

Nene Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110651
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337540
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Wainwright
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Crawley and Mrs Jane Dodsworth (Acting Headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
School address	Norwich Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire
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Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed seven teachers. The inspectors met parents, informally, on the first morning of the inspection and held meetings with the acting headteachers, teaching staff, governors and pupils. The school's work was observed, this included scrutinising: samples of pupils' work; the school's systems for tracking progress; management and curriculum documentation; teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation. In addition, inspectors took account of responses to questionnaires from 46 parents and 21 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of current strategies in reversing the recent decline in attainment and promoting improved progress for all pupils
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged
- how well the curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of pupils, especially those identified as underachieving
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in bringing about improvements in the school especially how well pupils achieve.

Information about the school

Nene is an average-size school that serves central Wisbech. A higher than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but one third come from other backgrounds, this is higher than the national average, and almost all of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. An above average number of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times of the year is increasing and affects all year groups. A building project has just been completed which has provided a new Nursery classroom and day care room for the school. The new Wisbech South Children's Centre shares the school site, but is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has gained the Activemark award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Nene is a happy and harmonious school in which pupils behave well and enjoy their learning because they are taught well. The school has experienced a rapid increase in the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and successful steps have been taken to ensure that these pupils are quickly and successfully integrated into school. Pupils make a good start to their learning in Nursery and Reception and by the end of Year 2 reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The same good progress ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English also make good progress because their needs are quickly and accurately assessed. Parents are pleased with all that the school provides. One said, 'My child has grown in confidence during his time at Nene School. I have been impressed with the personalised learning support given. His learning has really moved forward.'

Pupils meet the high expectations of good and kind behaviour set for them and show positive attitudes in their lessons. Attendance has improved as a result of careful monitoring by the school and working closely with parents and carers. However, a few families still do not assign a high priority to regular and punctual attendance so important learning time is missed by a few pupils. The school meets safeguarding requirements well and good care, guidance and support are provided for all pupils including sensitive arrangements for their transfer to junior school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They make a good contribution to their school and local community and show pride and enthusiasm in the responsibilities they carry out in class or as school councillors. They are taking a keen interest in the design of their new play area following the recent building extension.

The leadership and management of the two interim acting headteachers have promoted rapid improvements in the school in a short time. The curriculum has been reviewed and adapted successfully so progress has improved for all pupils, including boys, following the decline in standards in 2009. Teaching is monitored well by senior staff and new subject leaders are developing their skills to monitor progress, subject development and also teaching. Progress made by pupils is tracked well through the school but is not used effectively in all classes, especially to plan tasks that fully extend pupils of higher ability. Members of the governing body offer good challenge to the school and are fully involved in strategic planning. Leaders and managers at all levels are ambitious to bring further improvements to the school and there is good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve attainment by ensuring all teachers use assessment information to plan consistently challenging tasks for pupils of higher ability.
 - Improve attendance by building on good links with parents and taking immediate action to discourage unauthorised absence so that pupils do not miss learning time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In most lessons observed, pupils were seen to make good progress. The results of teacher assessments indicated a decline in standards in 2009 to below average in mathematics and exceptionally low in reading and writing. In this year the school experienced a rapid increase in the number of pupils joining the school at a later stage in all year groups. In Year 2, 10 new pupils were admitted to increase the year group of 55 pupils and of these, eight had no previous experience of school and were at an early stage of learning English. The school responded promptly to the challenge posed by a changing pupil profile. As a result of good induction arrangements and the development of individualised and effective learning support for all pupils, especially those who are at an early stage of speaking English and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress has improved and is good. Work in pupils' books and the school's own careful tracking indicate that attainment at the end of Year 2 is now average.

Subjects and themes have been selected which capture the interest of boys in order to help them make similar progress to girls. In a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils were enthusiastically involved in writing tasks based on their favourite hero. Boys and girls participated well and were especially keen to select really exciting adjectives to describe their hero; spiderman and superman were popular choices for the boys. Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well and try to do their best in lessons because learning is fun. Links have been developed across subjects to make learning fun and also to integrate reading, writing and mathematics more widely. Emerging evidence is that new initiatives to improve progress are having a positive impact and standards are rising.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well and they show kindness and concern for those around them and in their local community. They are enthusiastic in raising funds for charity. Pupils are very clear about what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle. They enjoy sport in lessons, and after school clubs, and this is reflected in the Activemark award achieved by the school. They enjoy finding out about other faiths and ways of life and their spiritual development is good. Pupils' good achievement and the good personal skills they develop ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The inspection confirmed the school's view that the quality of teaching is good overall but there are some inconsistencies between classes. Teachers mostly have good subject knowledge. Good questioning encourages pupils to explain their ideas and develop their speaking skills. Classroom assistants are well deployed and work in good partnership with teachers. They provide good support for pupils who do not find learning easy, are developing their English language skills or need help to catch up with missed work. Where teaching is less strong teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' progress well enough to plan tasks which stretch them, especially those who find learning easier, and so they are not fully encouraged to make the progress which they are capable of.

