

# Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

School Road, Erpingham, Norwich, NR11 7QY

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 has developed a strong, committed and effective team of staff and governors. Frequent checks on teaching and good training opportunities are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and achievement.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The 'flexi-school' timetable, used to allow individual pupils to be partly home educated, works very well.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Activities are interesting and carefully planned to help each pupil build on their learning and progress well.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in class and around the school.
- The development of a successful 'leadership partnership' with two other local schools has enabled the headteacher to closely monitor how well the school is performing.
- Excellent relationships exist between the school and parents. Many parents volunteer to provide pupils with wide ranging experiences in music, art and drama. This contributes to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils new to the school receive good support; they settle quickly and make good progress during their time in school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not plan investigations for pupils, especially the more able, to 'use and apply' their mathematical skills sufficiently, and this sometimes limits their progress.
- Marking does not always show pupils how to make their work better.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes with the headteacher. This included looking at pupils' books and talking to them about their work.
- She listened to pupils read in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6.
- The inspector observed physical education teaching for Erpingham pupils at a partnership primary school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, a representative from the Diocese, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. A representative from the local authority was spoken to on the telephone.
- There was insufficient response to the online questionnaire 'Parent View' to show parental views but a number of parents were spoken to during the inspection.
- A number of documents were examined, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, school improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding files, data on pupils' current progress, and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.

## Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The school operates a 'flexi-schooling' system. Pupils are authorised to attend the school for three or four days and are home educated for the rest of the week. Half of the schools' pupils have a 'flexi-school' timetable.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed aged classes. One class for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and another for Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. It was above average in 2013. No pupils are currently supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. This figure was above average in 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- There were too few Year 6 pupils in 2013 to comment on whether the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the school year; many of these have not previously received formal schooling. September 2013 was the first time in recent years that the school has had a full intake join at the start of Reception.
- The school works in informal partnership with Gresham Village Primary School. The two schools have pooled additional government funding for primary school sport, and pupils from Erpingham visit Gresham every Friday for PE lessons.

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

- Accelerate progress in mathematics by developing the ability of all pupils, and especially the more-able pupils, to undertake mathematical investigations, both in mathematics and in other subjects.
- Improve marking so pupils are clear about how to make their work better, and ensure that teachers check that pupils have responded and are not making the same errors in their subsequent work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupil numbers are very small; some year groups have only one child. This, together with the high number of pupils who join the school part way through their education, makes comparisons with national data difficult. The school keeps information to show that each pupil makes good progress during their time at Erpingham.
- Children begin Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typically seen at this age. They make good progress because their teacher frequently checks how well they are learning and plans activities to help them develop new skills and learn even more. They are well prepared to start Year 1. Their good progress continues and they attain results above national expectations overall, although scores are higher in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- End of Year 6 results in 2013 were low when compared with national figures. All pupils joined the school during Key Stage Two; three-quarters of the cohort joined at the end of Year 5 or in Year 6 and three-quarters were disabled or had special educational needs. School information shows that all pupils made good progress from their individual starting points in school but it was not always enough to catch up the gaps created in their learning before they attended the school.
- Pupils generally make good progress in reading. Effective teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) together with the provision of an excellent range of interesting new books in the school library helps pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils in all year groups make good progress in reading.
- The school makes frequent checks on how well all pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. They carefully check the progress of pupils new to the school to make sure they receive appropriate support to help them settle and make good progress as quickly as possible.
- Almost half of the pupils in school are on a flexi-school timetable. Teachers exchange information with this group of parents on a daily basis so that parents and teachers both know what pupils are learning in school and at home and how well they are doing. Data shows these pupils make at least good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and are given opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing. Pupils, and particularly the more-able, do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their mathematical skills by completing investigations or solving problems, either in mathematics itself or in other subjects. This limits their achievement.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding are a very small group so it is not possible to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals. Funding is used well to provide one to one teaching and school data show these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates in reading and writing but perform slightly less well in mathematics.
- The school has pooled its primary school sports funding with another local primary school. The schools employ a sports teacher and a gymnastics teacher who teach pupils from both schools

