

Cavalry Primary School

Cavalry Drive, March, PE15 9EQ

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception because of the high quality of teaching.
- Pupils achieve well from extremely low starting points, and reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and make sure the presentation of pupils' work is outstanding.
- The school excels at art and music. High-quality displays make the learning environment extremely attractive. The choir and band reach impressive standards of excellence.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in class and around the school. Pupils say they feel completely safe at school, a view supported by their parents.
- Reading is promoted extremely well, and pupils read widely and with confidence.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are passionate about the school giving pupils the very best education. The other leaders and managers support their ambition and, together with governors, have brought about improvements to teaching and achievement.
- The school works very well with parents, and all who returned questionnaires said they would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing, especially in Key Stage 1 where it has not been taught so well.
- Pupils do not have enough chance to show how they have worked out the solutions to mathematical problems, and teachers' comments in marking do not encourage them enough to practise new skills.
- The school's improvement plans include targets with deadlines, but these are of limited use as they are not easy to measure.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils read, attended an assembly and, together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, reviewed examples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including development plans, policies, and the school's own judgements on its own strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding and subject planning materials, records relating to partnership work, and information for families.
- Meetings were held with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of staff, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter, as well as speaking with parents.
- The inspectors considered 38 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Saunders	Additional Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- An increasing number of pupils join partway through their primary school education and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals or with a parent in the armed services) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been some long-term staff absence, especially in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - routinely encouraging pupils in Years 1 and 2 to show how they have tackled mathematical problems and worked out the answers
 - guiding pupils to try out and apply specific additional skills when marking their books
 - developing the home-school mathematics project to make full use of parental support.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by setting targets in improvement plans that can easily be measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards have risen this year, and are now average in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. During their time in the school, pupils achieve well overall from very low starting points.
- Pupils make an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children's language development. Very detailed planning makes sure that not a moment's time is lost during learning activities, and the exciting outdoor areas are used to the maximum. Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development and cooperate very well together.
- The results of the 2012 Year 1 reading check were well below expected levels. However, this is partly because of increasing numbers of pupils at the early stages of learning English, and partly because pupils had never experienced this sort of check before. This year more pupils have reached the required standard. Smaller groups for teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) are also helping pupils to develop their reading skills more quickly.
- In Key Stage 2 an electronic reading programme that is extremely popular with pupils is encouraging them to read widely. Many have made accelerated progress this year, after disappointing results in 2012. Since September the 200 pupils in Years 3 to 6 have read 4,812 books between them, amounting to some 53,808,887 words. They enjoy receiving certificates for their success in reading.
- Pupils' workbooks show that they make good progress over time in every class in Key Stage 2, and are expected to produce a large quantity of work that is beautifully presented. Consistently good teaching means that standards are rising rapidly.
- Standards have been below average at the end of Year 2. This is partly a result of long-term staff absence. Pupils' progress has accelerated in Key Stage 1 this year as teaching has improved. In particular, pupils are doing well in reading and writing and applying their skills across a range of different topics. Pupils write extensively in neat, cursive script and produce plenty of good-quality work.
- The school has identified that pupils do not do as well in mathematics in Key Stage 1 as they do in reading and writing. This is because pupils are not encouraged to show their working out when trying to solve problems, and the marking of their work does not guide them to apply new skills and build on their existing learning.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar good progress to that of their classmates. In the 2012 Year 6 national tests, they were on average two and a half terms behind in English and one and a half terms behind in mathematics. The attainment gap is closing this year, and more eligible pupils are reaching similar standards to their classmates. This is because the additional funding is used well to support them individually and in small groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and they receive good support from skilled teaching assistants to help them catch up with their classmates. They have done particularly well in developing their speech and language skills.

- Pupils who join the school late speaking English as an additional language make good progress, because they are given help with vocabulary and learning is adapted to suit their needs. As a result they settle quickly into the life of the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers offer good levels of challenge to all pupils, and make sure that work is set at the right level of difficulty for them. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Teachers are confident, and give pupils clear instructions about what they are learning and how they can be successful by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers make lessons enjoyable by actively involving pupils in learning. For example, Year 5 pupils designed a bathroom for a client of their choosing, and had to remember to add the retailer's 10% mark-up as well as allowing for assembly costs. This meant they had to use a wide range of mathematical skills, and the lesson generated considerable discussion as they came up with the best solutions.
- Writing is taught well. Work is designed around good-quality children's literature but also takes account of pupils' own ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils illustrated and described what you might find through the 'Secret Garden' doorway.
- Pupils take a real pride in their work. Their workbooks are neatly set out and carefully illustrated, and 'topic' work is of an extremely high quality. Imaginative links across subjects bring learning to life. For example, pupils designed a job advertisement for a Viking warrior, which required 'experience at stabbing hearts and kicking down doors' and promised by way of remuneration 'dried herring for life'.
- Teachers pick up pupils' misconceptions quickly and tackle them promptly. They ask probing questions to assess how well pupils are doing and to develop their thinking.
- In Key Stage 1, teaching has not been so consistent in the past because of staff absence. However, the situation has stabilised this year and teaching is now good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils thrive in the school's happy atmosphere and all get on extremely well together. Behaviour is outstanding in class and around the school. Older pupils act as play leaders to encourage the younger ones.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They think about what they are studying and enjoy learning new skills. In class they are enthusiastic and work hard. They say there is no bullying but understand about different types of bullying, such as racist bullying.
- Pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff and value the high standards they reach in art and music, which give them great satisfaction. This contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and boosts their confidence.
- Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and have a very good understanding about how to stay safe in a variety of different situations. They enjoy taking responsibility, as when the school council chooses charities for pupils to support.

- Attendance has been rising this year and is close to average, reflecting pupils' desire to come to school. Most pupils attend well and are punctual for lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders' vision and ambition for the school are embraced by all staff. Staff questionnaires show that they are proud to be part of the school and can see how they make a difference to the pupils. They know the pupils extremely well as individuals and make sure that they all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, drawn from regular and rigorous checks of its work by senior leaders and subject leaders. These enable leaders to form the right priorities for improvement. However, their plans for improvement do not include targets that can be easily measured to see what impact they are having on pupils' learning.
- Leaders have made improving teaching a priority and have been successful in securing consistently good or better teaching across the school. Staff are given clear feedback about how to improve their skills. Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and can show how they have helped to raise pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility. The school is very good at developing young teachers, providing support and coaching to help them improve.
- The range of taught subjects is imaginative and carefully planned to take account of pupils' interests. There are lots of related artwork and topics, and pupils show real flair in putting together their topic books. Visits to places of interest such as the West Stow Anglo-Saxon village enhance pupils' learning. Pupils are taught to achieve high standards in art and music, and many take part in the school's choir and concert band.
- The school works very well with parents. A new initiative to involve them in supporting their children's mathematical development at home as well as their reading is just getting off the ground. Respondents to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about the school and all said they would recommend it to others.
- The local authority has provided 'light-touch' support to this good school. There has been some useful help with mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors provide very good support, and know about the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. They visit the school regularly to check on its work. Governors know what the school is doing to manage teachers' performance, and how it rewards good teachers and tackles any underperformance. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements to keep pupils safe, and that the pupil premium benefits eligible pupils.

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	110674
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	412358

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Beeken
Headteacher	Val Spriggs
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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