progress
 - leaders' monitoring is used more effectively so that all staff are held to account for the standards achieved
 - governors provide greater challenge for leaders in accelerating the rate of improvement
 - plans to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils are reviewed and sharpened so that their progress is accelerated
 - leaders improve attendance by working with parents and following up absences more rigorously.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher took up her position at the beginning of January, barely three weeks prior to the inspection. She has high expectations of herself, of staff and of pupils. She has quickly identified the areas where the school requires improvement and set about tackling these with rigour and determination. Staff are firmly behind this drive for improvement as shown by the highly positive responses to the staff questionnaire issued by Ofsted during the inspection. However, there has not been time for these early efforts to show impact and, consequently, teaching and learning are not consistently good.
- Many leaders are new to their role and are at an early stage in developing their understanding of what to look for when checking teaching and learning. They are keen to play a fuller part in improving the school than they have been able to in the past, and are using the advice and support of the headteacher and the local authority to ensure that rapid action is taken to secure improvements.
- Previous checks on teaching and learning have not been rigorous enough and have not identified the key areas that teachers need to focus on to improve pupils' progress. Consequently, performance management has not been used effectively to secure improvements. The headteacher has created a structured programme for checking teaching and learning, observing teaching and looking at pupils' work together with her new leadership team. This is only just being implemented and so has yet to demonstrate its impact in building on existing good practice and addressing inconsistencies.
- Pupil premium funding has been used appropriately to support some disadvantaged pupils – for example, by providing nurture groups, additional teaching assistant support and support in the 'garden room'. However, leaders have not closely looked at the individual needs of each pupil for whom funding is provided, and planned support which is sufficiently well matched for each one. For example, no provision has been made to support the most able disadvantaged pupils. The lack of tailored support has meant that some disadvantaged pupils have not made the rapid progress needed to reach or exceed the expected standards in each year group.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well used to support their needs. Leaders carefully consider how best to support these pupils and ensure that support is evaluated to check that it has a positive impact.
- Parents are highly supportive of the headteacher. Those spoken to during the inspection commented that she is accessible and communicates well, and that they have already noticed a real and positive change in how the school is operating. One parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, wrote that the headteacher's 'energy and purpose are the school's main advantage'. A few parents who responded would welcome more information about the progress their child is making in school.

- A broad curriculum is in place with some interesting learning opportunities. For example, pupils enjoy learning outdoors as part of 'forest schools', exploring the natural world and working together cooperatively. Pupils are well supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is particularly the case in their social and moral development. The curriculum is planned to include key elements from the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award, which focuses on pupils understanding their rights and responsibilities.
- Pupils learn about British values – for example, electing school council members – and about respect for others and the rule of law in assemblies. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided through after-school sports clubs and the curriculum is also enhanced by trips and visitors. As a result, pupils enjoy learning in different contexts and about different subjects.
- The sports premium funding is well used to improve pupils' enjoyment of and participation in physical activities. Uses include the provision of specialist sports coaches and a range of after-school clubs which pupils enjoy. As a result, pupils enjoy sports and know the importance of keeping themselves fit and healthy.

Governance

- Governors are very committed to the school and have sought to support the previous leadership in moving the school forward. They have carried out visits to check aspects of the school's work and met with leaders to discuss pupils' progress and achievement. However, they have not been insistent that improvements take place as swiftly as they should in relation to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Governors recognise that more rapid improvements are needed and are highly supportive of the new headteacher in implementing changes.
- During the period of handover of leadership, governors have not ensured that some statutory responsibilities have been fulfilled. For example, governors know how funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used. However, they did not check that a review of the impact of the pupil premium funding for last year had been carried out and so were unable to identify where funding had been best used and where it was less effective. Governors had not checked that the latest safeguarding policy, which had been agreed by them, was put on the school's website so that parents could access the most up-to-date policy.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe has a high priority in the school. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded appropriately, and the headteacher checks the records of these. All staff receive regular training and updates regarding safeguarding. Staff, including those recently appointed, know what to look for that may indicate a pupil is at risk and what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Records for any pupil about whom there are concerns are well maintained and demonstrate that effective action is taken to follow up any concerns with outside agencies where necessary.

