

The Nene Infant School

Norwich Road, Wisbech, PE13 2AP

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding because leaders at all levels provide a very clear direction for the work of the school. They are very rigorous in checking that developments are making a positive difference.
- Leaders, managers and governors are having an excellent impact on teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, both are improving rapidly and are consistently good or better.
- The interesting curriculum supports the pupils' outstanding attitudes towards learning and helps them to learn about British values and life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are very enthusiastic about their work and take particular delight in their writing.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe at school and are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe.
- Teaching is good because teachers and teaching assistants motivate the pupils to want to learn and provide work that moves learning forward quickly.
- Pupils' achievement is good in reading and mathematics. Pupils are confident about discussing the books they have read and explain ably how they have made their mathematical calculations.
- A whole-school focus on developing writing has led to pupils achieving outstandingly well in this subject. Attractive displays of the pupils' work celebrate their success.
- Children make excellent progress in the early years because provision is outstanding. Children do particularly well in learning about letters and the sounds they make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not make sure that all reading activities promote quick learning.
- Not all work in mathematics is hard enough, especially for the most able.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects, especially in Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, 13 jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives of the academy trust.
- There were insufficient responses to the online survey Parent View to be able to take these into account. The inspection team took into account the school's own questionnaire for parents and held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in the responses to the Ofsted survey from 24 members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents and checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also looked at the school development plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Nene Infant School is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- There are two full-time Reception classes in the early years provision.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with the remainder being mostly of Eastern European origin.
- The proportion of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language is well above average. The majority of these pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English and their home languages are mainly Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish or Russian.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school is federated with two other schools in the area, a private nursery and a junior school. The three schools share the same Executive Principal, senior leadership team and governing body, but are inspected separately.
- The Nene Infant School became an academy school on 1 October 2013. The school is now being sponsored by The Elliot Foundation Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching and pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - reading lessons always have tasks that promote quick learning
 - work in mathematics is always challenging enough, especially for the most able
 - pupils, especially in Year 1, practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills more often when working in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Executive Principal, senior leadership team and governing body provide excellent leadership for this rapidly improving school. They work together exceptionally well as a team and are very passionate that every child should be able to achieve his or her best. Leaders are unrelenting in their drive to move the school forward and have precise plans for the next stage of its development.
- Leaders have established an excellent culture in which teaching and good behaviour can flourish. Good relations are promoted especially well and members of staff are totally committed to achieving the leaders' high aspirations. Several aspects of the school's work have now become outstanding and progress is already being made in further developing teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Arrangements for developing teaching are extremely strong and exceptionally rigorous. Leaders provide intensive coaching and support and very much lead by example. Consequently, teachers gain a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and are given effective training to enable them to aim high. Areas of focus, such as developing writing and improving the early years provision, have had a substantial impact. The evidence for this rapid improvement is very clear and tangible in the pupils' successful learning.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Leaders are consistently vigilant in making sure that pupils are kept safe and are quick to step in when there are any concerns. Members of staff are highly trained and are checked thoroughly for their suitability for working with young children. The supportive culture of the school enables pupils to feel exceptionally safe and nurtured.
- Leaders promote equal opportunity well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The special funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent on additional staffing. It is having a positive impact on the learning of these pupils so that any gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are slight and they are catching up quickly.
- Leaders spend the specific funding for developing sport and physical education on specialist coaches. The expert support provided increases the knowledge of teachers and their pupils. For example, children and their teachers in a Reception class were learning about various ways of throwing and catching a ball accurately. In addition, all pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim, improving their safety as well as their physical well-being.
- The curriculum is highly developed and exciting topics are planned around the pupils' interests and needs. There is a high focus on developing literacy and numeracy and this is especially effective in Year 2. The curriculum delivers a breadth of learning in all year groups. The curriculum is making a strong contribution towards the pupils' excellent attitudes, their learning and their understanding of life in modern Britain. For example, pupils gained good insight into the process of voting by choosing their school councillors.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for extremely well and contributes effectively to the pupils' considerate and tolerant behaviour. For example, in one lesson in Year 2, pupils learned the value of making and receiving compliments. British values are promoted very well so that pupils are being prepared extremely well for life in modern Britain. They have an extremely good understanding of the part they play within the school community. For example, in one assembly pupils increased their awareness of the importance of making the right choices and in Year 1 pupils knew that the qualities of a good leader included strength, good ideas and working hard.
- The academy trust has provided highly effective support and challenge for the school. Opportunities to share expertise across a wide range of schools within the trust have brought the best out of school leaders and equipped them to raise expectations for this school.
- Middle leaders, although largely new in their roles, have quickly established a clear understanding of what needs to be done next. They are working effectively to make the necessary remaining improvements in the subjects and areas they lead and manage. They are having a positive impact on the work of the