together whilst training teachers to improve their own PE teaching. Achievement in PE is improving and pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn with different pupils. This imaginative use of funding has enabled pupils to enter competitive team sport events which, due to the size of the school, they had previously been unable to enter.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is consistently good and there are examples of outstanding teaching. There is a strong commitment from all staff to look constantly for ways to improve. They attend training courses to improve their own teaching and pupils' learning. They share their new training with all teachers so it can benefit all pupils in the school. This approach is creating an increased proportion of outstanding teaching in school.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They take time to quickly get to know pupils new to the school, including their varied previous experiences of education. They check pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics to help plan lessons that are neither too easy nor too hard for pupils. This helps new pupils make good progress in their learning.
- All groups of pupils learn well. The school follows a 'stage not age' approach so pupils work with pupils at the same stage of learning as them, not necessarily the same age. This helps all groups of pupils, including the more-able and those who need additional help, make good progress especially in reading and writing.
- In class pupils are absorbed in their learning. They like tackling the challenges given to them because they enjoy have to think carefully for themselves.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium. They are very skilled at asking questions to check pupils' understanding and make sure pupils are keen to tackle problems for themselves rather than be over reliant on adult help. They have benefited from many training opportunities, for example forest school leader training and specialist sports leader training. This training has helped improve the experiences and achievement of all pupils in outdoor learning and PE.
- 'Flexi-school' pupils experience a wide range of learning on days not in school. Pupils often choose to link these to the topics they are learning about in school. Many of these pupils benefit from additional art, music and languages lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently. Marking usually explains what learning has taken place; it does not show pupils precisely how to make their work better.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They arrive punctually to school every morning excited by the learning experiences that await them.
- Pupils and teachers have excellent relationships and pupils are fully prepared to take part in the learning activities prepared for them. These relationships help pupils grow in confidence when they may not find activities easy. This is seen in pupils' improved attitudes to, and achievement in, gymnastics and dance.

- Good behaviour was seen at break and lunchtimes and pupils were eager to point out that this was typical behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school has a positive and caring atmosphere and pupils say they feel safe in school. The headteacher, governing body and parents have also introduced systems of risk assessments to keep pupils safe during the days of the week they are educated at home.
- The school works effectively to maintain good behaviour and attendance, and there are clear procedures in place to monitor and support pupils who have difficulties in these areas. This includes collecting pupils from home to walk them to school if necessary. Attendance has improved in recent years and is close to the national average.
- Pupils are confident that despite occasional small disagreements between friends there is no bullying in school. Staff and parents support their view. Pupils are taught how to keep safe on the internet.
- The school has a strong focus on learning outdoors and pupils enjoy a weekly 'Forest Schools' session. Safety is given high priority and pupils are taught how to keep safe near fire and water.
- Pupils are polite to each other, to adults and to visitors. They are proud of their school and are eager and happy to talk about how much they enjoy their learning.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides very effective and committed leadership. He is well respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. All adults share his commitment that Erpingham will support every pupil to be the best learner they can be. He has developed a strong team approach and all members of the school community work together to provide wide ranging learning opportunities that enable pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress. Morale is very high.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The information is used to write clear plans for improvement. This responsibility is shared by all leaders and managers. Plans are frequently checked and are helping improve achievement; this has been particularly successful in reading, where plans to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading and their access to high quality children's literature have worked well.
- The headteacher works closely with two primary schools within the local cluster to develop the leadership and management skills of all three schools. The reciprocal arrangement means leaders visit each school to monitor and verify the quality of teaching and learning. This has led to sharper judgements when observing learning and a higher proportion of outstanding lessons.
- The management of staff performance is clear and concise; targets are clearly linked to professional 'Teachers Standards' and the need for improvements in pupil progress.
- Leaders and managers frequently check information about how well pupils are doing so that either additional support can be given if a pupil falls behind in their learning or more challenging work if a pupil is learning quickly.
- The school teaches a wide range of interesting themes and topics and pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to extend their learning during trips and visits. Pupils gain additional

experiences from the large number of adults who volunteer to support the school. A local artist supported Year 1 for an exciting day based on Jack-in-the-boxes. Pupils had an enjoyable day developing high quality art and technology skills.

- The headteacher closely monitors the work and progress of 'flexi-school' pupils. He makes sure the school has the right to withdraw the arrangement for any pupil whose family do not provide suitable learning opportunities during flexi days.
- The pupil premium grant is spent on a variety of activities to promote learning. This includes one-to-one opportunities to work with a teacher and setting up an after school fishing club to develop pupils' concentration and self-esteem.
- The local authority has not visited the school, other than to check its attendance figures in recent years or provided specific support to the school as they have categorised it as a good school with many outstanding features.
- Relationships with parents are excellent. Parents appreciate the care and support for learning their children receive in school.
- Weekly 'Stay and play' sessions take place in Reception and 'Forest friends', both for pre-school children are very popular and attendance is high. Both schemes have contributed to the school having a full Reception intake for the first time in many years.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very proud of their unique school. They acknowledge that, although small, the school offers an important educational experience for its families, many of whom travel over 15 miles to bring their children each day
  - Governors are very pro-active to keep the school viable in the future and are looking to establish a formal partnership with another primary school and set up a pre-school on site to aid sustainability
  - Governors have good knowledge and understanding of how well pupils are doing, including those supported by the pupil premium. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of what is being done to improve teaching
  - All policies are up to date, the pay policy has been updated to ensure better teachers can be rewarded financially and governors have recently approved use of this policy
  - Governors ensure all statutory requirements related to safeguarding are met.

## 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>	121036
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	440574

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Longhurst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon East
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 761365
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