

Caister Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120796
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	395475
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Warboys

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Plunkett
Headteacher	Brendan McCarney
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2006
School address	Kingston Avenue Caister-on-Sea Great Yarmouth NR30 5ET
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys

Additional Inspector

Graham Stephens

Additional Inspector

Joan Beale

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, senior leaders, staff and the members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, talked to different groups of pupils and listened to them read. The school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, samples of pupils' work, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' progress were scrutinised. The inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses from 53 parents and carers and 27 staff.

Information about the school

Caister Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre is larger than most infant and nursery schools. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is above the national average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These pupils predominantly experience speech, language and communication difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Below average proportions of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages and speak English as an additional language.

A breakfast and after-school club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.

The Children's Centre, Nursery and childcare provision, also managed by the governing body, are inspected and reported on separately.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because the quality of teaching is not contributing to outstanding achievement for all groups of pupils. The vast majority of pupils, staff, parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school. It provides a very caring and supportive environment for pupils and their families.
- Pupils' achievement, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good. Attainment is broadly average overall, but is higher in reading and mathematics than it is in writing. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the consistently good teaching they receive over time.
- The quality of teaching is good. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and support learning. In most lessons, teachers use interesting and engaging methods that motivate all groups of pupils and as a result, they make good progress. However, in subjects other than literacy and mathematics, work is not always closely matched to pupils' needs. In particular, there is insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Attendance rates are average despite a variety of strategies employed by the school to improve them. As they move around the school, pupils are polite, courteous and helpful to adults and to each other. They show very positive attitudes to learning and this contributes well to their learning and personal development.
- Leadership and management are good. They are not outstanding because the leadership of teaching and the management of performance are not resulting in outstanding achievement. The headteacher, governing body and staff share a clear vision for the school. Effective self-evaluation has identified the right priorities for school improvement and their actions are having a positive impact, particularly on pupils' reading and increasingly, on their writing skills.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, raise attainment in writing so that it more aligned with reading and mathematics by:
 - increasing opportunities for adults to model writing for children in the outdoor area of the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - building on recent, successful strategies to increase the imaginative, interesting curricular experiences that motivate pupils to write.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing the most effective practice that exists in the school
 - ensuring greater challenge for higher attaining pupils in subject areas across the curriculum, as well as in literacy and mathematics.
- Work together with parents and carers to improve attendance so that it is consistently above average.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Positive relationships with parents and carers and effective transition arrangements with the Nursery provision on site means that they settle in quickly and well. Children make good progress in their Reception year and reach broadly average levels by the time they join Year 1, though some weaknesses in linking sounds and letters, reading and writing remain. Adults provide good role models and help children to practise and develop a range of skills through play. For example, children learned descriptive language and extended their vocabulary choices as they excitedly explored different textures and as they peeled and prepared different vegetables to make coleslaw. They practised speaking and listening skills in the roleplay fruit and vegetable shop. However, there are missed opportunities for adults to model writing in the outdoor area. Adults praise children for their achievements, use questions skilfully to guide their play and actively teach good behaviour.

By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics are the equivalent of a term ahead of the national average. Attainment in writing is similar to the national average. In recent years, attainment in writing for boys and those known to be eligible for free school meals lagged behind similar groups nationally. Initiatives to improve writing standards by teaching phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) together with their written form are showing signs of success. Consequently, existing gaps in writing standards have been closed or are closing significantly.

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Pupils make good progress during their time in the school because teaching is consistently good. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good or better progress because of positive parental relationships and good links with a range of outside agencies that ensure pupils get the tailored support they need. As a result, all groups of pupils are well prepared for their next key stage. Most parents and carers comment that their children are making good progress. Inspectors found that in lessons, an overwhelming majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Progress is accelerated when pupils are actively involved, as in a Year 1 lesson where pupils worked in pairs outside and learned how to use precise technical vocabulary to give instructions to a partner so that they moved in a particular direction. In Year 2, pupils worked collaboratively to work out the most accurate and efficient way to solve problems involving money totals and giving change. This partnership-working helped to clarify pupils' thinking and contributed well to good progress.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers, who completed the questionnaire, are positive about the teaching their children receive. Most say that their needs are being met. As one parent put it, 'My child has transformed from a reluctant learner into one that is hungry to learn.' Inspection evidence confirms that the quality of teaching is good and outstanding at times. It consistently promotes learning well in lessons for all groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make consistently good progress because intervention programmes are personalised for individuals and small groups to address gaps in their knowledge and skills.