- Risk assessments are carried out, for example for swimming lessons and for trips, to ensure that any possible issues are considered and risks minimised. Pupils said that school is a safe place and that there is someone to speak to if they are upset or worried. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child is safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning is not consistently good across all classes or in all subjects. While in some classes, teachers have high expectations of the work that pupils produce, in others expectations are not as high. Consequently, the quality of pupils' work and the progress they make varies.
- In some classes, the most able pupils are not given work which challenges them sufficiently. Sometimes, these pupils complete tasks which are the same as those for others, and are not expected to move on quickly to harder tasks. Occasionally tasks are too hard for least-able pupils. This is because some teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. In general, however, teachers plan lessons carefully and provide the resources needed to help pupils learn.
- Sometimes additional adults do not support learning well enough, for example by not checking on the progress pupils are making in lessons sufficiently. Evidence in pupils' books shows that sometimes pupils have worked with an adult, but have still reversed letters or numbers without the adult correcting this during the lesson.
- Additional adults provide good support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with behavioural difficulties. They work with them with patience, knowing when to intervene and when to provide pupils with more space and independence.
- Some additional support provided to pupils out of class, while of good quality, disrupts other learning because it takes place during the introduction to lessons. This means that some pupils miss key pieces of the teacher's explanation of what to do and so have difficulties when rejoining the class.
- The teaching of phonics is variable because some adults do not have sufficient expertise in this area. For example, during the inspection, pupils were given words to practise particular sounds. The words chosen were too hard for pupils of their age and pupils did not know if they were real words or not, even though they were expected to sort them according to this.
- Well-structured learning which moves learning on briskly is evident in some classes but not all. For example, where pupils are given independent time, they are not regularly provided with a range of activities that will extend their skills and so regularly choose those that they are comfortable with and do not challenge them. No additional adult intervenes to extend their learning within these tasks. As a result, time in these sessions is not well used and pupils make limited progress.

- In some classes, lessons do not capture pupils' imagination and interest and so pupils make slow progress. Where teaching is stronger, however, tasks are engaging and interesting. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were motivated to write their story because the teacher had modelled her own version effectively and with enthusiasm. In these classes, pupils produce good-quality work and make good progress.
- Evidence of teaching and learning in some subjects, such as science, is limited because learning in practical lessons is not captured. Consequently, some teachers are not able to identify clearly what pupils have learned and use this to plan further learning so that pupils develop their skills progressively over time. Nonetheless, teaching in some subjects other than English and mathematics is strong with pupils given interesting and challenging opportunities for learning. For example, good learning in design and technology was seen where pupils designed and made dragons exploring different materials. Pupils' books demonstrated that in some classes pupils develop their artistic skills through exploring pencil marks and applying them to sketches.
- Teachers and other adults have good relationships with pupils, taking time to talk with and listen to them. Because of this, the majority of pupils behave well, and are eager to please their teachers and to carry out their tasks. Those pupils who have particular issues with their behaviour are managed well so that they do not disturb the learning of others.
- In some mathematics classes, opportunities for reasoning about numbers and for solving problems and puzzles are too limited. As a result, pupils do not deepen their knowledge and skills in mathematics and do not make as much progress as they could. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Teachers set up attractive and engaging reading areas which are well resourced. Teachers read stories regularly so that pupils develop a love of stories and enthusiasm for reading. This is having a positive impact. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were reading independently and were engrossed in their books. Some pupils spoken to during the inspection said how much they enjoy reading and listening to their teacher reading. This is helping to improve the progress that pupils are making in reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured that developing pupils' confidence and positive attitudes to learning have a high priority. Teachers talk with pupils regularly about trying their best and the majority of pupils respond accordingly. Pupils show confidence in talking with adults and say that they enjoy learning.
- Family support workers help parents and pupils by discussing concerns and helping overcome difficulties such as accessing medical support and getting pupils to school on time. Pastoral support workers also make a valuable contribution, particularly to helping those pupils who have emotional needs.