The curriculum has been successfully adapted to provide interesting learning experiences and support for pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils are clear about what they are to learn and through marking and talking to their teachers they are clear on how they can improve their work. Pupils are also encouraged to identify for themselves what could have made a piece of work even better. One pupil said, 'I really love school because the teachers are so friendly and I learn lots.' Links developed across subjects adds to the fun in learning. In the Year 1 Africa project, for example, the story of Handa had been enjoyed by pupils who went on to find out about African wild life and geography, research facts using information and communication technology and to draw wild animals and African artefacts in their art lesson. They also enjoyed role play tasks based on Elmer the elephant to inspire their writing task in literacy. Links with local schools are used well especially in helping pupils prepare to move to their next school.

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Visits out of school, the contribution of speakers such as the local police officer and after-school clubs, bring learning alive outside of the classroom. Pupils spoke very enthusiastically about a visit to a butterfly park. The good support and care provided by the school is extended by good links with a range of agencies and services.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is good and has resulted in the acting headteachers taking rapid and effective action to address the changing needs of pupils entering the school. The introduction of a range of well chosen strategies, supported by staff training, has led to clear improvements in the progress made by pupils. The school is an inclusive community in which all pupils are valued and their well-being and progress is a priority. Staff work as a united team with a shared commitment to continue to improve standards attained by all pupils. New subject leaders in literacy and numeracy are developing their roles and are monitoring what is happening in their subjects and the quality of teaching and learning; they receive effective support and good leadership from the acting headteachers. The sharing of the acting headship has been beneficial to the school with complementary skills and commitment from both leaders. Development planning is shared well with the governing body and teaching staff and identifies clearly the priorities for improvement in the school.

Governors have a good range of skills and expertise which are used to advantage in the school and they offer both good support and effective challenge to senior staff. The planning of the new building developments has been prudently managed with a reserve fund for future work. The partnership with parents has been improved and parents and carers value the termly consultation meetings and regular information about what their children are to learn in class. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school makes a good contribution to its local community and recognises its social and changing ethnic composition. Through charity initiatives pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of the wider global community. However, pupils have few opportunities to become aware of the rich diversity of cultures and beliefs of the United Kingdom. Safeguarding arrangements are well planned with efficient procedures and clear policies. Issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed and achievement for all pupils has improved.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in school because of the stimulating teaching and good care they receive. Resources are used well by staff to plan enjoyable activities that cover the six areas of learning. Staff manage inventively the limitations of space in the outside learning areas. Children mix well and learn to share. Independence is fostered carefully so children are confident in speaking to adults, follow routines and tidy things away when they have finished with them. Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those of other children of the same age and weak in elements of language and communication and social and emotional development. As a result of good quality teaching in Nursery and Reception, children gain confidence and develop a love of school. By the time they enter Year 1, their skills and abilities are generally similar to other children.

There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by children. In Nursery, a simple boat shape area became a pirate ship for three children who were determinedly steering and discussing where they should go. When asked what they had decided one said, very quietly and seriously, 'We're heading for Captain Bob's place.' Adults take good opportunities to subtly intervene in such games to encourage children to share their ideas and develop their speaking skills. There is a well planned emphasis on helping children, many speaking English as an additional language, to develop sounds into words and begin writing letters and short words. Counting games and practical tasks encourage the building of number skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed and staff work as a close, efficient and dedicated team. The high ratio of staff to children ensures good individual care and careful monitoring of development. Links with parents and carers are good and they are kept closely informed

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of their childrens progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately one in five parents and carers replied to the questionnaire and almost all were very happy with the school. They value all that the school provides for their children and are especially pleased that their children enjoy school, are well taught and safe. Parents are also pleased with the individual approach to the care, support and guidance that pupils receive. One, typical of many, said, 'It's exceptional how all the children's needs, academically and personally, are met on an individual basis, and are closely monitored throughout the year. As a parent this is very comforting.' Inspectors agree with parents' overwhelmingly positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Nene Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	70	14	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	50	21	46	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	54	20	43	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	70	13	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	61	16	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	61	16	35	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	50	19	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	61	17	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	48	22	48	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	41	23	50	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	59	16	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	83	8	17	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Nene Infant School, Cambridgeshire, PE13 2AP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so helpful and polite. We really enjoyed our visit. We were very impressed with the lovely displays of your work around the school and we know you are enthusiastically helping to plan your new playground area. You told us how much you like your school and that you think your lessons are interesting and fun. You also told us how very safe you feel in school. We agree with you that you go to a good school where there are a lot of exciting activities and people look after you well.

Your teachers encourage you to work hard and make good progress in lessons. You behave kindly to each other and work sensibly in lessons. Your two acting headteachers, other staff and governors all work very hard to make sure your school is a happy and successful place in which to learn. There are two things that we think could make your school even better.

For those of you who find learning easier we have asked your teachers to use what they know about how well you are doing, to plan activities that help you make even better progress.

To make sure that some of you do not miss learning time in school we have asked that your parents be reminded about how important it is that you come to school regularly and on time.

You can help by doing your best, always working hard and paying attention in lessons. It was a great pleasure to visit your school and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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