

Bluebell Primary School

Lovelace Road, Norwich NR4 7DS

Inspection dates	5–6 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, managers and governors have been successful in improving the school to good since its previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly as a result of rigorous checks by leaders at all levels. Teachers have benefited from high-quality training and coaching.
- Standards are rising. The school was among the 25% most successful in the country in 2015 to add value to its pupils' achievement from their different starting points.
- Pupils in the specialist resource base for those on the autistic spectrum make good progress because the experienced staff tailor work to meet their needs well.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are outstanding because all staff promote their well-being and help them to make the most of their schooling. Parents and carers agree that their children are extremely safe at school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They show respect to one another and to adults. They enjoy learning and take a pride in their work.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because staff establish routines quickly and create a stimulating place where children can play and learn together safely and with enjoyment.
- The governing body's effectiveness has increased since the previous inspection. Governors hold school leaders to account well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, the most-able pupils have work that is too easy for them, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- There are variations in the extent to which teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy, especially in setting pupils next steps for learning.
- On some occasions, children in the early years do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their emerging writing skills. This is because there are not enough interesting activities based around writing for children to choose for themselves.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning and accelerate pupils' progress so that:
 - the most-able pupils are sufficiently challenged across different subjects
 - teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy consistently, especially when setting next steps for pupils' learning.

- Strengthen provision in the early years by:
 - giving children engaging opportunities to apply their early writing skills when choosing activities for themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher together provide strong leadership and make clear their high expectations to all staff. As a result of rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning and through regular training, teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Leaders, managers and governors have communicated their vision and aims effectively to the whole school community. These have been embraced by staff and pupils alike and focus on developing each child as an individual.
- The leadership of the specialist resource base is good. Staff have expertise in working with pupils on the autistic spectrum and provide a safe, calm environment where pupils can thrive.
- Middle leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of their areas and regularly check the quality of provision, offering useful advice to staff about how to improve their practice.
- The leaders of provision for those pupils who have special educational needs or disability know the progress of individual pupils extremely well. However, they do not have a clear overview of how different groups of pupils are doing. This means that staff are not as adept at adjusting the support to enable groups of pupils to make rapid progress.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well across subjects. Subject leaders reflect on the effectiveness of their practice in these areas. The school celebrates the different cultures that pupils come from. Pupils held their own general election last year and have been marking the Queen's 90th birthday. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has a very strong sense of community and has established good links with parents, who join their children at clubs. Pupils work with a residential home for elderly people to help run a gardening club and make bird boxes. There have forged strong links with the 'friends' of the local park. The art club held an exhibition of landscapes at the Norwich Forum, a local venue.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write in different subjects. Staff have designed a curriculum that is relevant for pupils and suits them. For example, pupils constructed their own 'volcano' reading area as part of their studies on Pompeii.
- A good range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. The Mayor of Norwich visited in response to pupils' persuasive letters to explain her role and the workings of local democracy. The nursery held a 'wedding' at the church to find out about marriage rituals.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium effectively in supporting disadvantaged pupils so that gaps in their attainment are closing with other pupils. The school purchases specialist support, such as a speech and language teacher and a therapist, to help pupils with specific needs. Pupils also benefit from additional teaching and access to clubs and activities that enhance their experiences.
- The school uses its sports premium effectively to improve pupils' participation in sport and to offer them a range of sports such as golf, tennis and cricket. Pupils increasingly take part in sports tournaments. They were runners-up in a recent basketball competition.
- Music and dance are key features of the school. The choir takes part in the Norwich Music Festival and pupils danced at a local concert venue in front of 2,000 people.
- Parents are mainly positive about the school. They appreciate the support from the school's parent support adviser and the behaviour, nurture and inclusion team and having the chance to get involved with their children's learning.
- The local authority has supported the school well on its journey to becoming a good school. The school has taken part in 'Norfolk Better to Best', a programme where schools can share good practice and take part in school improvement workshops. Advisers have worked with the school to validate the accuracy of its self-evaluation.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has become more effective since the previous inspection. It commissioned an external review of governance and has carried out the recommendations. These have helped to tighten up systems and enable governors to offer more informed challenge to school leaders.
 - Governors regularly visit the school to check its work and write detailed reports about their findings. The governing body has been careful to appoint governors with skills that will support the work of the school.
 - Governors make sure that the pupil premium and sports premium are spent effectively. They take a long-term view of how the school needs to develop and have recently overseen a restructuring of support staff to build in greater expertise in each class.

