

Cecil Gowing Infant School

Falcon Road West, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8NZ

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children achieve well in the Reception classes. They make particularly good progress in developing their speaking and social skills.
- Pupils' achievement is rising. School records and work in pupils' books show that the great majority of those currently in the school are making good progress.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding, especially in Year 2. Proficient teaching assistants play an important part in the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They have positive attitudes to learning. In Year 2, in response to their teachers' high expectations, pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- The school has improved since the previous inspection because of good leadership, including governance. The headteacher and governing body have realistic plans for the future. They have high expectations and know what to do to make the school outstanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with their pupils and plan interesting topics that make pupils keen to learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always enable pupils to make rapid progress, especially in learning phonics (letter sounds to help them read and write). Teachers mark pupils' work very well but do not make sure the suggested improvements are made.
- On occasions the most-able pupils do not have work to make them think hard.
- Under the guidance of the headteacher, other leaders are developing their roles well. However, they are not routinely observing lessons so that they can help colleagues improve their practice further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 10 lessons some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. They visited five phonics sessions, attended two assemblies and observed lunchtime arrangements. The inspectors also heard pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. Inspectors met with representatives of the school council and Year 2. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the outcomes of the school’s own questionnaire for parents, letters from a small number of parents and discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day. The views of 39 staff who completed the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s work and at documentation including: leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness; the school development plan; information relating to safeguarding; and records of pupils’ attainment and progress. Inspectors sampled pupils’ books in each class.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Adrian Reed

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school shares a large site with the junior and secondary schools.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well above average.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs located on the school site. These are not run by the school and will be inspected and reported on separately. The reports can be found on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make more rapid progress by:
 - keeping a check on the group teaching of phonics to make sure that the pace is appropriate
 - making sure that pupils respond to their teachers' excellent marking in order to improve their work
 - ensuring there is always work planned to challenge the most-able pupils.
- Strengthen the roles of other leaders so they can play a bigger part in school improvement by:
 - providing them with training and sufficient time to check rigorously on the quality of teaching in lessons and, where necessary, help teachers to improve their practice further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception classes with skills that are a little below those typical for their age, particularly in speaking and communication skills. Children currently in the Reception classes are making good progress, especially the most-able. These children make excellent use of their knowledge of phonics to read and spell words. They are well ahead of most children of their age. However, children who find it difficult to learn and use phonics do not make such rapid progress because the teaching for this group moves on too slowly.
- Since the appointment of the headteacher almost two years ago, above average standards at the end of Year 2 have been sustained and are now rising further. Pupils are making good progress and this year, in Year 2, standards are over a term ahead of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement in reading is good. The school has clear structures to ensure pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills before moving on to harder texts. Pupils read with pleasure and confidence. They are very keen to discuss favourite characters and events in their chosen books. Most-able readers are reading at the level of pupils two years older. The headteacher's determination to improve links with parents has been very helpful in guiding parents to help their child with reading at home. The great majority of pupils read at home regularly.
- Pupils enjoy writing. They say they like 'having a long time to think and write'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the drama activities leading up to writing about their chosen 'alien'. They planned out their stories, considering the use of appropriate adjectives, and were keen to edit their work to make it even better. Their handwriting is neat and well formed. They take pride in presenting their work carefully.
- The school's work this year to improve the achievement of the least-able pupils in mathematics has been successful. The increased opportunities provided for practical activities and mathematical games have been beneficial and standards have risen as a result. Pupils enjoy mathematics, especially when they have to solve problems related to their topic work.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as their classmates. The gaps between the two groups have closed considerably in the past two years because their progress is carefully tracked and changes made if there is any slowing of progress. Gaps, where there are any, in standards are now very small.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in response to well-organised teaching and outstanding care. Parents speak very positively about the excellent care their children receive. They are confident that their children are safe and should there be any concerns, they would be told immediately.
- In the past two years, Year 1 pupils' performance in the national phonics check has been below the expected standard. Although the most-able pupils have very well-developed phonic and reading skills, the teaching for pupils who have difficulty learning and using phonics has not been good enough to help them make rapid progress.
- The reason that achievement is not yet outstanding is that there remain inconsistencies in the progress made by some pupils, especially in learning phonics and, in some classes, for the most-able pupils. However, in the past year, improved teaching across the school is ensuring that all year groups are making good progress overall and are on track to do increasingly well by the

end of Year 2. Pupils are prepared well for their start in the junior school.

