

Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary

Balmoral Close, Towcester, NN12 6JA

Inspection dates 2-3 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides clear direction and has the full support of her staff. All leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They work effectively together to continue to make improvements.
- Pupils' conduct and attitudes are excellent. Their manners are exemplary; they show great respect to others and are always keen to learn. Pupils enjoy school and feel extremely safe. This is reflected in their above average attendance.
- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. Valuable support is provided for those who are disabled or have special educational needs. The needs of the most-able pupils are also well catered for, so they reach high standards.
- Reading is taught most successfully from the outset. Pupils go on to become confident readers who often read for pleasure.
- All pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain standards that are above average by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Children make good progress in the early years because teaching is good and the provision is well managed. Children settle quickly because of the good quality nurture they receive.
- Displays around the school are vibrant and of exceptionally high quality. They show the wide range of subjects taught and the emphasis given to key skills. Artwork is of a particularly high standard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively and enhances the school's welcoming and harmonious atmosphere. All pupils have a high level of respect and appreciation for others.
- Governors are very knowledgeable. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to senior leaders. Together, they have ensured that teaching and achievement are consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing in Key Stage 2 is not yet as good as it is in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- A small number of the less-able pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Marking is not always effective in helping pupils to improve their work and pupils are not routinely expected to respond to the guidance that is provided.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 24 part-lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the leadership team, the headteacher, and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 137 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire from 42 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, talked to them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- The inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school’s checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils’ current progress, leaders’ reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Winfield-Chislett

Additional Inspector

Aileen Thomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School converted to be an academy school on 14 February 2011. When its predecessor school, Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2007 it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school with two classes in each year group from Reception Year to Year 6.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis, either in the morning or the afternoon, and are full-time in Reception.
- The school has specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This provides additional support for eight children in the Nursery who have speech and language difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in ten. This is below the national average.
- Only four per cent of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils known to be entitled to free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing in Key Stage 2, so that attainment matches that seen in reading and mathematics, by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding and thereby accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - the progress made by less-able pupils is more consistent and provision is adjusted more rapidly if progress is too slow
 - teachers' marking has more impact on the quality of pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior and subject leaders successfully promote a culture of excellent behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning. They work effectively together to ensure that achievement and teaching are consistently good. High quality training and support are provided to help teachers develop their practice even further. Support is also available for teachers new to the school or profession to quickly acquire the expertise needed. As a result, this is a good and improving academy.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and areas in the school which need further improvement. They draw on their in-depth knowledge to generate tightly focused action plans to rapidly drive identified areas forward. For example, a dip in mathematics results for girls was identified in 2013, and swift action was taken that brought about improvement in their achievement.
- All leaders, including those who oversee subjects or specific areas, carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching and carefully analyse information about pupils' progress. Through regular observations, leaders provide feedback to teachers and follow up any improvement areas. They carefully analyse information about the progress made by all groups of pupils in different subjects and different year groups. This is regularly shared with governors. The impact of all this is that support is quickly provided for pupils or staff to ensure high standards are maintained.
- The headteacher has improved the system for managing the performance of teaching staff and holding them to account. Challenging annual targets are set for teachers as part of the school's drive to continually improve. These are linked to whole-school priorities and staff pay. Only those who demonstrate that pupils make at least good progress receive pay awards.
- Leaders have taken steps which make sure that disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as other pupils in the school. The pupil premium is used to good effect to provide a good range of focussed support for eligible pupils. Regular checks are made on how well these pupils are achieving. The schools' own information shows that the in-school gaps in attainment are diminishing for current year groups.
- The sports premium has been used well to train teachers and extend the opportunities open to pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. As a result, staff are more confident in teaching physical education and increased numbers of pupils attend sports clubs. Pupils are having greater success in competitions; for example, they recently won a local cross country tournament.
- The school has adjusted and reviewed its planning in order to deliver the new curriculum. It is developing its approach to implement an assessment system which will track and measure the progress of pupils in different subjects. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the pupils' interests. Although links are made between subjects so learning is meaningful and enjoyable, pupils are not always given enough opportunity to practise and develop their writing skills in other subject areas. After-school clubs, visits and visitors contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school and provide them with memorable experiences.
- Leaders strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through topic work, religious education lessons and assemblies, pupils are taught to appreciate and respect those from different backgrounds and with different beliefs. Pupils who spoke to inspectors had a good knowledge of different faiths, for example Sikhism, and also had an understanding about life in India through their topic work. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils work in ability groups for English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. This helps cater for their different needs. Additional support is also provided for the most-able pupils and those with special educational needs. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff are effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Good governance contributes significantly to school improvement. Governors have a broad range of

skills and expertise which they put to good use to strongly challenge school leaders but equally give optimum support. They are not complacent and are determined to raise standards even further.

- Governors receive regular and comprehensive reports from senior staff on how well the school is performing compared to other schools. They are familiar with published data and school information about the progress made by all groups of pupils. They know how the pupil premium and sports funding are used and the impact this funding is having on the learning of eligible pupils.
- Governors set very challenging targets for the headteacher and are kept fully informed about teachers' performance. As result, they have a clear understanding on the quality of teaching. They check that pay increases for teachers and leaders are only awarded where there is evidence that pupils are making good progress.
- Governors attend regular training to keep their skills and expertise up-to-date. All statutory duties are fulfilled, including that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Their excellent conduct and readiness to learn reflect the high expectations placed upon them by all staff. They work enthusiastically in lessons and this contributes to their good progress. Good levels of respect are shown to adults and other pupils. These warm and trusting relationships create a highly positive atmosphere within the school.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils are extremely positive about behaviour. Parents have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. Behaviour is consistently of a high standard in lessons and at break times. Pupils move seamlessly to activities around the school, as expectations of behaviour are high and routines are well established, including in the early years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs show good levels of determination in tasks set. Support is always on hand to help them if they get stuck. Very high levels of concentration are also evident in the early years where children become absorbed in the variety of activities on offer.
- Pupils know and follow the behaviour policy and are clear about the sanctions and rewards in place. This helps maintain the calm and orderly learning atmosphere. Records checked show that there are very few serious incidents but, when they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils readily take on and enjoy additional responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council or helping younger pupils in the dinner hall at lunchtime. They carry out these roles with maturity and confidence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Arrangements are thorough and comprehensive. Checks are carried out on all adults to make sure they can work with children. Robust systems and policies to keep children safe are in place. Staff are also trained to make sure they are very clear about their responsibilities in protecting children. Pupils' safety is paramount in this school.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe as a result of being taught about potential dangers. They have an excellent understanding of computer safety and know that they should not disclose personal information.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including internet and racist bullying. Those spoken to were adamant that bullying does not happen in their school. Where low level incidents occur, they are confident that, if reported, these are dealt with quickly by adults.
- Attendance is above average and has been over the past three years. There are very few pupils who are persistently absent as school systems for following up absences are robust and effective.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a high degree of consistency in the quality of teaching that results in all groups of pupils making good progress and achieving well over time.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning skills to check or probe pupils' understanding. Relationships are good in all classes. It is clear that pupils like and respect their teachers and this is reciprocated. These positive relationships have a beneficial impact on pupils' motivation and learning.
- Teaching is good across a range of subjects and teachers plan exciting activities to interest and engage pupils during lessons. They use information about pupils' attainment to plan work at the right level. While this is appropriate for the more-able and middle attaining pupils, on occasions, activities are too difficult for the small number of less-able pupils and, as a result, their progress slows.
- Effective and well managed support is in place for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants and additional teaching staff, including those from external agencies, work on an individual or small group basis both inside and outside lessons. This focused input results in pupils being fully included in school life and keeping up with others in their class - including children who have speech and language difficulties in the Nursery.
- The needs of the most-able are catered for well, including by moving pupils into the higher sets in English and mathematics. Challenging activities are planned which make pupils think for themselves. For example, in a weekly mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils track and follow the stocks and shares of different companies. They utilise a wide range of mathematical skills to predict, analyse and present their findings. This enables them to apply and use their mathematical knowledge to a real-life situation and make rapid progress.
- Reading is taught very successfully in the early years through phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and as a result, all pupils go on to become confident readers. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are also taught well as pupils reach high standards at the end of Year 6. However, pupils do not always get opportunities to write at length in other subjects and this limits the progress they make overall in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers create a very positive climate for learning. Excellent displays throughout the school celebrate the best examples of pupils' work, especially their art work, and show the wide range of subjects taught. Displays in classrooms also provide helpful prompts to aid pupils during lessons. All rooms are kept neat and tidy so that pupils can work efficiently and effectively.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but comments are not consistently effective in helping pupils improve. While marking supports good progress generally, not all teachers make sure that pupils respond to the comments about what to do next or to their advice on how to correct their mistakes.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in learning letters and sounds for early reading. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the levels required in Year 1 national check of phonic skills is above average and rising. Younger children use these skills to break down unfamiliar words. Older pupils build on the skills acquired and go on to develop a love of books and many read for pleasure.
- Pupils make good progress across the school and reach standards that are significantly above the national average at the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Progress is consistently good in reading and mathematics but not as good in writing, especially in Key Stage 2. In 2013 and 2014, a minority of pupils who left Year 6 did not achieve as well as they should in writing. Leaders are aware of this and actions are already in place to accelerate progress in this area.
- There are only a small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school who are in receipt of the pupil

premium. The school's own information and pupils' work show that they make good progress along with other groups in the school. Their attainment varies between individuals, but compares favourably overall with their classmates and pupils nationally. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their attainment compared to others without risk of identifying individuals.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs usually make good progress but the progress of a few such pupils, who left Year 6 in 2014, required improvement. This was due to some complex difficulties for this small group of pupils.
- The small number of less-able pupils do not make consistently good progress. This is because they are sometimes given work that is too difficult for them and which they are unable to cope with. On these occasions, they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Children in the resource provision make good progress. This is due to the additional high quality support they receive both from within the school and external specialists. As a result, they join Reception Year close to the levels of other children in their class.
- The most-able pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The early years provision is good

- Effective induction arrangements and very good communication with parents ensure that children receive a very warm welcome when they start school. They settle happily in the very safe and secure environment. Children join school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, the large majority are working at a good level of development in readiness for Key Stage 1, and are well-prepared for this move.
- Teaching is good and children learn well both indoors and outdoors, as lessons are made interesting and exciting. There is a good balance of adult-led tasks and activities which children choose for themselves. Early reading, writing and number are also successfully taught from the outset with children quickly developing the skills needed. Adults give children clear examples of accurate English when they speak to them. They skilfully question children to check their understanding and extend their speaking and listening skills.
- Valuable school and external support is provided for children in the speech and language resource in nursery and, as result, they make good progress and are fully integrated with other children in their class. Activities are tailored to their specific needs and regular external support from a speech and language therapist ensures that their progress is carefully tracked. School staff also use sign language to help children with their early communication skills both in the resource and within the classroom.
- All adults encourage children to get on well together from the outset. As a result, children behave very well and develop highly positive attitudes to learning. They play happily together, share resources and quickly make friends with classmates. Whether they are learning indoors or outdoors, adults ensure that children are safe through the systems in place. Children's emotional health, safety and well-being are all catered for effectively owing to the high quality nurturing and support in place.
- Leadership and management of the early years setting are very effective. The leader has a clear vision for further improvement. Records of children's achievements are shared with parents through an electronic system for tracking children's progress. Photographic evidence and examples of children's own work are captured and stored on individual files. Teachers track children's progress and carry out regular observations to make sure that planning builds on children's interests and abilities.

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	136480
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449381

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Falvey
Headteacher	Andrea Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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