- Safeguarding is effective. The school makes sure that all staff are trained and kept up to date. Staff have had training in the Prevent duty and are familiar with measures to combat radicalisation and exploitation. Staff work well with families to support pupils with particular difficulties.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Staff have been successful in building mutual respect and positive attitudes to learning among pupils. Pupils are confident to 'have a go' when it comes to learning.
- In the specialist resource base, teaching and learning are good. Staff have very strong subject knowledge and high expectations. All pupils make good progress, whatever their difficulties. Two of the Year 6 pupils have made so much progress that they work predominantly with other Year 6 pupils.
- Teachers make pupils' readiness to learn in the specialist resource base a focus. They tailor learning to the individual needs of the pupils. Work scrutiny shows that pupils make good progress over time and that pupils' attainment has risen well.
- The school has an innovative approach to teaching writing, linked to classic texts. For example, older pupils wrote stories inspired by 'The Railway Children'. They have written their own play scripts on the theme of 'Macbeth', which they are turning into their annual school production.
- Pupils benefit from being able to make use of effective displays, known as 'working walls', that support them in their current learning.
- Pupils are able to clarify their knowledge and understanding and extend their learning because teachers use probing questioning well to make them think deeply.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is taught well. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge when reading. They read with confidence and expression and enjoy spending time in the school's excellent library, which is spacious and well resourced.
- The school's maths café and reading café help build links with parents and enable them to support their children with their learning through enjoyable shared experiences.
- The school has involved parents in developing its homework policy and provides homework clubs for pupils who find it easier to do their homework at school. This enables pupils to consolidate their learning.
- Teachers ensure that they challenge the most-able pupils in mathematics, setting them work that is sufficiently difficult and moves them on in their learning effectively. In some other subjects, such as history and science, teachers sometimes give the most-able pupils work that is too easy for them.
- While the marking and feedback policy is generally followed consistently, at times teachers do not give pupils clear next steps as to how to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school is highly successful at helping pupils to develop excellent attitudes to learning. Staff create a positive climate where pupils can overcome any difficulties and thrive. One pupil said, 'Teachers are super supportive and with us every step of the way'.
- Pupils work together very well and are kind. They respect one another's cultures and differences and welcome pupils from the specialist resource base. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously as peer mediators, school councillors and librarians. They organise charity events and know that their views matter.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They have walked the site identifying where they feel safe and where they could be more vulnerable, such as near a busy walkway. They know about staying safe, including e-safety and the use of social media.
- The community police officer regularly visits to provide additional support and guidance to pupils about keeping safe. Year 6 pupils learn about life skills from a visiting expert, which helps to equip them well for the move to secondary school.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue for them. They know about different types of bullying and are confident that staff will deal with any concerns they may have promptly.
- The breakfast club gives pupils an excellent start to their school day. Pupils of different ages enjoy socialising together and eat a healthy cooked breakfast.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in the classroom and around the site. Staff help them to focus on different aspects of behaviour, such as listening intently. The school is a very orderly place. Pupils follow adults' instructions promptly.
- Pupils respect the modern school building. They wear their uniform with pride and keep the grounds tidy.
- The school can identify individuals whose behaviour has improved considerably since joining, as a result of the support they have received.
- In the specialist resource base, staff manage pupils' behaviour extremely well and ensure that it is a calm and happy place to work. Several parents commented on how their children have benefited from this provision.
- The school has taken a robust approach to improving attendance and has been successful in reducing the occasions when pupils are frequently absent. Pastoral staff work closely with families to help them see the importance of regular attendance. The school's 'league table' of attendance for classes gives this a high profile. Pupils enjoy winning the teddy bears, Bruin and Rosie, for the best weekly attendance.
- On occasions, pupils lose concentration when the work is not challenging enough for them.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In 2015, Year 6 pupils reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress was among the top 25% of schools nationally. The school equips them well for secondary education.
- The school enables pupils to achieve well, even though many join late in their school careers. The published information about pupils' achievement does not record the good work that the school does with the many pupils who leave before Year 6.
- The school caters well for the increasing numbers of pupils who join from overseas, with limited experience of education and speaking little or no English. Staff assess their needs rapidly and give them all the support and guidance they need to become successful learners.
- Good provision in the early years has increased the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. The gap between the school's children and the national average has narrowed considerably over recent years.
- Year 1 pupils make good progress in their reading. Despite limited experience before they start school, children soon learn to sound out new words and to enjoy books. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in phonics is broadly average.
- The school identified that pupils could do better in their writing by the end of Year 2. These pupils are now making good progress in Year 3, as they have opportunities to write at length in different subjects and learn useful techniques to make their writing interesting.
- Pupils in current year groups are continuing to achieve well. Good support for disadvantaged pupils means that they keep up well with their peers and the gaps in attainment with other pupils are closing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress, including those in the specialist resource base. Staff know the pupils very well as individuals and tailor the support to suit them. Some pupils on the autistic spectrum spend part of the day in mainstream classes, where staff and pupils include them well and provide them with all the support they need.
- Pupils make good use of their phonics skills to read well. They talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and read widely.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is generally good. However, at times, teachers do not set them work that challenges them enough and then the pace of their learning slows.

