

# Cecil Gowing Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120904
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	327389
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	158
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Fiona Hardman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ruth Burn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Falcon Road West Sprowston Norwich Norfolk NZ7 8NZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603429564
<b>Fax number</b>	01603429564

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- How well do pupils with learning difficulties achieve?
- How effective are the systems for setting targets and tracking pupils' progress?
- How well do subject leaders contribute to the school's checking of performance?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Cecil Gowing is smaller than most primary schools. The EYFS consists of two classes of Reception children. There is a breakfast club and a separate after school club, neither of which is managed by the governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has changed from being a first school to an infant school which means that the school now provides for pupils up to Year 2 rather than up to Year 3.

Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few pupils from a number of other ethnic backgrounds, and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have either behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Sports Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some significant strengths. It provides its pupils with a calm, friendly and supportive environment in which to learn and develop. Parents are almost unanimous in their support. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance rates. They particularly enjoy the caring and supportive way that their teachers help them when they are stuck and the interesting range of activities that they provide for them. As one parent said, 'My son's teacher is very dedicated and she seems to know how to get the best out of her pupils.' A good balance is achieved between the attention given to the pupils' academic progress and their personal development. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their move to the junior school.

The very high quality of the care and support provided is pivotal to the pupils' exceptional personal development. A high priority is placed on pupils' safety and well-being and all safeguarding regulations are met in full. Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and an improvement since the previous inspection. Even though some pupils have behavioural and emotional difficulties, behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the positive role models provided by all the adults and the very good relationships that staff develop with the pupils. This helps to engender very positive attitudes and makes the school a safe and fun place to learn. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they are enthusiastic in explaining the many opportunities that they have for physical exercise. They also contribute very well to the school community by membership of the influential class councils which provide all pupils with a chance to have their views acted upon by the school council. Pupils in the wooden fort in the playground proudly showed how the school council had helped in its planning.

Achievement is good. From starting points that are below those typically found, children in the EYFS make good progress and, by the time that they enter Year 1, a large minority reach the expected goals, although their communication, language and literacy skills are below average. Progress is good in both years 1 and 2. By the time that they leave the school, standards are significantly above average in all areas. They are highest in reading because an excellent emphasis is placed on developing this skill. The school's thorough analysis of children's skills on entry has highlighted the relative weakness of their communication skills. This has resulted in a good focus being placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills. The recent priority to develop these skills for writing, particularly through the use of drama, is paying dividends, and the school is rightly continuing to emphasise these areas as a key to strengthening writing standards further.

An emphasis has been placed on tracking pupils' progress and the school has refined its systems to enable staff to quickly identify any pupils that are in danger of slipping behind. The new arrangements are working well. In addition to providing robust information about all pupils' progress, those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly carefully monitored. In consequence, staff are able to target additional support well. The consequent good quality provision, both by class teachers and teaching assistants, results in these pupils making good progress towards the individual targets set for them.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Lessons are characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which teachers make clear to pupils not only what is to be learned, but also what

the pupils have to do to meet objectives. Relationships are excellent and pupils are managed well. In the best teaching, very good account is taken of the learning needs of pupils of different abilities to provide the appropriate amount of challenge and support. In addition, the school provides excellent guidance for its pupils. Marking is thorough and helpful to pupils. Cards showing their individual targets provide them with a clear and comprehensive understanding of their targets in both literacy and numeracy because they are constantly referred to. Pupils are keen to ensure that they meet their targets and proudly show their cards which indicate when targets are met.

There has been an improvement in the quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection when it was being re-modelled. It is now outstanding. An extensive programme of class projects, that link different areas of the curriculum in an exciting and meaningful way, has been established. Topics are tailored well to meet pupils' interests and skills, and they build on first hand experiences, such as the many visits to places of interest, which help to make learning real. The curriculum is very effective in supporting pupils' good progress, as well as their very high levels of enjoyment.

All these things don't happen by chance! The school is well placed to improve because leadership and management are good. The headteacher continues to lead the school well and has built on the many strengths found at the time of the previous inspection. There have been improvements since that time in the pupils' personal development and also in provision both for teaching and learning and the curriculum. The headteacher is supported well by teachers with responsibilities who have a good understanding of the strengths and development points in their areas and they contribute well to the school's good evaluation procedures. These ensure that the school's improvement plan provides precise and accurate detail of areas to be addressed as priorities. The governing body plays an important part in the life of the school and is focused well on the school's strategic development. Commitment is real among staff and governors to work as a team in taking the school forward.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress because the activities planned closely match their starting points and needs. For example, the relatively low writing skills of some children are being well developed through short sessions that are structured and very closely focused on improving specific skills.

Very good use of drama gives children many opportunities to develop speaking, listening and their imaginative skills. In movement lessons, children use apparatus well to demonstrate 'under', 'over' and 'through'. The progress of those who struggle is quickened by skilled teaching assistants who use pictures to extend discussion and develop children's thinking well. As a result, these children are subsequently able to improve what they do. No opportunity is lost to develop vocabulary. In music, for example, children are asked to describe the sounds they create.

Children's welfare and personal development are paramount in this very caring environment. They settle happily at the start of sessions because of the positive relationships they have with staff and the interesting activities that await them. Staff notice any children who are unusually quiet and enable them to settle quickly. Staff are particularly skilled at asking open-ended questions to develop in children an awareness of their own safety and that of others, and a realisation that they can assess situations and make choices about what to do.

The EYFS is well led and coordinated. Because staff work well as a team no time is wasted and everyone is engaged in productive activity. Staff plan together to share expertise and improve the curriculum offered. Staff are reflective and keen to improve and develop the EYFS. Although the relatively new outdoor area is used satisfactorily for all areas of learning, it is not used as effectively as possible because the outdoor environment is not as rich and welcoming as that indoors.

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

- Ensure that the outdoor learning area in the EYFS provides a learning environment that is exciting and as effective as the indoor spaces.
- Embed the current good plans to strengthen pupils' speaking and listening skills, and, in particular, make use of drama activities to extend communication skills.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B**

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

28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Cecil Gowing Infant School, Norwich, NR7 8NZ

We really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you very much for the friendly way you welcomed us and for your help in finding out about your school.

Both you and your parents told us that you love school and that you feel safe and well cared for. We are not surprised. Yours is a good school and everybody who works there tries hard to help you to do well. Your teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are made interesting and exciting and all the adults look after you exceptionally well. The quality of the topic work that your teachers set for you is excellent. Your headteacher has done a good job to make sure that everyone helps you all to work and play together in such a friendly way and to make the school successful. I was particularly impressed with your beautiful singing in assembly and also your excellent behaviour. Your teachers help you to learn well and also make sure that everyone feels part of the family of your school.

You work hard in lessons so that you learn lots of new things. Your progress is good and you attain good standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

We have asked your teachers to do two things. First, to make sure that you have lots of chances to practise your speaking and listening skills, particularly by using drama. Second, to make sure that the outdoor area for the Reception children is made as exciting as the classrooms.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to us.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector