

Marsham Primary School

High Street, Marsham, Norwich, NR10 5AE

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Determined leadership and management at all levels has driven rapid improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher is the catalyst for the many improvements. For example, she has ensured staff had the high-quality training needed to improve.
- The partnership with parents is very strong and trusting; parents support the school in all it does for their children.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe and very well cared for. They are tolerant and respectful of one another because the school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Teaching, guidance and extra help are tailored to each pupil. Each is known as an individual. All, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs, thrive because they are nurtured so well.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and their assistants form effective teams. Basic skills are taught well, laying the foundation for good learning.
- Achievement is good; all pupils make good progress in relation to their different starting points.
- The Reception provision is effective; children make good progress and learn many basic skills essential to their learning in Year 1 and beyond.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not taught how to think for themselves; for example, how they might try to resolve a problem when they are stuck. They rely too readily on adults to help them.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use and apply their good mathematical knowledge to reason and problem-solve across subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in six lessons, including all year groups and in a range of subjects. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with: the headteacher; the assistant headteacher; members of the governing body; subject leaders; parents and pupils; a headteacher representing the Aylsham Cluster Trust; and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and heard a group of pupils read.
- The inspector considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by parents in discussions. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View for them to be considered representative. The inspector also took account of ten questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Bob Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is federated with Hevingham Primary School. This federation is known locally as 'The Partnership'. These schools share one governing body, the same headteacher and leadership team. The school is part of the Aylsham Cluster Trust.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time. They are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 form a second class. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taught in a combined class with those of the same age at the federated school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part-way through their primary education is high. Around three of every five pupils do not start and finish their primary education at the school.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to qualify for the usual judgement about whether the school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate progress further by ensuring that:
 - pupils are encouraged to think for themselves when they are stuck
 - pupils are given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to reason and problem-solve in mathematics and across other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The vision is clear; 'What we are doing to improve our school' is visible the moment you enter the school. All staff share the drive towards these goals, so the school is moving forward rapidly. The 'key drivers' are sent to parents, too. Staff convey a positive 'can-do' attitude and they form a cohesive team. As a result, the conditions are created for effective teaching and good behaviour.
- The good progress of all pupils is testament to the success of the school's commitment to giving all pupils an equal chance to succeed. On the very rare occasion any form of discrimination arises, the school has clear policies and procedures to take effective action, so there is no repetition.
- Key to pupils' academic success are the regular and accurate checks on how they are advancing. Any pupil failing to make at least good progress is quickly identified and given extra help. The school has already implemented a new approach to assessment which is equally effective.
- High-quality training, largely in response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. In particular, staff subject knowledge is greatly increased.
- The school recognises that effective staff are fundamental to its success. Everyone benefits from regular opportunities to discuss their performance and how it might be improved. Teachers, for example, receive regular checks and pointers for development. Even so, leaders have not yet ensured that all approaches adopted by the school, such as how to teach pupils to solve problems for themselves, are fully and consistently implemented by all staff.
- If the headteacher is steering the direction of improvement, then middle and subject leaders are the engine driving the school forward. Each has significant expertise in their area, together they form a very effective team.
- The new curriculum is very precisely planned to meet the demands of mixed-age classes, with up to four year groups. Pupils say work is interesting and they enjoy the different areas of study. Overall, it is good, but, in mathematics, pupils are given too few opportunities to use and apply their knowledge.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, 'Careers' Day' encourages pupils to think about what they should be doing now to prepare for the job they want.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They experience democracy in action when governors seek their views. At one meeting about behaviour, they showed a clear sense of fairness, explaining one change they wanted was a way to see pupils always doing the right thing did not receive less praise and reward than 'naughty' pupils who were perceived to receive praise every time they did something right.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Eligible pupils, more than half the school population, make equally good progress as their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Primary school sports funding is used well. Specialist expertise simultaneously improves pupils' skills and the knowledge of staff. A wider range of energetic activities has led to higher pupil participation. Key staff receive nationally recognised training and accreditation as part of the drive for high-quality teaching.
- The partnership with parents is open, honest and trusting. While the school supports families through its excellent and extensive links with outside agencies and charities, it also holds them to account; for example, for their children's attendance. Everything is explained to parents, including the new approach being taken to assessment. As a result, parents are not afraid to say they do not understand their children's homework, and to come into school to and learn alongside their children so that they can help them more effectively at home.
- The partnership with the federated school is a key part of the school's success in providing high-quality

education. Expertise and resources are available that the school alone could not afford.

- The partnership with the cluster is very effective, sharing resources and expertise to mutual benefit. For example, all schools share a calculations policy so all pupils start high school with similar prior learning.
- The impact of the local authority support since the previous inspection is seen by the school as fundamental to many improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements. Record keeping is meticulous. The local authority has complimented the school on the thoroughness of its procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective because they use a wide range of information to check how the school is progressing towards the goals set. For example, data about pupils' performance is supplemented by governors' own focused visits, reports from subject leaders and presentations from pupils. If they find gaps, governors ask for more information. As a result, they make informed decisions.
 - School leaders are questioned closely if governors have any concerns. They are held to account for spending, including additional funding, such as pupil premium and the primary sport funding.
 - The governing body has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and ensures that pay increases reflect good or better performance. They are not afraid to tackle weak teaching.
 - Equality of opportunity is given strong emphasis; the Chair is equalities governor and meets pupils regularly to hear their views about aspects of school life, such as how displays promote equality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Exclusions are rare. A relatively high proportion of pupils join during the year. School information and parents' comments show that some of these pupils struggle to settle initially. Parents say this is sometimes because previous school experience was unhappy. The excellent nurturing approach, and support tailored to each individual, quickly overcomes any barrier so that pupils thrive.
- Pupils' personal development benefits from 'The Partnership' with Hevingham. The very small number of Reception children, for example, have opportunities to work and play with their peers at the partner school.
- Attendance is above average and most pupils are punctual to school. They attend well because they are not worried about school, as they know they will be listened to and helped.
- Pupils sometimes struggle with a task and do not put in the level of effort needed to succeed. On other occasions, when they are stuck, they will wait rather than trying to figure it out, knowing that staff will always help them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The grounds are secure. Each topic pupils study includes a visit, which is rigorously assessed. Pupils and their parents say they feel safe in school.
- The school thoroughly checks the suitability of staff and visitors to work with pupils. Safeguarding is seen as paramount.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what to do if they are worried. Parents, too, are offered guidance. Bullying is very rare and pupils know they can speak to pupil 'bully-busters' or staff if they are worried. All pupils spoken to were confident that staff would resolve any issues.
- Parents are full of praise for how the school cares for its pupils. Key to the school's success is getting to