- Support provided in the 'garden room' for pupils with behavioural difficulties is of high quality. Pupils are provided with appropriate work and support within a caring and nurturing environment. Adults ensure that pupils who spend time here still access the curriculum appropriate to their needs and so pupils thrive.
- Pupils learn about safety and how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology such as the internet. For example, pupils told inspectors that they know what to do if they come across something inappropriate online and what information they should keep private from others.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about what bullying is and is not. Pupils spoke to during the inspection told inspectors that playtimes are happy times. They said that bullying is rare in school and that adults sort out any incidents of poor behaviour that take place. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that the school deals well with incidents, although a few parents feel that sometimes incidents could be handled better.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for through lessons and in assemblies. Pupils are given regular opportunities to work in pairs and groups to develop their social skills. The newly introduced 'Compliments' book provides opportunities for pupils and adults to pick out the strengths of others and celebrate them. Pupils told inspectors that they particularly enjoy Friday celebration assemblies where they look forward to hearing who has made their way into the 'golden book' for doing good work or showing positive attitudes. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures in religious education lessons and show positive attitudes towards diversity. Pupils told inspectors that everyone is different but that this was good. Leaders recognise, however, that in this multicultural school more could be done to draw on pupils' own experiences and knowledge to develop pupils' cultural understanding.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Occasionally, when lessons are not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils lose interest and become distracted. For example, during the inspection, in some classes pupils were expected to sit and listen to the teacher for longer than they were able to maintain their attention. Teachers did not recognise when this was the case and so their time was spent redirecting pupils to listen instead of focusing on learning. Where work lacks challenge for pupils, some pupils do not concentrate or work as hard as they could in lessons.
- The majority of pupils behave well in class and in lessons. Those pupils who have difficulties with their behaviour are managed well. Pupils are respectful to adults and polite – for example, stepping back to allow adults to walk through doors, and remembering to say please and thank you to staff at lunchtimes.

- Attendance has been below average for a number of years and last year attendance was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. The headteacher has quickly begun to take action to improve this, including regular attendance as one of the key features of the 'expectations' document sent out to parents at the beginning of term. She provides encouragements for attendance such as certificates and a 'Bertie the attendance badger' award. The headteacher now includes attendance for each class on weekly newsletters and meets with parents to discuss particular concerns, and she is ensuring that a consistent approach is taken to absence, punctuality and term-time holidays. This is beginning to have an impact and attendance is improving. However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that parents understand the importance of their children's regular attendance at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening checks have varied over time. Having risen from below to above the national average in 2015, last year they fell to well below average. Leaders recognise that this was because the teaching in Year 1 was not of a good enough standard. Leaders have taken action to address this and are providing good support for pupils in Year 2 who did not reach the expected standard in last year's phonics check. Pupils currently in Year 1 are showing better progress in their knowledge of sounds, and school assessments indicate that the proportion reaching the expected standard this year will be higher. However, leaders recognise that the teaching of phonics by some adults is still not of the same high standard as of others, and that more needs to be done to ensure consistently good achievement in phonics.
- In previous years, at the end of Year 2, outcomes in reading and writing were below average. In the new tests in 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading and writing was in line with that found nationally. For pupils currently in Year 2, school assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading and writing and so the proportion of pupils at the expected standard is improving. Many pupils have made this progress from low starting points due to issues with the quality of teaching last year.
- The quality of pupils' writing across the school has begun to improve, particularly following leaders' checks on pupils' books last term. Pupils are now being given more frequent opportunities to write at greater length and, as a result, pupils currently in the school are making better progress in writing.
- Outcomes in mathematics were below national averages in previous years. In the new Year 2 tests in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was below that found nationally. Pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that a significant proportion of pupils are currently working below the standard expected for their age in Years 1 and 2. Progress in mathematics, while improving, is still not rapid enough. Improvements have been made to pupils' skills in understanding of number and calculations, but pupils are given too few opportunities to reason about number and to apply their knowledge to problems.