Teachers' secure subject knowledge, consistently high expectations of pupils and good relationships contribute significantly to pupils' learning and development. Adults are skilled in asking pupils searching questions, which aids understanding and challenges their thinking. The use of partner working has been particularly successful in improving writing. An illustration of this approach was observed in a Year 1 and a Year 2 lesson where pupils were encouraged to share their ideas regularly with others. This helped them to clarify their thoughts prior to writing. A recent review of the curriculum has increased pupils' engagement, by providing interesting and stimulating experiences to write. As a result, there are better opportunities for all pupils, and boys in particular, to apply their writing skills in other subjects. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is helping pupils to appreciate what they have done well and identify what they need to do to improve. Pupils are very clear when teachers emphasise positive features with pink highlighters as in being 'tickled pink' and areas for improvement with green as in 'green for growth'. Opportunities to reflect on their writing and explore ways to improve it are important skills for future life and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

In the most effective lessons, learning proceeds at a brisk pace and support staff are effectively deployed to support individuals and groups of pupils. Information and communication technology enhances learning because it interests and motivates

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pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils' technical skills developed rapidly as they enthusiastically explored the results of giving explicit instructions to a programmable floor robot. In most literacy and mathematics lessons, teachers use assessment information effectively to ensure that the work set is matched closely to pupils' needs. This is less effective in other curricular subjects when there is often insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of almost all pupils in lessons demonstrates their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are supportive of each other and this contributes well to their good achievement. Around the school, pupils are typically well mannered, kind and considerate. Parents, carers and staff in their questionnaire responses indicate that there is a good standard of behaviour at school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about lessons being disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found, and the school's records show, that teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour management policy effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour is ensuring that learning proceeds with very few interruptions. In discussions, pupils say that they feel safe and secure in their surroundings because, 'the teacher is always there to help us'. They say that incidents of any type of bullying, such as name-calling do not occur. However, on the rare occasions when pupils are unkind to each other, adults help them to deal with these issues quickly.

Rates of attendance have fluctuated considerably over recent years. Although the school has worked hard to improve them with a range of strategies, including certificates for the class with the highest attendance, it remains average.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management and the school's capacity to secure further improvement are good. Under the leadership of a highly committed and determined headteacher, there is a clear drive, and a strong sense of teamwork and shared responsibility exist among the school community to raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress. Governors regularly hold the school to account for its performance. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and are clear about its areas for development. They systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its actions on pupils' achievement. Rigorous performance management and professional development have led to teaching that is consistently good and outstanding at times. Leaders have fostered a reflective approach among the staff, where teachers learn from each other by sharing the very best practice that currently exists in the school. However, staff development has not been effective in securing consistently outstanding teaching and in maximising pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs and interests of its pupils. Recent initiatives have been successful in providing pupils

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with stimulating curricular experiences that inspire them to write. This has resulted in increased opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills as they learn about other subjects. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Consequently, pupils demonstrate curiosity in the world around them, show respect for adults and each other and behave well. A wide range of curricular visits and visitors help pupils to develop their understanding of cultural diversity. Partnerships with parents and carers and the close links with the Children's Centre are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. The breakfast and after-school club provision and invitations for parents, carers and grandparents to visit the school to enjoy a hot lunch together are appreciated by working parents and carers and also by pupils, who say that they very much enjoy these activities.

The school is very inclusive and any form of discrimination is tackled with due consideration. Meticulous tracking of pupils' progress ensures the promotion of equality. Pupils in danger of falling behind are identified early and targeted additional support is provided. Gaps in performance between different groups of pupils are tackled robustly. As a consequence, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points and attainment gaps have been successfully addressed.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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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.



28 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caister Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre, Great Yarmouth, NR30 5ET

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We think that your school provides a good education. You behave well in lessons and this helps you to make good progress. We found that you are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. We particularly enjoyed listening to you sing so well in your Olympic Values assembly. You were very keen to talk to us about the things you do in school. You told us that you are happy and feel safe at school. Your school is helping you to learn important skills that you will need for the future. You clearly enjoy the work you have been doing in learning to read and use mathematics. Your teachers are right to be helping you to improve your writing as well. Those in charge lead and manage the school well. They make sure that they know how well you are doing. As I am sure you know, there is always room for improvement, so to make things even better, I have asked your school to:

- work with your parents and carers to make sure you come to school as often as you possibly can
- make sure you use your writing skills more when you are learning about different subjects so that you reach the same standards in your writing as you do in reading and mathematics
- challenge you more in all subjects, not just literacy and mathematics, especially those of you who find the work too easy
- give your teachers every opportunity to work with each other to share what works best for you.

You can all play your part by continuing to work hard and by doing your best every minute of everyday. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Warboys
Lead inspector

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