

Anthony Curton CofE Primary School

The Chase, Walpole St Peter, Wisbech, PE14 7NG

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and standards have risen this year.
- Children are given a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is good. Interesting activities promote learning well.
- The quality of the physical education curriculum and the range of after-school activities are particular strengths.
- Strong leaders regularly check the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching, responding quickly when underperformance is identified.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to learning. Many are highly trained.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, and their attitudes to learning are good. They learn all about how to keep themselves safe.
- Interesting and stimulating displays promote learning in all areas of the school.
- Governors know the school well. They challenge leaders effectively about the performance of staff and pupils, and ensure spending is targeted effectively to improve pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More-able pupils are not always challenged enough to reach higher standards.
- Leaders' action plans for improvement are not ambitious enough to help the school become outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw nine lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils including the school council, a group of Year 6 children and a group of Year 5 children.
- Other meetings were held with members of staff, a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body and some parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, governing body meetings, school assessment information, curriculum planning, local authority reports, teachers' planning and the school improvement plan.
- Pupils' books were examined and several groups of pupils were asked to talk about the work in their books. Displays around the school were examined and inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses from parents via the online questionnaire Parent View and one letter that was received during the inspection, and questionnaires that were completed by staff.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Carpenter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The staff run a before- and after-school club on the premises which is monitored by the governors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more-able pupils are challenged to make rapid progress and reach higher standards by ensuring that teachers:
 - show consistently high expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve
 - plan and provide activities more carefully with able pupils in mind
 - provide more detailed feedback to pupils on how to reach the highest levels of work.
- Develop more effective plans for improvement by:
 - setting more ambitious performance targets
 - including clearly measurable targets in action plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin in Reception class with skills and knowledge that vary year on year. In some years they have the skills expected for their age and in other years their skills are not as well developed. Good teaching, an excellent partnership with parents and a stimulating learning environment mean that they make good progress. Many children, including those with low starting points, leave reception with a good level of development.
- In 2013 Year 1 pupils achieved levels in line with the national average when they took the national phonics screening check. This year pupils are on track to achieve scores above the 2013 national average.
- Younger pupils read confidently and know how to break down words that they do not understand. They enjoy their books and appreciate that many of them are of a good quality. Older pupils show considerable enthusiasm for reading and writing. They talk eagerly about the books they read and their writing in class.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has typically been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The current progress of pupils is good. They are on track to achieve higher results this year, particularly in writing.
- Pupils develop basic skills in mathematics confidently and apply these in practical contexts. Considerable effort is made to use mathematics in a wide range of subjects and this has been successful in improving rates of progress. The project work on aeroplanes is a good example.
- Good progress continues between Years 3 and 6. It is not quite as fast in Years 3 and 4 as it is in Years 5 and 6. In 2013 there was a dip in the progress pupils made in writing. Leaders responded quickly, introducing a range of measures that had a rapid impact.
- This year's oldest pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics and particularly good progress in writing. Detailed school assessment data, the work of all year groups and discussions with pupils show that current progress in Years 3, 4 and 5 is good.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013, were on average two and a half terms behind the others in mathematics and nearly two years in reading, but a term ahead in writing. Eligible pupils in Year 6 are currently making similar progress to their classmates, and sometimes better. In other year groups the gaps have narrowed considerably too. Funding has been used effectively by providing additional one-to-one support, releasing class teachers so they can spend more time with eligible pupils, and taking on a part-time specialist mathematics teacher.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. This group of pupils also make good progress, because of well-chosen support and guidance from highly trained teachers and support staff. Although more-able pupils make good progress they do not always progress rapidly enough to reach the highest levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults work well together, providing a stimulating classroom. Indoor and outdoor activities support purposeful learning in a wide range of areas.

Pupils choose activities that are often challenging, and show good levels of perseverance and enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy measuring activities using water.

- The teaching of phonics (early letters and sounds) is good. This happens at a fast pace and pupils are given lots of opportunities to practise. In lessons pupils are split into groups so that they can learn at a level appropriate for their ability. Pupils enjoy these sessions and make good progress.
- Stimulating activities help keep pupils focused on their work. It is common for pupils to discuss their work with others and to work on extended tasks. Teachers provide effective support so that pupils make good progress. One of the strengths of teaching is the way that many teachers respond during the lesson to the pupils' progress, changing direction or giving additional support when needed.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge and use this well to motivate pupils so that they try hard during lessons. This was evident in a Year 5 class, which were working on a persuasive letter to the Village Council regarding the proposed siting of a recycling centre in the village. Pupils worked hard and with considerable enthusiasm for a long period of time. They were given good support by the teacher to create presentations of their findings. They were particularly motivated when they found out that their letters would go to a real councillor.
- Pupils' books show that most take good pride in their work and present it neatly. A small number do not look after their books, for example they may scribble in them, and teachers do not challenge this sufficiently.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively both in class and out of class. Considerable effort has been put into training these staff and many are highly qualified. This can be seen in the good quality support they give which is characterised by clear questioning and timely help in learning activities.
- The teaching of internet safety is good. In a Year 3 lesson pupils were giving excellent guidance on how to use the internet safely, including safe use of a search engine and what to do if anything unexpected happens.
- The quality of physical education teaching is particularly good. Strong leadership by a highly skilled coordinator has developed an exciting and extensive curriculum which encourages high standards. This is supported by a wide range of after-school clubs, which many pupils attend.
- In some classes teachers do not put enough thought into providing activities that will help more-able pupils make rapid progress. They do not provide sufficient challenge in the questions they ask or in the comments they make when marking books.
- The before- and after-school club provide safe surroundings. Pupils take part in a range of social and learning activities that promote their development in a positive way.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils often show good attitudes to learning. They typically try hard and work enthusiastically at a wide range of activities. They respond quickly to instructions and move around school quietly and calmly.
- Pupils show good levels of responsibility. They use computers confidently and take part in

science and technology activities safely. One group of pupils was observed behaving sensibly during an archery class. Others showed excellent awareness of how to use the internet safely.

- Pupils show considerable pride in the school community. One practical example of this is the way pupils decided that the school was not tidy enough and launched a 'clean up litter' campaign. The result of this is that the school is kept in extremely good condition. They also have a considerable pride in their attachment to the Scotties Little Soldiers Charity. They care deeply about raising money for this organisation.
- There is very little inappropriate behaviour. Examinations of the bullying log show that this is rare and pupils say it is dealt with quickly. There have been no racist incidents recorded.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school takes great care to make sure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet all requirements.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because, 'Teachers care about us and the lessons are interesting'. This shows in the improving attendance levels, which are now better than the national average. They wear their uniform with pride and several pupils who were new to the school commented on how welcome they had been made to feel.
- The results from the parents' questionnaire show that a very large majority of parents feel that the school keeps their child safe, and all 27 responses suggested pupils are well behaved. Almost all parents would recommend the school to another parent.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are not outstanding because on the rare occasions when lessons are not stimulating, some pupils lose focus and learn at a slower pace.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership to the school. Parents, pupils and governors value her tireless efforts to raise standards. They also feel that the school is a place where all pupils feel valued.
- Effective monitoring of pupils' progress and accurate self-evaluation means that leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development well. The headteacher and assistant headteacher acted decisively last year when there was a dip in the progress pupils were making in writing. In partnership with the governors they took a range of measures to rectify the situation, such as better support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and more specialist teaching. Clearer progress measures were also included in the teachers' performance management targets.
- The quality of staff training is a strength of the school. Teachers and support staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities, which they attend to raise their skills.
- Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' work. Teachers are held to account at meetings to check pupils' progress, which take place every half term. If pupils start to fall behind they quickly receive extra help.
- Subject leaders are clear about their roles and work effectively with senior leaders to drive up standards of work. In English and mathematics, subject leaders take time to provide feedback to staff on areas of teaching and learning that need further improvement.

- The curriculum has been planned effectively so that pupils can join in whatever their background or level of ability. It is imaginative and stimulating, providing high levels of motivation to pupils so that their progress is good. All subjects are taught well. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop technological and computing skills. The school seeks the views of parents regularly and responds to the results of these surveys. For example, communication has been improved greatly and the partnership with parents strengthened.
- The use of additional primary sports funding has been effective. Specialist training of staff has improved the quality of teaching, new after-school clubs such as archery have been introduced, and the level of participation in physical activity has been increased. Many pupils have risen to the challenge to take part in five or more hours of physical activity a week. As a result, their skills are developing well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are good links with the local community groups including the village church and good opportunities for a range of visits. Cultural diversity is celebrated in many subjects with 'World Cup' week being an example of how different cultures are learnt about and appreciated. Spiritual development is given a high priority and this can be seen in acts of worship that regularly take place.
- Despite the school making good progress in almost all areas, its action plans for improvement are not ambitious enough. Leaders and governors do not yet have a clear vision of how to keep the school improving further so that it can become outstanding. Their action plans are not ambitious enough and do not include clear measurable targets by which progress can be measured.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors visit the school regularly. There have been recent visits by the chair of governors, the health and safety governor and the governor responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These and other visits mean that governors know the school well. They are good at ensuring that the school's budget is used wisely, and monitor spending of the pupil premium and sports funding very well. This good knowledge of the school is used well to ensure that the management of staff performance is closely linked to the rewards they receive. All teachers have pupil progress targets, which are monitored regularly. The governors have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. They engage fully in development planning, taking part in deciding the key issues for school improvement. They undertake training regularly and have introduced a self-evaluation cycle for their own work. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors hold leaders fully to account. Safeguarding procedures are managed well.

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	121138
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	443953

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Scott
Headteacher	Anne Senior
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2011
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