



# Cecil Gowing First School, Sprowston

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120904  
**LEA** NORFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 280914  
**Inspection dates** 15 November 2005 to 16 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. John Messer LI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Falcon Road West
<b>School category</b>	Community		NR7 8NT
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 8		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01603429564
<b>Number on roll</b>	237	<b>Fax number</b>	01603429564
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs.Fiona Hardmann
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Ruth Burn

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

There are more boys than girls in the school. Pupils are taught in 8 classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is below average and has been declining in recent years. Half of pupils live outside the area and attend this school through parental choice. Nearly all pupils are from white English speaking families but a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak languages other than English and a few are at early stages of learning to speak English.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher gives good leadership and analyses the school's performance thoroughly and accurately. The self-evaluation shows that the school's overall effectiveness is good. Inspection findings confirm that this is a good school. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most are likely to attain the learning goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is particularly strong. Pupils do not have sufficiently clear or challenging targets to help them or their parents to understand how they can further improve their performance in writing and mathematics. Teamwork is good and all staff are enthusiastic. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the good quality of teaching and learning. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics because basic skills are taught well. The school is constantly finding ways to make learning more effective and has adopted new ideas that are proving successful. Following national guidance, the school has begun work on introducing a more exciting curriculum. The new initiatives are not yet fully linked across the curriculum to ensure a consistent approach to learning. The school manages its finances well and provides good value for money. Parents are very pleased with the education their children receive. There have been many improvements since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the exciting approaches to learning are more closely linked across the curriculum - Review target setting and devise a manageable system that helps pupils to know what they should do to reach the next stages in their learning in writing and mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, faster learners and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Children enter the school with attainment that is below average and leave with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most children are on course to attain the early learning goals that they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year and the faster learners are likely to exceed them. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was not reflected in the national test results in 2004, which were below average, because that year group was untypical and had an exceptionally high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Results improved significantly in 2005. Inspection findings show that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 3 attain standards that are above average. Teachers remind all groups what they should do to improve their work but specific and challenging targets are not set regularly

enough to help pupils to understand what they must do to reach the next stages in their learning. Pupils are well motivated, work hard and are keen to succeed.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils like coming to school. They feel safe and are well cared for. They enjoy their lessons and are eager to take part. Attendance is above average. Many children arrive in reception classes with poorly developed social skills. The good behaviour and good achievement reflect the hard work of all staff. Teachers motivate pupils well so that they learn to follow rules and are keen to take on responsibilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors and understand how their behaviour and attitudes affect others. The school fosters a good sense of wonder and curiosity by making lessons exciting so that they capture pupils' imagination and make learning fun. The school has a very good link with children in Mozambique which promotes good awareness of other cultures and beliefs. The school supports many charities and this helps pupils to understand their social responsibilities. The school council takes its duties seriously and has helped to make the outside area a more exciting place to play in. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Pupils enjoy a range of fruit at break time. Pupils understand the need to take regular exercise to stay fit. They develop a good range of computer skills. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education and for their wider role as young citizens.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Across the school the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly to address the needs of different groups within each class. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Teaching assistants are well trained and contribute strongly to the quality of teaching and learning. Several have developed particular expertise in how to manage specific disabilities, such as autism. Teachers are enthusiastic about developing the curriculum in a way that makes learning exciting and they are successful in doing so. The school has adopted a new system to teach pupils about the sounds that letters make and a new handwriting scheme. These systems are used with precision and are having a marked impact on improving reading, spelling and writing. One exciting initiative is film making in Year 2. Here pupils make films about subjects, such as, life a hundred years ago and the story of the Battle of Trafalgar. Drama is used well in Year 3 to give pupils a deeper understanding of how people might have felt during the great fire of London. Above all teachers and support staff are especially good at encouraging pupils' confidence and self-esteem. As a result pupils are developing self-assurance in their ability to learn effectively.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well planned so that pupils make good progress. However, the school is currently reviewing approaches to learning to make it more exciting and enriching. Teachers are concentrating on making topics come alive. For example, in their study of Nelson, teachers have extended pupils' experiences through visits, the use of information and communication technology (ICT), drama, poetry and music. There is much to celebrate in relation to this approach but more needs to be done to ensure that links between subjects are effective and fully support pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy a range of activities outside lessons which include art and crafts, sports, recorders and computers. As part of its strategy to improve standards in writing, speaking and listening, the school used a drama specialist to stimulate greater enthusiasm for writing. This adds significantly to the pupils' experiences and helps them to gain confidence in their learning. The organisation of the curriculum is adapted well to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities. Provision for health education is built into the curriculum well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school gives a warm welcome to pupils from different backgrounds and with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all individuals and provide well for their specific needs. Good access facilities are provided for those who use wheelchairs. Close attention is given to pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils are confident about taking any problems to their teachers and know that any incidents, such as bullying or racism, will be dealt with firmly. Child protection procedures are in place, and are clearly understood by all staff. Teaching assistants play a very important role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and those with disabilities so that they make good progress. Some pupils who might otherwise find it difficult to sustain good behaviour flourish in the school's supportive community. The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires said that they welcomed the good care, guidance and support that their children receive. However, targets for future learning are not shared well enough with pupils. Consequently they lack a clear understanding about what they should be learning next.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher takes a strong lead in analysing the school's performance in great detail. The results of tests and assessments are examined minutely to see if any groups of pupils are not making as much progress as expected. If any pupils appear not to be making good progress, possible reasons are explored and action is taken to boost performance. The school recognises the need to improve target setting and provide better feedback to pupils

on what they are doing well and where they need to do better. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored methodically and any areas for improvement are acted upon swiftly. The headteacher encourages teaching and support staff well and helps them to enjoy their work. Governors are well informed and are fully involved in school improvement initiatives. The school produces an exceptionally good improvement plan that gives clear direction to its work and helps to focus resources on the most important priorities. Finances are managed well. Governors report that each individual child is highly valued and the best interests of all are at the heart of decision making. Parents are also kept well informed about all major issues and their views on new initiatives are welcomed and taken into account. There is no complacency in the school but rather a constant endeavour to find ways to raise standards further. There have been many improvements since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. This is what we thought about your school. Cecil Gowing is a good school because all the adults work hard as a team to help you to learn. You all enjoy working and playing happily together. The youngest children are brilliant at knowing the sounds that letters make. You learn to read extremely well and you are good at writing and mathematics. You use computers well to find information and to write stories. Children in Year 2 have made some great films and Year 3 are good at making up plays. You are sensitive to the needs of others and help your friends if they are upset or worried about anything. Some of you told us that one or two children are sometimes too rough and can be bullies but that staff deal well with the rare instances of poor behaviour. Generally you behave very sensibly and are interesting to talk to. You understand how to stay safe and healthy. Your headteacher is a good leader and she works closely with all the adults to organise the school well. All staff listen to your opinions and take great care of every one of you. The school spends its money sensibly so that there are enough adults to help you and there is all the equipment that you need in lessons, like paper, pencils and books. Teachers and helpers are quite excited at the moment because they have good plans to make teaching and learning even more interesting through more drama, film making and fascinating topics. We think that there are two things that the school needs to do to make things even better. The first is to continue to think hard about how to make lessons even more interesting and make your learning really exciting. You can help with this because you are sensible and have some good ideas. Secondly we think that it would be helpful if you had a much clearer understanding of exactly what you should do to reach even higher standards in writing and mathematics. We wish you all every success in the future.