

Inspection of a good school: Cecil Gowing Infant School

Falcon Road West, Sprowston, Norwich Norfolk NR7 8NZ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Cecil Gowing Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cecil Gowing Infant School is a community in which pupils thrive. Pupils are happy. They show courtesy towards visitors and greet them enthusiastically.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. As a result, behaviour in the school is exceptional. Pupils listen attentively in class and carefully follow their teachers' instructions. During social times, pupils enjoy playing together. Pupils treat each other with kindness; they are patient when waiting their turn for activities.

Pupils comment that bullying is not something they worry about at school, and they describe their friends and peers as 'being kind'. If they have worries, they speak to a trusted adult. Pupils have faith in all adults in school to help them. Pupils say that they feel safe. Staff have the best interests of pupils in mind. The sense of community is very clear.

Pupils can take part in outdoor learning every week. The activities inspire their imagination through weather experiments, role play and mud kitchens. At snack time, pupils take part in activities which support their learning. They enjoy the challenge of counting money to 'buy' their fruit.

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

Leaders have undertaken a substantial amount of work to construct a curriculum that is typically well sequenced and planned. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and present information clearly. This is particularly evident in early years. Teachers focus on 'teachable moments' where everything in the learning environment provides pupils with opportunities to learn. These opportunities are never wasted.

Teachers assess pupils well. For younger pupils this is undertaken 'in the moment' and recorded on school systems. For older pupils there are also frequent adult-led assessment activities. Staff know pupils well and can identify any gaps in their knowledge as a result.

Pupils can describe what they are learning now, and draw on their knowledge from previous topics. The expectations of teachers are high. Pupils' concentration in lessons is exceptional. They listen to their teacher and follow instructions. As a result, pupils can achieve well.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully planned. Leaders communicate with nurseries and parents and carers early in the transition process to ensure that children's needs are identified. Specific transition arrangements are in place for individual children. Adaptations to the curriculum and/or additional adult support is provided if needed. The expectations of pupils with SEND are the same as other pupils, and all pupils follow the same curriculum.

Leaders adopted a new phonics scheme in September 2022. Leaders took this decision because standards of reading did not meet their high expectations. Leaders recognise that the impact of this scheme has not yet been realised.

Pupils at Cecil Gowing experience a range of activities beyond the classroom. These support pupils' broader development effectively. 'Outdoor learning' provides a weekly opportunity for children to work alongside pupils in other year groups. Pupils are challenged to engage in new experiences. They benefit from high levels of adult support and encouragement. As a result, they develop a range of skills. Pupils also benefit from the school's close links with the community. Leaders invite visitors to the school, including vets and the uniformed services. Visits to places of worship provide children with the opportunity to develop their understanding of religion and culture.

The school is well led and managed. Parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are happy and safe, and that they would recommend the school. Leaders have created a community in which children are encouraged and nurtured by dedicated and caring staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel leaders actively engage with them. Leaders take the issue of workload seriously. Governors understand their strategic role and are an integral part of the school community. Governors also understand the importance of their role in ensuring the school is a safe community. They are working to further improve their existing oversight.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They know that they can speak with an adult in school if they are worried. They also understand who trusted adults are outside school. When worries are reported, staff understand the school's system for recording safeguarding concerns. Staff are also able to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders take effective action to protect children, involving external agencies as appropriate. Governors are refining their efforts to ensure that they monitor safeguarding systems rigorously. This includes strategic oversight of all safeguarding checks across the school community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The impact of the new systematic synthetic phonics programme on standards of reading has yet to be realised. For pupils to achieve consistently highly, leaders should ensure that a rigorous analysis of the programme's effectiveness takes place in a timely manner and any remaining areas for development are addressed.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

Unique reference number	120904
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10288469
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Hardman
Headteacher	Isabel Stubbs
Website	cecilgowing.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2023.
- The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, school staff and representatives from the governing body and local authority.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the lead inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed

safeguarding records. The lead inspector also reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.

- The lead inspector met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- The lead inspector considered 30 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included 24 comments from parents and carers in the free-text facility. The lead inspector also considered the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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