

# Magdalen Gates Primary School

Bull Close Road, Norwich, NR3 1NG

**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher's determined leadership and relentless focus on improving teaching and the way subjects are taught has increased pupils' rate of learning and raised standards. The effective governing body and all staff share the headteacher's ambitions for pupils' success.
- The headteacher makes sure that her senior leaders have excellent opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Consequently, the senior team has a precise understanding of how well the school is doing, what needs to improve next and how to do this.
- All groups of pupils achieve well because teachers plan suitable work for them. More-able pupils receive a high level of challenge in lessons. Pupils who find learning difficult have carefully organised support.
- Teaching is increasingly of a high quality particularly in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Teachers' outstanding marking help pupils know exactly how well they have done and what they can do to improve.
- Subjects are linked imaginatively so that interesting and enjoyable lessons promote pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils work very sensibly together which contributes to their good and often outstanding learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding. The school is a happy and welcoming community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in the lesson and how much time they have to do this.
- Pupils who struggle with reading do not always have enough opportunities to practise using letter sounds to help them read or have enough guidance on their choice of reading book.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, almost all of which were seen together with members of the senior leadership team. Teaching assistants were also observed working with groups or individuals.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff and members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and the school growth plan detailing the school's development planning.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View as well as informal discussions with parents and e-mailed comments from them.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in a questionnaire returned by seven members of staff.

## Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Josephine Lewis

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a little smaller-than-average sized school. It serves the local community.
- There are six single-age classes plus a class for the Reception children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. This extra funding is for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average with an average proportion who speak English as an additional language. Many arrive at the school speaking no English.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of half of the teaching staff, including teachers who are newly qualified and others who are at the early stages of their teaching careers.
- The school has a high number of pupils, just over a quarter, joining and leaving the school part way through their education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a daily breakfast and after-school club during term time and a holiday club. These are managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - teachers making it clear to pupils what they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson
  - teachers setting consistently high expectations for pupils to work at a good rate
  - sharing the outstanding practice in the school.
- Accelerate the progress pupils make in acquiring early literacy skills in Reception, Years 1 and 2 by:
  - increasing the rigour with which phonic skills are taught, especially for those who find remembering letter sounds difficult
  - making sure struggling readers have guidance as to their choice of book so that they build up their skills in easy steps and read more than once per week to an adult who knows the skills they need to practise.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has risen in Key Stage 1. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher than expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have increased to just above average.
- At Key Stage 2, achievement is also improving but this improvement is not evident in all results. Over a quarter of the school's population can change in a year. The changes tend to be in the older year groups and therefore pupils new to the school and sometimes new to the country with little English, can make a difference to the data.
- Pupils who have been educated at the school since their start in Reception make at least good progress. Children, especially boys, start in Reception with their level of skills and personal development well below that which is typical of the age group. At the end of Year 6, pupils achieve as well as pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher than expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average.
- The school identified the need to change what is taught and the methods of teaching to deal with the low starting points of boys. School data indicate that these changes are making a difference. For example, in Year 5 boys and girls are at broadly the same levels in reading.
- The school's data about pupils' progress show the great majority in the school are making good progress from very wide-ranging starting points. For example, pupils who arrive in the school with very little English and may not have not attended school before, make impressive progress. The two main reasons for this progress are, first, outstanding teaching, and second, the pupils' kindness and consideration for one another.
- In developing social skills and very positive attitudes to learning, children in Reception and Year 1 make outstanding progress. Within a framework of outstanding relationship, all staff make it consistently very clear to children how they are expected to behave and how they should treat resources.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills. Their progress is not outstanding because, firstly, for some pupils there is not enough rigour applied to the teaching of letter sounds to help them make progress at a more rapid rate. Secondly, for children who struggle when starting to read, there is not enough guidance to make sure they have the right type and level of books to read and enough opportunities per week to practise reading.
- By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, the attainment and progress of the high number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are very similar to that of their classmates. For example, in recent national tests for Year 6, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were approximately half a term ahead of their classmates in mathematics but half a term behind in writing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of their classmates. Highly proficient teaching assistants deployed effectively by the special needs coordinator have a good impact when they carry out the special work planned for pupils. Parents speak highly of the support their children receive, how their confidence has grown and the progress they make.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Increasingly teaching is of an outstanding quality with little that is less than good. In almost all lessons, teachers' expectations are very high and they ensure lessons are challenging for all pupils, especially the more able. Pupils remain focused and engaged because teachers make lessons lively and interesting. Pupils say that lessons are fun and they love learning.
- Very high expectations, outstanding behaviour management and skilled questioning are key features in the most effective teaching. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson the teacher's skilled questioning led pupils to understand that the six times table was double the three times table. Teachers check pupils' understanding and quickly make adjustments to their teaching if needed.
- All teachers follow the school's system for marking pupils' work. Marking is outstanding and leaves pupils in no doubt as to how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils say they like trying to make their work even better. They know their targets and are very keen to meet them.
- The setting of interesting homework is a strong feature in pupils' interest in learning and their good progress. The school has many games pupils can take home to play with their family to help them reinforce mathematical concepts. Pupils are expected to tell their parents the class story and parents are invited to comment on how well their child has done this.
- Teaching of reading is good and is particularly appealing to boys. The school is a 'storytelling school' which means that each class has a story, which is used as the theme or topic for about half a term. As a result, pupils show a great deal of interest in authors' styles, their use of language and the topics dealt with. For example, older pupils can discuss favourite authors and give reasons for their choices. Through the current Year 6 story, their teacher has provided pupils with thought-provoking questions about slavery. They demonstrate considerable maturity in their responses to these questions.
- Teaching for the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes is good and frequently outstanding. Teachers set very high expectations for pupils to apply themselves to their tasks. Teachers do not have long introductions to their lessons because they know that many pupils find it difficult to concentrate. Teachers are very sensitive to the rate at which pupils learn. If they sense pupils are losing concentration, they change a task or bring them together to discuss how well they have got on.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to work with small groups. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language have the right sort of support to help them with developing their vocabulary.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. The special educational needs coordinator makes sure the planning of pupils' special work is linked closely to the skills they need to develop.
- When teaching is not at its most effective in a small number of lessons, learning slows. This is because teachers have not made it clear to pupils what they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson and set high expectations for them to work at a good pace.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Relationships are outstanding between adults and pupils and the pupils themselves. Pupils are very kind to one another and courteous to adults. They enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and to succeed. Through the school's focus on raising pupils' aspirations by having visitors in to talk about their jobs, pupils give considerable thought to their futures and know that they have to work hard and are keen to do so.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents unanimously agree. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school and have great confidence that should they have cause to worry, any member of staff would help them. Pupils have an impressive understanding of how to deal with risks especially when using mobile phones and the internet.
- Pupils know about a healthy diet and the benefits of regular exercise. There is a high participation rate in after-school sports clubs.
- In lessons, pupils work very well together especially when sharing ideas with a partner. Pupils respond well to their teachers so that little or no time is wasted correcting behaviour. On some occasions, when they are not clear what they are supposed to be learning, pupils' concentration wanes and this is why their behaviour is not outstanding.
- At break times, pupils play sensibly together in limited space. Older pupils take care of the younger ones and ensure that newly-arrived pupils are made to feel welcome.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors have maintained their clear vision and ambition for pupils' success. In spite of several staff changes, including the appointment of newly qualified teachers, good levels of achievement and pupils' personal development have been secured.
- All staff share a strong commitment to making sure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and there is no discrimination. Senior leaders take advantage of the strong links with the local cluster of schools to provide extra opportunities for pupils' learning.
- The headteacher ensures that senior staff have first-class opportunities to develop their leadership roles. Many have a national qualification in school leadership. As a result, senior leaders have an outstanding understanding of the school's strengths and areas where they believe they can improve further.
- Excellent management systems are at the heart of the school's success. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils rigorously. Senior leaders and teachers know exactly how well individuals and different groups of pupils are learning. They are well aware of where teaching needs to improve and have made a good start on bringing about improvements.
- The school has good arrangements, linked to the national 'Teachers' Standards', for managing the performance of teachers. Teachers have targets to meet related to the school's priorities for improvement and for their own performance.
- The headteacher and senior team hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.

Senior leaders provide outstanding role models in their own teaching. They give effective support to teachers at the early stages of their careers. A good 'coaching' system is in place to help staff improve and refine their practice.

- The organisation and teaching through subjects linked together in themes related to stories not only ensures all pupils make at least good progress but makes learning interesting. A particular strength is the successful focus on engaging boys and making sure they do as well as girls.
- The school is using the new government sports funding to employ more specialist sports coaches to enhance the provision for sport. This is helping to improve teachers' expertise and increase pupils' participation in clubs and other activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school provides an excellent range of visits and residential trips which pupils thoroughly enjoy. They are eagerly awaiting their trip on a cross-channel ferry to their residential visit to France. Pupils also visit theatres and museums regularly. The school participates in the children's university so that for a small initial fee, pupils can have free entry to any of the city's museums.
- The headteacher and governing body value parents as co-educators of their children. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for parents to visit and find out how their child is taught and how they are getting on with their work. For example, the school runs a 'reading café' and a 'maths café', both of which are sometimes run on a Saturday morning.
- The school has a high number of pupils leaving and joining. The headteacher and senior team are rigorous in following up after pupils leave the school to make sure that they have registered at another school. Similarly, they are quick to ask for the records of a new pupil from his or her previous school.
- All parents who voiced their views to inspectors had positive views, especially about the school's 'open door' policy. All responses on Parent View agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge which is valued by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are thorough in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff. They ensure that all requirements for pupils' safeguarding are fully met. They make good use of their individual professional expertise in supporting the school and asking searching questions. A small core of governors visit regularly and have a good understanding of what performance information tells them about how pupils' achievement compares with schools nationally. There is no complacency. They are well aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies used for helping teachers to make further improvement, such as linking pay closely to pupils' achievement and dealing with any underperformance. Governors check on spending decisions carefully, including the use and impact of pupil-premium funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120932
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	425274

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Duesbury
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cara Fahy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 622675
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