school.

- Parents are very positive about the work of the school and typically make comments such as, 'The children make good progress in everything.' Another stated, 'I like everything about the school.'

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is highly effective. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and take an active part in ensuring that it school continues to develop rapidly.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the arrangements made for improving and training teachers and other staff. They know how good teaching is, how good teaching is being rewarded and how weaker aspects of teaching are being tackled. They also know how well pupils are doing compared with pupils in other schools and what the school needs to do next to improve further.
- Governors keep a very close eye on the spending of additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils. They check frequently to make sure that the additional teaching these funds provide, is helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Members of staff manage behaviour very successfully because they have high expectations for the pupils' behaviour and provide excellent role models on how to behave. Children in the early years settle in quickly and learn new routines rapidly. Their highly positive attitudes make a strong contribution to children's learning.
- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes towards learning and are especially enthusiastic about writing. One pupil spoke for many others by saying, 'We love writing at this school.' They settle to their work without prompting from adults and work without fuss, including in the early years provision. Pupils from varying races and backgrounds get on outstandingly well together.
- Pupils are extremely willing to support each other in their learning and concentrate exceptionally hard. They are very keen to help check their own work and use 'thumbs up' and 'thumbs down' signals to let the teacher know how well they think they are doing. They are enthusiastic about supporting pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language and are quick to make new pupils feel at home.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are proud of their roles as school councillors or ambassadors. They enjoy sharing and celebrating success in the form of 'Green Dojos' awarded for good work and kind acts.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well in class, on the playground and when moving about the school. They are highly respectful of the needs of others and are keen to raise funds for charity. For example, pupils in Year 2 were motivated to bring in their pocket money to help support a lifeboat charity after learning about the bravery of Grace Darling.
- Parents who responded to the school's own questionnaire are extremely happy with the way the pupils behave at school. Pupils are also pleased with behaviour and report that there are very few instances of bullying or unkind behaviour. They say that on the rare occasion it occurs it is dealt with immediately. Pupils typically make positive comments such as, 'teachers help when a child gets hurt' and 'teachers sort it (bullying) out straight away'.
- Rates of attendance have rapidly improved at the school since it became an academy and are now broadly average. Any absences are rigorously followed up and most are due to genuine illness.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safety is high on the school's agenda and the monitoring of the pupils' safety is exceptionally thorough. Any concerns are logged meticulously and followed up swiftly, when necessary.