know its pupils as soon as they arrive. One parent summed this up: 'We felt welcome. The school picked up straight away on what he's like and what he needed. He's coming on in leaps and bounds.'

- Regular 'learning conversations' engage parents further. Parents and their children contribute their views, and targets are set, to be reviewed at the next 'conversation'. Parents say these are helpful to them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers skilfully use their assessment of pupils' learning in one lesson, such as the 'exit activity', when planning their teaching points for the next. For this reason, work is set at the right level and is neither too hard nor too easy.
- Pupils' interest and curiosity are engaged because teachers use a range of approaches, and vary them as the lesson progresses. For example, pupils role played a Viking attack to stimulate vocabulary for writing.
- Teachers' questioning is effective; teachers use a wide range of questions, sometimes to check pupils have understood and sometimes to challenge them further. Teachers' marking gives pupils constructive feedback, including guidance on what they need to do next to improve.
- Reading is taught well, including skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The shortcomings reported at the previous inspection have been addressed through good training. Advice and resources given to parents further support pupils' progress.
- Writing is taught well because teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is particularly strong and so their marking is very precise in what pupils need to do next to improve.
- Basic mathematical skills are taught well, partly because the calculations policy is clear and offers good guidance. However, opportunities to use and apply these skills are too few. For example, pupils rarely articulate a line of thinking or elaborate on it, or demonstrate an ability to break problems down.
- Pupils' academic development benefits from 'The Partnership'. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils from both schools joined together to learn examination techniques.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning because they are well trained and confident in the areas they teach, such as phonics. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Homework supports learning in school well and parents have the guidance and information they need to help their children. Pupils say they particularly like the challenges, such as to design and make a sundial.
- Lessons are well staffed and many activities take place as groups, rather than the whole class. As a result, pupils have access to good levels of adult support. However, too often teachers and teaching assistants, when they see a pupil stuck, immediately help. This means that pupils do not learn to think for themselves.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement from pupils' starting points is good because all make faster progress than expected in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, every pupil makes at least the progress expected from Year 2 in reading and writing, and nearly all in mathematics. School information and inspection evidence, drawn from pupils' workbooks, lessons and conversations with staff, suggests that a good proportion will reach higher levels this year. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
- By the end of Year 2, although attainment is a little below average, this represents good progress when pupils' low starting points are taken into account.

- Reading standards are relatively strong because the school has emphasised these skills as a key requisite of learning. In 2014, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the nationally expected standard in the phonics check was a little above average, an improvement on previous years.
- Writing standards are improving. 'Tools' of writing, such as punctuation, are learnt more methodically than in the past, and practised more frequently in other subjects.
- While basic skills in mathematics are good, they are not honed and extended sufficiently by using and applying them to reason and problem-solve. In particular, real and relevant opportunities in other subjects, such as science investigations, are missed.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment without identifying individual pupils. Throughout the school, rather more than half of pupils are disadvantaged. School information, confirmed by the inspection, indicates all are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points because they have extra help that exactly meets their individual learning needs.
- The most-able pupils make good progress, particularly benefiting from improvements in teaching since the previous inspection. In particular, lesson planning identifies these pupils better and, as a result, the tasks they are given are harder.
- Pupils joining the school other than at the start of Reception settle quickly. This is because the school's strong nurturing approach and the ready acceptance by other pupils, many of whom have had a similar experience, makes them feel welcome. They make good progress because their prior learning is checked so no time is wasted before they are set work that is at just the right level of difficulty.

The early years provision is good

- Although individuals vary greatly, overall children start in Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding well below those typical for their age. They make good progress from these low levels but most have not yet caught up by the time they join Year 1.
- Children benefit from learning with older pupils because this gives them good role models to follow when they first arrive at school. Additionally, those still struggling with the more formal Year 1 subjects continue to work in the early years approach for a while longer, and build the foundations of subsequent good progress.
- Children are enthusiastic to learn from the wide variety of imaginative tasks, such as a phonics game where they enjoy 'fishing' sounds from an imaginary pond, and reading them aloud. They take part very willingly in adult-led activities, such as recreating traditional tales, but tend to return to their old favourites when choosing for themselves.
- Children behave well. They co-operate with one another and generally share. Activities they are given help them begin to understand how they are all both alike and different.
- Clear leadership ensures provision fully meets the learning needs of the children. Their good progress through a full range of activities is tracked closely in their 'learning journeys'. Parents are invited to contribute to these records of their children's development.
- Children's safety and well-being are paramount. Through thoughtful questioning, staff develop children's awareness of their own safety.

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	120831
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	462054

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsay Peaston
Headteacher	Karen Hutchison
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2013
Telephone number	01263 732364
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	office@marsham.norfolk.sch.uk

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