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, evidence of pupil's achievement is variable because in some classes pupils do not record their learning often enough to demonstrate progress. Teachers do not have consistent systems for recording progress made through practical tasks. In science, for example, pupils' work in some classes is limited and does not demonstrate progress in pupils' understanding of scientific skills over time.
- Progress for the most able pupils is not as rapid as it should be because in some classes these pupils are not given work which challenges and extends their learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics is variable. In 2016, some disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 made good progress in writing, especially those from lower starting points. However, in mathematics, many disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as they should have. The progress of disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school is also variable, but is slower overall than that of others. This is because support for these pupils has not been tailored closely enough to their individual needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points in relation to their individual targets. This is demonstrated through their education plans over time and in their work. Those pupils with social and emotional needs are particularly well supported and so make good progress relative to their starting points.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching in the early years is not consistent. Some children start in the Reception classes with skills below those typical for their age. However, in the current year group, most have skills typical for their age and some with skills above these. At the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who achieve the early learning goals has risen with most making expected progress from their starting points. Learning journeys show that some children currently in Reception are making good progress from their starting points, particularly those from lower starting points, but those who started with skills better than those typical for their age are capable of achieving more.
- Sometimes adults do not ensure that children adhere to class routines. Some adults, for example, allow children to leave the classroom for lunch before tidying up their play equipment ready for others to use, or to call out when they should be listening when an adult is explaining what to do. Nonetheless, some adults have high expectations of children, reminding children regularly about routines such as how to behave on the carpet, when to speak and when to listen.
- Sometimes activities are not well planned and it is unclear what learning is intended. For example, during the inspection, children were provided with ice and mathematical equipment with no indication as to what was expected and no adult intervention to promote learning.

- Provision for learning outdoors is not well developed. Too few carefully planned tasks are provided which support learning in the areas where many children are weakest on entry: early reading and writing and knowledge of number. This means that some children do not make as much progress as they should do in these areas, even though the large outside area has some good opportunities set up for learning, such as the bird hide and climbing equipment.
- Some activities in the early years are well planned and promote learning well. Children's learning journeys show that children experience learning across all areas of learning and have some good opportunities for independent play as well as adult-supported learning. During the inspection, children were learning about shapes with the teacher, and were able to identify and explain the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. This was because the teacher had provided very clear explanations which children had clearly grasped. Children were then able to explore properties of shapes independently.
- Adults sometimes provide good support for children, for example when they are upset or anxious. Support for children in the Reception classes who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because adults know the needs of these children well. Adults ensure that children are kept safe in the Reception classes.
- Parental involvement in learning is encouraged. 'Stay and play' sessions, for example, are welcomed by parents, who enjoy the opportunity to engage with their child and to chat with staff about their child's learning. Parental involvement is also demonstrated in learning journeys where parents contribute examples of learning that take place at home.
- Leadership of the early years is developing with a new leader in place. She is being well supported by the headteacher, herself an experienced early years practitioner. Together they are identifying how to improve provision further and ensure that all children make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	120946
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10000988

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	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Wigg
Headteacher	Rachel Barker
Telephone number	01603 620 344
Website	www.nelson.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	head@nelson.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils for the last academic year on its website.
- The school is a smaller school than is found nationally.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than is found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of special educational needs, is average.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for less than three weeks.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. Some joint observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning, and a range of school documents.
- Inspector spoke with a small number of parents, took account of 37 responses to the Parent View, and met with some pupils from Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors listened to a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority and with four 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.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ollie Millington	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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