The quality of teaching is good

- In all classes there are excellent relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils themselves. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well so that no time is wasted. Proficient teaching assistants are a valued part of the team and contribute significantly to the purposeful learning atmosphere in classes.
- Teaching over time is typically good and for Year 2, it is outstanding. It is not yet outstanding for all pupils because in Year 1, the most-able pupils are not routinely set work and expectations at the right level to ensure they always work to the best of their abilities. The teaching of phonics for groups of pupils in Reception and Year 1 who find learning difficult is sometimes too slow. As a result, pupils tend to lose concentration and do not learn as well as possible.
- In the Reception classes, teaching is good. The high number of teaching assistants ensures that children are guided well to develop good learning habits and behaviour. Children's speaking skills are developed well by all adults modelling a wide vocabulary and encouraging children to speak clearly. Interesting activities are planned for inside and outside the classroom; however, on occasions teachers do not pinpoint exactly what it is they expect children to learn from undertaking these activities. In such instances, opportunities for developing learning further go unplanned.
- The headteacher has made sure staff have had very good opportunities to update and extend their knowledge and skills. The impact of training is particularly evident in teachers' subject knowledge and the way they plan good links between subjects to make learning relevant. As a consequence, pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks and enjoy planning how to go about them.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in detail, leaving pupils in no doubt as to what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, teachers do not set the expectation that work will be improved in response to the detailed marking. As a result, pupils often continue to make the same mistakes, for example, forgetting to check that basic punctuation is correct.
- The money allocated for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is spent well. It helps to provide additional adult support so that pupils are taught in smaller groups and ensures full access to all learning opportunities.
- Teaching for the most-able pupils is good overall and outstanding for those in Year 2. Here, teachers set their pupils challenging work and expect them to persevere but also make sure that support is on hand should they need it. As a result, pupils try hard and develop good work habits. Where there are inconsistencies in other classes, it is because teachers are not always expecting enough of their most-able pupils or setting their work at the right level.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good; as a result they make good progress from their starting points. The school employs a considerable number of teaching assistants who are deployed effectively to work with small groups under the guidance of class teachers. Pupils who have very high levels of need have carefully planned help which is reviewed regularly with outside agencies and parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is not yet outstanding as on occasions, where teaching does not fully capture their interests, pupils get distracted as their concentration dips. Pupils are very polite, well-mannered and friendly, and school records show that behaviour is typically good. Pupils, staff and parents are most positive about behaviour in the school.
- In Year 2, in response to their teachers' high expectations, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They say they like writing and the presentation of their work indicates they take pride in it. Pupils take on responsibilities around the school willingly. For example, they help the younger pupils during lunchtimes. School councillors take note of other pupils' views and know that their ideas will be valued and, if appropriate, acted on.
- The way that the school links subjects together in topics promotes pupils' eagerness to learn. They are enthusiastic about their tasks and work very well together, for example, to create models to exhibit.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and mobile phones. Parents express confidence that their children are well looked after and kept safe. For their age, pupils have a reasonable understanding of different types of bullying but say that 'everyone is very friendly' and that staff make it very clear how pupils should treat one another.
- The headteacher's determination and success in improving links with parents have had a very good impact on the level of attendance. In the past two years, the attendance rate has risen from a below average level and is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- On her appointment, the headteacher quickly established a precise understanding of the school's considerable strengths and areas to improve. She has managed changes for the better extremely well and has the confidence of staff and parents. All staff are committed to making sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in all they do.
- The headteacher checks on the quality of teaching very regularly to ensure that the teaching is helping pupils to make at least good progress. If improvements are needed, teachers are set appropriate targets and helped to improve. As a result, standards are rising, and the gaps in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and their classmates are now negligible.
- The headteacher tracks pupils' progress rigorously. She uses this information in regular meetings with teachers, when there are discussions about pupils who are not making the progress expected of them. Targets are set and reviewed as a result of these discussions, and suitable work or support is put in place to ensure better progress. All teachers have challenging targets to meet that are linked to pupils' achievement.
- Teachers have had a wide range of good opportunities to develop their skills further through training and visits to other schools. Team work among staff is strong particularly in developing the good links between subjects, which involves visits and having visitors to school.
- The reason that leadership and management are not outstanding is that other leaders have not yet developed their management roles to the full so that they can share the workload of the headteacher. The leaders responsible for literacy and mathematics check on teachers' planning and the pupils' work and report back to staff on strengths and areas to improve, for example, in

the quality of marking. However, they have had few opportunities to observe lessons so that they can help their colleagues improve their practice further, where necessary.

- The school is making good use of its primary sports funding to raise pupils' achievement, increase their participation in a wider range of activities and promote their health and well-being. Pupils say they like 'having lots of clubs to choose from'. The funding is also used to develop greater expertise among staff.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school. However, the school has bought in services from the local authority which have been used to advantage, for example, to help develop the mathematics curriculum.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are active within the school and make regular visits which are reported back to the whole governing body. They check on particular spending such as the pupil premium and sports funding to ensure that it is being used to best effect in line with the agreed budget allocations. They are clear about the quality of teaching, its strengths and areas for development.
- Governors make sure that both the performance of the headteacher and checks on teachers' pay and progress are routinely monitored. They link pay increases with performance.
- Governors receive detailed information regarding pupils' progress from the headteacher. The Chair of the Governing Body is well aware of how to compare the school's data with national data but not all governors are at this stage and further training is planned for them to help them to be able to ask questions, for example, if different groups, such as boys and girls, are making enough progress and attaining as well as the groups nationally.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements, which includes making sure that the adjacent secondary school boundary is well supervised.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120904
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425383

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Hardman
Headteacher	Isabel Stubbs
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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