

Necton VA Primary School

School Road, Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 8HT

Inspection dates:

9–10 November 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' failure to ensure that pupils made good progress followed by instability in senior leadership has resulted in a decline in pupil outcomes, especially in key stage 2.
- Learning is not sufficiently challenging for some groups of pupils in a range of subjects. This is because teachers are not matching the work to the ability of the pupils. In too many lessons pupils do the same work, whatever their ability.
- Teachers are not making sure that pupils take care with the presentation of their work.
- There is variation in the quality of phonics teaching.
- Pupils do not always receive helpful feedback that allows them to improve their work.
- Not all leaders have a deep enough understanding of assessment information to use it effectively to analyse pupils' progress.
- Leaders' improvement plans are not sharply enough focused to enable them to measure the impact of their actions to improve the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve school standards.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils feel safe in school. Parents agree.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum and have access to a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Governors are determined to improve standards in the school. They are now appropriately challenging leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress so it is above average in a range of subjects, especially English and mathematics, through a greater consistency in teaching by ensuring:
 - that teachers match work to pupils' levels of ability with greater accuracy so that pupils are sufficiently challenged
 - greater consistency in the quality of phonics teaching
 - that teachers provide feedback that will allow pupils to improve their work
 - that pupils take greater pride in the presentation of their work.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a deeper understanding of assessment information and use it to analyse the progress of pupils from their starting points
 - producing sharply focused plans which allow leaders to monitor and measure the impact of school improvement activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Complacency by senior leaders regarding the quality of teaching and pupil achievement followed by a period of instability in leadership has resulted in a decline in pupil outcomes, especially in key stage 2. Since the previous inspection there have been two changes in headteacher and changes in the senior leadership team.
- School improvement plans lack detailed measurable targets, making it difficult for leaders to gauge the impact of their work. As a result, they are not able to make changes to their actions quickly enough to improve provision and outcomes.
- Pupils' progress and attainment is now tracked with greater accuracy. However, not all leaders have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the data to allow them to measure the progress of different groups.
- The newly formed leadership team is determined to improve standards and provide every opportunity for pupils to achieve their very best. They have correctly identified what needs to be done to improve outcomes for pupils. However, many of the changes have recently been introduced so they are not yet fully established to bring about consistency in teaching and pupil outcomes.
- Leaders have changed the methods used to support pupils who are falling behind with their work. Each lesson, teachers identify pupils who would benefit from extra support. The pupils receive targeted support in the lesson and/or short, personalised support sessions in the afternoon. Early indications suggest that this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is now thoroughly monitored using a range of information. Teachers are supported to improve their practice through individualised training. Whole-school training is correctly focused on improving literacy and numeracy.
- Leaders use the primary sport and physical education funding well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports. Pupils get the opportunity to take part in competitions against other schools. During the inspection pupils took part in a cross-country competition and were very proud of their success.
- Leaders have correctly identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. They use the pupil premium funding appropriately to support pupils' progress through individualised support. The funding is also used to support pupils who experience problems with emotional and social issues, through mentoring and lunchtime activity provision.
- During this period of instability the local authority has provided effective support for the school. It has supported governors through training and providing the school with experienced headteachers. As a result, standards have started to improve. Local authority advisors have helped leaders to improve teaching and special educational needs (SEN) provision and supported school leaders to validate their judgements of the school's performance.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. They have access to a full range of

subjects which are taught through topics. These are supplemented by visits and a full programme of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also enables them to understand and develop the fundamental British values required for life in modern Britain. Pupils take full advantage of these clubs and activities which they enjoy.

- Parents are supportive of school leaders. Most would recommend the school.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection governors have not monitored the work of senior leaders with enough rigour. The decline in standards in 2016 prompted them to take swift action. Governors commissioned a full review of their performance. As a result, they have restructured the governing body. Governors have undertaken a skills audit and are now making best use of these. New governors are appointed based on their individual skills and expertise.
- Governors are determined to improve standards in the school and have undertaken relevant training to fulfil their duties effectively. They ask detailed questions of senior leaders in order to understand how the school's performance compares with schools nationally. Visits to the school during the day give them first-hand information about the work of the school. Governors carry out regular checks on safeguarding procedures to make sure that the school fulfils its statutory duties.
- Governors are now monitoring the use of the pupil premium and sport funding in greater depth. However, they need to ensure that action plans are monitored against detailed criteria.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on all members of staff and volunteers before they are able to work with pupils. The identity of visitors is carefully checked. Visitors are provided with information on the actions they should take if they have a concern about the welfare of a pupil.
- Staff are trained regularly to an appropriate level and understand the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Referrals to the appropriate agencies are made and followed up swiftly.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. They also know how to keep themselves safe outside of school. Supervision in the playground is light touch but makes sure that pupils are safe. Parents agree that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- On too many occasions teachers set the same activity for all pupils rather than matching the work to the ability of the pupil. This can limit the pupils' opportunities to further develop their knowledge and understanding. As a result, not enough pupils are

sufficiently challenged in their learning, or attain well enough, especially the most able.

- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils take care when presenting their work. In mathematics this can result in them making errors in their calculations.
- There is an inconsistency in the standard of phonics teaching. In some classes pupils make good progress as teachers have good subject knowledge and they briskly move pupils on. However, this is not evident in all lessons.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with feedback that will help them to improve their work. This slows the progress of pupils.
- Teachers know their pupils well and provide them with interesting and often fun learning activities. For example, in key stage 1 pupils were excited by the message they received from Marvin the puppet. They were keen to write a reply to his message.
- Pupils have the opportunity to write in subjects other than English. Inspectors saw some good examples of pupils writing for different purposes, especially in history and geography.
- Teaching assistants provide appropriate support for the pupils they work with. They work well with teachers and know the pupils' needs.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding. In lessons where pupils made good progress teachers changed learning activities in response to pupils' feedback to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Teachers set relevant homework that supports pupils' literacy and numeracy development.
- Mathematics teaching is leading to improved outcomes for pupils. Pupils are provided with problems that allow them to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils enjoy mathematics because 'the work is interesting and it makes them think'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's values form part of the curriculum and underpin relationships between all members of the school community. Comments such as 'a welcoming and big-hearted school with a caring ethos' and 'a warm and welcoming atmosphere with a caring ethos' sum up the views of a number of parents.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They say that they feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that their child is well cared for.
- Pupils respect one another's differences and support each other well. Racist incidents are extremely rare.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by school records. If an incident occurs, pupils have confidence that adults will deal with it effectively.
- Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to take on posts of responsibility. There is a strong school council and the eco-council is vigilant in ensuring that the

school is as environmentally friendly as possible. Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' to younger pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons. They work well together, cooperate with one another and help each other. Pupils respond to praise and enjoy the rewards they receive for good behaviour and work.
- Pupils quickly respond to teachers' requests and immediately correct their behaviour when reminded of the behaviour expectations.
- Pupils are well mannered, polite and courteous towards adults and one another.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils is in line with primary schools nationally.
- Parents agree that behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection. In 2016, pupils' progress in mathematics was well below average and below average in writing. In 2017, progress had improved and was in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the number of pupils attaining the expected standard in all of these subjects combined was below average. The progress and attainment of boys and disadvantaged pupils was below average.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 is improving but it is not yet good due to the variations in teaching.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics varies across subjects and year groups. Inspectors saw examples of some good-quality work where pupils are making expected progress.
- The school's progress information indicates that there are still some inconsistencies in the progress and attainment of some groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and boys. However, inspectors saw some current evidence of improved progress in the books belonging to boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 is stronger than that in key stage 2. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and writing was above average and average in mathematics. An above-average percentage of pupils attained the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils read well. Inspectors listened to pupils read and found that lower-ability pupils are able to use their phonics sounds effectively to read unfamiliar words. Most-able pupils are confident readers who read suitably challenging books fluently. Most pupils enjoy reading.
- When pupils are given work that allows them to develop their answers they are making good progress. Good examples of this were seen in art and history.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader works closely with staff from the on-site nursery and parents. Accurate assessment is used well to plan learning activities that are well matched to the interests and abilities of the children.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has improved since the previous inspection and in 2017 it met the national average. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Adults provide children with interesting learning activities which develop their curiosity. As a result, they are keen learners. For example, children were very keen to talk to inspectors about the conkers they had found and the slugs and snails in the leaves.
- Children with SEN and/or disabilities are provided with good support. They are helped with their learning while still being given the opportunity to develop their independence.
- Children are well behaved and relationships between one another and with adults are good.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. She has made a number of improvements to the provision, including working with the nursery to develop phonics teaching.
- Parents are well informed about their child's progress. They are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey.

School details

Unique reference number	134043
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10040457

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Barley
Headteacher	John Marshall-Grint
Telephone number	01760 722975
Website	www.necton.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	head@necton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is well below average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is well below average. Most children are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- A higher than average number of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year.
- The early years provision consists of a full-time Reception class
- The school met the 2016 floor standards for primary schools. These are the minimum

expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in all year groups and talked to pupils about their work. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books to examine learning and progress during the current term. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors for many of these observations.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body, subject leaders, the early years leader, the SEN coordinator and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading. They also talked informally to pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and visited an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the 78 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 free-text responses.
- The view of the 40 pupils and eight members of staff who completed questionnaires were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lyn Beale

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017