- The strong and supportive culture in the school encourages pupils to discuss concerns and worries. They are especially positive about how approachable they find the staff. Pupils form excellent relationships with staff and other pupils, and are appreciative of the way they are listened to.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at school and have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to stay safe. For example, they know why they need to line up to be counted during a fire drill and how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Parents are highly positive about the level of care provided by members of staff and appreciate the support given to their children to ensure that they feel safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good or better. The very strong relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and the pupils are an important factor in the pupils' good progress.
- Teaching is excellent in the early years provision. Knowledgeable members of staff ensure that work enables children to make extremely rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are well-trained and, as a result, they have good subject knowledge and share important vocabulary well with pupils. This is especially helpful for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers are good at involving pupils in their learning and motivating them by asking probing questions. They provide helpful demonstrations so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. There has been a recent focus on improving marking. Consequently, marking is now consistently in line with the school policy and includes helpful next steps for pupils. This has been especially useful in improving their writing.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics has a good impact on learning and achievement. Teachers have clear expectations and these are successfully shared with the pupils. As a result, pupils learn quickly most of the time. Expectations for writing in Year 2 are especially high. In Year 1, pupils learn well in most lessons although there are occasions when teachers do not build in relevant opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Work is well judged in most lessons so that it provides the right level of challenge for pupils of differing ability. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers give us challenging work.' Occasionally in reading lessons, a few of the tasks are not sufficiently purposeful to move learning forward quickly. Similarly, in mathematics the most able are not always challenged to master their skills by deepening their understanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment has been rising rapidly at the school since it became an academy. In 2014, pupils in Year 1 did better than other pupils nationally in the phonics screening check. This checks how well pupils use the sounds that letters make to help them to read unfamiliar words.
- In 2014, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 was below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2, attainment is much higher. School data and pupils' work show that most are now working at or above the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils' achievement is good from their starting points in reading and mathematics and they make excellent progress in writing. Writing has been a whole-school focus and pupils are very proud to share their copious, good quality work. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote excellent, discerning accounts from the view points of passengers on the Titanic. In another Year 2 class, they made detailed notes during a video clip to help support their writing about Grace Darling.
- In reading, pupils make good progress and use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read and write

new words. They enjoy reading and are keen to talk about the characters and plot in the books they are reading. Occasionally, when pupils are working in specific reading lessons, their progress slows when the tasks they have been given are not sufficiently purposeful to help them extend their skills.

- In mathematics, pupils make good progress and appreciate the interesting practical activities such as folding shapes to learn about fractions and cracking codes to find the pirates' hidden treasure. They are good at explaining how they have carried out calculations in their number work.
- The most-able pupils do well over time and are given work that is at the right level for them in most lessons. Occasionally, progress slows in mathematics when they are given the same work as other pupils and they are not challenged to deepen their understanding so that they can master the work they are doing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in class and work is tailored to help them to succeed.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up with other pupils at the school and nationally. Any gaps in their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are slight and are closing rapidly.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Their attainment is similar to that of the other pupils in mathematics and writing. They are catching up with their peers in reading because members of staff effectively enable these pupils to develop their English vocabulary to help their understanding of the books they are reading.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Most children are working below the levels typical for their age when they join the Reception classes. They make outstanding progress across all areas of learning so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are working securely at the levels typical for their age. Consequently, their achievement is excellent and they are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is excellent because members of staff work extremely closely together to ensure that children are given tasks that are just right for their next stage of learning. The teaching of phonics is a particular strength. All children, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, are very well supported and skilled at using their 'phoneme fingers'. For example, in one Reception class bilingual assistants helped pupils to learn that 'oo' and 'ew' can make the same sound.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly trained and have consistently high expectations for the children. They use questioning extremely well to draw out the children's knowledge and to check up on their learning.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are very enthusiastic about learning because activities are exciting and relevant to their needs. They are keen to discuss their work with each other as well as with adults. For example, in one lesson children were keen to discuss what they had learned about various types of bird and were confident about expressing their ideas and feelings.
- Children feel exceptionally safe at school and are extremely knowledgeable about the part they can play in staying safe. For example, they help to draw up a set of safety checks for their classroom, such as making sure that they tuck their chairs in carefully. They are keen to make sure that these routines are followed rigorously.
- Leadership and management are outstanding because leaders are constantly checking up on how well teachers and the children are doing. They use this information well to ensure that work is planned to move learning forward very swiftly. Very close links with the parents have been established so that there is a really strong partnership. For example, the children take home their daily sound books and learning journeys so that parents can support their learning at home.

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	140174
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	450201

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Wainwright
Executive Principal	Karen Crawley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01945 583907
Fax number	01945 589101
Email address	head@nene.cambs.sch.uk

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