

# Dersingham Primary School

Admirals Drive, Dersingham, Kings Lynn, PE31 6LR

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Children settle quickly in the Reception class and make good progress because they are curious to learn from the rich variety of interesting activities provided.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 so pupils reach expected or above expected standards by the time they leave. Reading is a particular strength.
- Well-planned skilfully taught extra help, tailored to their needs, means pupils who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Pupil premium funding is also used effectively so that eligible pupils are catching up with other pupils.
- Pupils show good attitudes and eagerly accept the challenge to do harder work.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know staff will take care of them.
- Parents would overwhelmingly recommend the school to another parent.
- Governors and the headteacher have successfully amalgamated the infant and nursery and junior schools into an effective primary. In the short time since then, they have improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' standards.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Particularly effective teaching is not shared enough.
- Some teaching assistants are unsure what they are expected to do in parts of lessons.
- Parents would like to see communication between school and home improved.
- Some parents say they would like to know more about how their children learn in school, so that they are better able to support their children's learning at home.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors sampled parts of 12 lessons. Three were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Twenty-four other parents gave their views in writing. The responses to 22 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Dutton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is a little below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- In 2013, the Department for Education did not publish an official picture of the school's Key Stage 2 results, so no comparison is possible with the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress when they leave primary schools.
- The previous infant and junior schools closed and re-opened as a voluntary aided church primary school in April 2013.
- The Reception children are taught in two classes on the Saxon Way site. Years 1 to 6 are taught in seven classes on the Admirals Drive site.
- The school operates a breakfast club on both sites and an after school club at the Admirals Drive site.
- A preschool, run by the governing body, shares the Early Years site (Saxon Way) and is inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
  - sharing examples of particularly effective teaching more widely among staff
  - the work of teaching assistants is regularly checked and that they are always thoroughly prepared for the tasks they will do and deployed to maximise their impact on pupils' progress.
- Further develop the links with parents by:
  - exploring ways to improve communication between home and school, and ensure parents receive the information they need in a timely fashion
  - providing opportunities for parents to understand how their children learn in school so they are clearer about how to help their children learn out of school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Reception with skills and experiences which, overall, are below those typically seen at that age, particularly in speech and language, and social and emotional development. They enjoy learning from the many and varied tasks they are given or choose for themselves. In 2014, about two-thirds of children reached a good level of development before they entered Year 1.
- Through the school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of the approach taken by the school. Pupils see learning as something done by them, not to them, so they are clear about the level they are working at and how they are going to challenge themselves to make the quickest progress and so reach the highest level they can.
- In 2014, by the end of Year 6, all pupils reached the expected level for their age in reading and mathematics, and nearly all did so in writing. Nine in every ten, a high proportion, reached a higher level in reading. Although this fell to six in ten in writing and four in ten in mathematics; these results are a significant improvement on 2013.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the way letters link to the sounds they make (phonics) because they are taught well using a clear method. As a result, three-quarters of pupils are expected to meet the expected level in the Year 1 national screening check. This is a big improvement on 2013 because school leaders acted decisively when they saw the previous method was not working.
- Fundamental to the quicker rate of progress and consequent higher levels all pupils reach is the very effective use of information about their progress. At the start of the year, challenging but realistic targets are set for each pupil. On a regular basis, staff check how each pupil is progressing towards these targets. If they seem to be falling behind, or not progressing as quickly as they should, staff analyse why and put extra help in place to bring them back to where they should be. This extra help, in turn, is checked and changed if it is not working.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points because they receive just the right level and amount of extra help they need to enable them to succeed in tasks while still being challenged them to think for themselves and persevere when the work is difficult.
- There were not enough Year 6 pupils in 2013 known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without the risk of identifying individuals. Information provided by the school about the progress of these pupils in all year groups shows that they make good progress and are catching up quickly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Good use is made of particular expertise among staff so pupils produce good quality work in art and information and communication technology. In physical education, coaching is good, pupils learn new techniques for example in tennis, and do well. They have a good understanding of the health benefits of regular strenuous exercise.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Classes run smoothly and no time is lost in lessons because of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, an atmosphere of mutual respect permeates learning in all classes.
- The approach taken by teachers is fundamental to pupils' good rates of progress, positive attitudes to learning and improved behaviour. Typically, teachers give pupils a task to check their knowledge before new work. Based on this, pupils start at a suitable level. Subsequent tasks involve different levels of challenge and pupils are carefully guided towards choosing the one that is most suitable. No cap is placed on their learning and they are encouraged to attempt harder work as soon as they feel ready to do so. As a result, they progress quickly.
- Reception children are taught well. Staff recognise their interests and suggest activities which encourage them pursue them further. Staff strike a good balance between guiding children and letting them find things out for themselves.
- If teachers identify that any pupils might struggle with a new topic, shortly before it begins, these pupils are given some preliminary tasks to build their knowledge so they can confidently tackle the new work.
- Basic numeracy and literacy skills are taught effectively. Spelling, grammar and punctuation, for example, are taught in short focused sessions before pupils are given activities, often in other subjects, that allow them practise these skills. In this way, pupils learn the skill and then understand how to use it generally, and teachers see how well the skill has been mastered.
- Most teachers are skilled at asking just the right question to encourage pupils to think through a problem, without leading them to an answer. As a result, pupils learn to problem-solve methodically.
- Learning is supported by a good number of well qualified assistants. Most teachers manage these colleagues effectively, so they are always making a positive contribution to pupils' learning, but there are inconsistencies in how thoroughly they are briefed and deployed.
- Throughout the school, different teachers are particularly effective in aspects of teaching, in the use of techniques to enable pupils to learn well. However, while these skills have largely been identified by school leaders, insufficient opportunities have yet been given for teachers to learn from one another.
- The homework policy is clear and the school provides a homework club so school staff can support and guide pupils, particularly if they need to research.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of pupils respond very well to the school's system for managing behaviour, particularly its emphasis on, and reward for, good behaviour. A few pupils struggle to manage their behaviour sometimes, but because staff know them so well, they can usually find an approach to help them rectify the situation quickly.
- Right from Reception, pupils are curious and keen to learn. They are encouraged to think for themselves and to play a part in choosing their own route towards more advanced work. By recognising the improvements they are making, their self confidence is built and they are motivated to learn.

- Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations, for example that workbooks will be kept neat and tidy, work carefully presented.
- Pupils are listened to and consequently feel the amalgamated school is their school. They had a say initially in the logo and colours. The eldest year organised their 'activity week', making sure everyone's views were listened to, plans were properly budgeted for and their fund-raising covered the costs involved.
- Older pupils enjoy helping. They are well trained by their staff mentors to listen to the views of their 'families' of younger pupils, and provide a helpful contact if any of these pupils need one.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught to be aware of their own safety, and that of others. They generally follow these rules. Whether using the road or the internet, they have a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have great pride in their school and enjoy re-affirming this through enthusiastic singing of the school song.
- Attendance is average. The school operates a balanced approach, with incentives to encourage good attendance, while rightly tackling persistently poor attendance.
- Reception children settle quickly because of the excellent transition arrangements. Elsewhere in the school, pupils meet and work with their new teachers and classes just before the summer holidays. As a result, they understand new routines and make good progress from their first day.

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

- The headteacher is relentless in her drive and ambition for the school. In a very short time, she has led many improvements to important aspects of the school so that teachers present lessons in an interesting way and as a result pupils love learning and behave better.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate so improvements are in the right areas, with clear measurable targets.
- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and use this information productively both to help the individual teacher improve and, when many staff have similar needs, to plan training. Although the intention is to introduce a similar system for teaching assistants, none exists currently.
- Staff from both schools have 'gelled' well to form an effective team. New staff are made to feel very welcome and given the information they need to contribute fully.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well; staff strengths are utilised effectively and the clear structure to the day and range of activities gives children a rich diet of learning.
- Staff have a collective role in organising subjects and how pupils' skills are developed year-on-year which is particularly useful in giving all teachers an understanding of what is done elsewhere in the school and their role within the bigger picture.
- The curriculum is well thought out. Increasingly, pupils' ideas are incorporated into the plans.

Visitors and visits extend pupils' learning.

- Additional sports funding is used well. Pupils enjoy some additional activities, such as sailing, but the majority is used to train staff so that sports generally are taught better. School leaders' observations of teaching demonstrate the improvements which have resulted from the funding.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the improvements made recently. In discussion, several parents say they would like better communication generally with the school, while others feel they would like to know more about the learning that goes on in school in order to help their children learn out of school.
- Parents appreciate the good quality before and after-school provision. Pupils enjoy the breadth of interesting activities, the opportunity to socialise with others, and the healthy snacks.
- The local cluster of schools is very effective as schools work very co-operatively. For example, they have checked where practise is best so that one school can learn from another. Pupils from different schools, such as the school council, share ideas and learn together.
- The school has benefited from the 'challenge partner' provided by the local authority to give an opportunity to check the school has an accurate picture of itself.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are well managed and organised; in particular the wide range of governor expertise is used wisely to the benefit of the school. They plan meticulously for the present and are equally thorough in planning ahead. Amalgamation has been handled well but is understood as only the first stage of the school's evolution. Information about how well pupils are doing is understood and analysed; they know about the rate of pupils' progress and how extra funding, such as pupil premium, is used and the difference it makes. Governors ask searching questions of the headteacher and other staff and play their part in improving the school and raising standards. Governors' committees mirror key aspects of the school, such as teaching and learning, so governors are better able to hold the school staff to account. They have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, the role of performance management, and how pay is linked to performance. Like the headteacher, they do not tolerate underperformance and have already faced difficult decisions taken in the interests of pupils. The governors make sure the school meets all legal requirements, including those relating to safeguarding.

## 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>	138795
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	439927

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	250
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Brock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gayle Platt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01485 540308
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