

# Inspection of Exning Primary School

Oxford Street, Exning, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7EW

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Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Exning is a school that has got the balance right. Leaders focus on academic excellence. They also make sure pupils develop into happy, healthy and well-rounded young citizens. The school is welcoming and inclusive. Leaders and staff go out of their way to ensure that pupils and their parents and carers feel 'at home'.

The school is a calm and orderly place, where pupils can concentrate and are able to learn. Pupils behave exceptionally well throughout the school. They have excellent attitudes to learning and are keen to know more. This has a marked impact on how well the curriculum is taught and how well pupils learn.

Pupils develop deep knowledge of a wide range of subjects because the curriculum is challenging and well thought through. Staff routinely think of ways to bring subjects to life and to capture pupils' interest. For example, in history, virtual reality headsets 'take' pupils to museums or enable them to have 'first-hand' experiences. Pupils developed a deeper appreciation of the conditions faced by soldiers in the First World War after spending time in the 'trenches'.

Pupils feel safe at Exning. Bullying is something that happens rarely. Staff are alert to it and deal with incidents promptly.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have a particularly clear vision for the school. They are determined that every pupil will achieve as well as they possibly can. This vision is shared by staff and governors. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are very high.

Leaders and staff ensure that pupils master the 'fundamentals' by the time they reach the end of key stage 1. Almost all pupils start Year 3 able to read and write, and with essential mathematical knowledge under their belt.

The school's curriculum is broad and well developed. Pupils are given an enormous number of opportunities, including educational visits and residential trips. Leaders continually seek to improve on-site provision. For example, the 'forest school' is a key part of the curriculum and is highly valued. Pupils learn about responsibility by taking on roles such as librarian, play leader or 'bistro buddy'.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are some of the best in the country. This is not because Year 6 pupils are 'hot-housed' for the national tests. It is because they have seven excellent years of education and are ready by the time these assessments come about. These same high standards apply to the full range of national curriculum subjects.

Reading is given the highest priority and is taught extremely well. It is rightly seen as being crucial to pupils becoming successful all-round learners. Leaders and staff

have expert knowledge about early reading and phonics, as well as the development of more advanced reading skills. Children get off to a rapid start when they join the Reception class, gaining phonics knowledge quickly.

Staff encourage pupils to develop a love of books and choose books carefully to ensure that pupils experience a range of texts. For example, during the inspection, pupils were very moved as they listened to the end of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. They were able to see past the Victorian prose to understand and enjoy the story. The teacher's skilful questioning enabled pupils to think about and explore the moral issues in the text. This approach is typical throughout the school.

Mathematics is similarly well planned and sequenced. Leaders have thought very carefully about what should be taught and when. The same approach to teaching mathematics is used consistently throughout the school.

Children get off to a very strong start when they join the Reception class. They settle quickly and soon become effective young learners. The school's high expectations about behaviour are clear from the very start. Children love to learn because the early years curriculum is thoughtfully planned, stimulating and exciting.

The school's ethos is that 'no child will go without because of a lack of funds'. Leaders go 'above and beyond' to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on opportunities or feel different to their classmates. Disadvantaged pupils' needs are met particularly well. They achieve at least as well as other pupils and, very often, do better. Similarly, the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met extremely effectively. Pupils are given the high-quality support they need to achieve very well.

Leaders and staff have extremely high expectations of how pupils should behave. They make these expectations clear and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This helps them to recognise possible signs of abuse and neglect. It also means that staff know exactly what to do if they are concerned about a child. The school has recently moved to a web-based system for recording child protection concerns. These records show that staff report their concerns promptly and appropriate action is taken in response. The very strong relationships between pupils and staff help to keep children safe. Pupils trust the adults who work with them. They know that staff will always help them if they have a worry or concern.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124544
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110241
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Malone
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Clark
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.exning.schooljotter2.com">www.exning.schooljotter2.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school was inspected in February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. That inspection found that the school continued to be good, with signs of marked improvement and strong practice. This full inspection was carried out as a result of the February 2019 inspection judgement.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with: the headteacher and other senior leaders; leaders responsible for individual subjects; teachers and pupils; a representative of the local authority; and the governing body.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, we checked the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks, met the school's designated safeguarding lead, spoke with staff and pupils, and checked the school's child protection records.
- We observed and talked to pupils during their breaktimes and as they moved about the school.

- We considered a range of school documents.
- We spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. We took account of the 63 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey and the 20 responses to the staff survey. We also considered the 32 responses to Parent View and the 31 free-text comments from parents.
- We looked in depth at reading, mathematics, history and physical education (PE). We met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, looked at pupils’ work, spoke with pupils about their work, spoke to teachers, and listened to pupils read.

### **Inspection team**

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Debbie Rogan

Ofsted Inspector

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