Early years provision

is good

- Leaders understand the strengths and areas to develop in the early years. They have improved the outside area well since the previous inspection to give children a wider variety of more stimulating activities.
- Children join the Nursery with significant difficulties in speech and language and many have limited social

skills. Staff tailor the activities to enable them to engage with learning rapidly. The staff give children examples of good spoken language to help them become more fluent.

- Staff support children in Nursery and Reception well socially and emotionally. They have well-established routines and have created a calm and purposeful atmosphere where children can explore and learn safely. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points and are prepared well for Year 1.
- The early years provision meets all statutory welfare requirements. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- The early years staff plan activities carefully to ensure they meet the children's needs and build on their interests. They learn to take risks in a safe environment. For example, children cut up rhubarb themselves and made rhubarb crumble.
- Parents appreciate the detailed and informative 'learning journeys' that tell them how well their children are doing and record their achievements.
- Children are very keen to learn and work with concentration. They take turns and work cooperatively. Children learn about the natural world, for example, by planting sunflower seeds and watching the plants grow.
- Children behave well and follow adults' instructions.
- Staff support children who have special educational needs or disability well. The early years provision uses the additional government funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged children make good progress.
- Sometimes children do not have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills during activities they choose for themselves.

School details

Unique reference number	134942
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10011793

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Rolph
Headteacher	Trudi Sharred
Telephone number	01603 452196
Website	www.bluebell.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@bluebell.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes, apart from in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are taught together in three classes in the mornings.
- While most pupils are from White British backgrounds, an increasing number of pupils are joining the school outside normal times, speaking little or no English and with limited experience of schooling.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average, but more have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school has provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability in the form of a specialist resource base for up to 10 pupils from key stage 2 who are on the autistic spectrum. Pupils come from across the county to attend.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 28 parts of lessons, many of them jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports and safeguarding records. They considered evidence of the school's partnership work and the information provided for families.
- A meeting was held with a group of older pupils chosen at random and with members of the school council, peer mediators and librarians. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff on a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements and their professional development. The lead inspector talked to the chair of the governing body and three other governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector observed a whole-school celebration assembly.
- Inspectors considered 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 12 written comments. The inspection team also spoke informally to some parents.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Macmillan	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector

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