

Wells-next-the-Sea Primary and Nursery School

Polka Road, Wells-next-the-Sea, NR23 1JG

Inspection dates 11–12 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, overall, in school and achieve well. This is because teaching is good and improving so, from very low starting points when they join the school, pupils attain levels at least in line with national averages by the end of Year 6.
- Lessons are enjoyable for all pupils. Teachers' careful planning means that all groups of pupils are fully included in all learning activities.
- Pupils behave well around school and in lessons. They are eager to learn and have excellent relationships with adults in school.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and they are kept safe in school.
- Pupils love to read and the school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for the school. He has developed a strong team who share his ambitious plans for school improvements to teaching and achievement.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and identifies appropriate areas for development supported by detailed plans for improvement.
- The school plans a wide range of visits to support pupils' learning. These contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The Chair of the Governing Body gives strong leadership and holds school leaders to account for pupils' progress and the use of school funding.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to that of their classmates because additional funding is spent carefully.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding so pupils do not make outstanding progress.
- Teachers' marking does not always make it clear to pupils how to improve their work.
- Low attendance for some groups of pupils means they make slower progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons; 11 were joint observations with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 5, and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. An inspector met with a group of pupils and the team spoke informally to many pupils during the inspection.
- The 24 responses the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration and inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day to ascertain their views of the school. The team also considered 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector analysed work in pupils' books with the headteacher.
- A number of documents were examined, including: the school's view of its own performance, school improvement plans, safeguarding files, information on pupils' current progress, records of visits from the local authority and the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to be used for pupils in local authority care, pupils with a parent in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A greater number of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the school year than is found nationally.
- A small number of pupils attend specialist resource units for part of each week to support their specific learning needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher at Alderman Peel High School; in September 2013 the two schools are scheduled to form a hard federation sharing one governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - improving teachers' marking so pupils always know exactly how to improve their work
 - sharing the outstanding practice that now exists in school so teachers learn from each other how to teach more effectively.
- Improve attendance by closely analysing patterns of absence and taking positive actions to promote good attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Nursery with skills that are considerably below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception because of skilled teaching and careful use of assessment. However, they enter Key Stage 1 with skills still below those expected for their age group, especially in communication, language and literacy.
- From their low starting points, pupils make good progress throughout their time in school to attain levels at the end of Year 6 in 2012 that were ahead of the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics. National test results in 2011 and 2012 compared with reliable information held in school about 2013 performance show a year-on-year improvement. The good progress made from entry to the end of Year 2 lays the foundations for pupils' improved attainment. Those gains are consolidated in Key Stage 2.
- Leaders responded effectively to pupils' low scores in the 2012 Year 1 phonics screening check. A new system was introduced to teach phonics, which has a strong focus on teaching pupils to understand the meaning of what they read. Consequently, their comprehension of text has greatly improved and pupils show great pleasure in the books that they read. Pupils' progress is rapidly improving in reading because pupils benefit from the opportunity to read a wide range of books, and they enjoy discussing their understanding of what they read.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 eligible for the pupil premium did not make good progress in 2012. The levels they attained were one term behind the same group nationally and five terms behind other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. Decisive action led by the headteacher means this group is now monitored closely by teachers, senior leaders and governors. Consequently, the gap in attainment in English and mathematics between this group of pupils and that of their classmates has closed rapidly during the year and there is now less than one term's difference between this group and their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils in school. The progress of this group is checked carefully by the special educational needs coordinator, who makes extra help available if pupils are not making, at least, expected progress.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision for part of the week also make good progress in their learning because information is shared between school staff and staff at the specialist resource units.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than the start of the school year make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well supported by leaders and managers and if necessary the parent-support adviser to make sure they settle into school quickly and continue to learn.
- Pupils are currently making rapid progress in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and their classmates' progress. This was seen in a Year 4 and Year 5 English lesson when pupils had to explain what their friends had done well and how they could improve their work. By encouraging pupils to reflect deeply on learning, teaching enables pupils to learn rapidly.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. Teaching has improved because leaders are providing staff with the right training to enhance their skills to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Lessons are carefully planned to challenge pupils' thinking and promote more independence in their learning in all subjects, including literacy and mathematics.
- Teachers introduce new information in lessons clearly and concisely. Consequently, little time is wasted and pupils have maximum opportunity to develop newly introduced skills independently. In lessons seen, all pupils were engaged in their learning and rising to the challenge of work planned to match their different abilities.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide good support during all parts of lessons. The support for either individual pupils or small groups is carefully planned by teachers and helps pupils who need additional help to make good progress.
- The best teaching clearly shows pupils the skills required to become outstanding learners. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, the teacher demonstrated how to make a traditional folk story more detailed by sharing his own writing and editing it in front of the pupils. The pupils were then able to use these skills to improve their own stories.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils mean pupils feel confident in school and are happy to ask for help and support. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the excellent relationships in class meant pupils were confident in challenging the deliberate mistakes made by the teacher; this helped pupils to consolidate their own understanding.
- Teachers ask well-directed questions in class that encourage pupils to think very carefully. The school has focused on encouraging pupils to think deeply about their learning by challenging them to think and answer challenging questions, such as, 'Who owns the trees?' The focus on developing thinking skills has contributed considerably to improving pupils' progress.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently helpful. In some classes, it is exemplary and makes clear to pupils how to improve their work and it is evident that pupils use the feedback to make improvements. However, this good practice is not applied in every classroom.
- In class, pupils are given frequent opportunities to assess their own learning. Teachers use this information well to check pupils' progress and understanding and provide additional support where necessary.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in physical education, Spanish, mathematics and music. Teachers come from the partner high school to teach the primary-aged pupils. The school also employs specialist teachers and coaches. Good specialist teaching helps pupils to enjoy these subjects and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- Pupils love their school. They are happy to be at school and work and play together harmoniously. They are prompt to arrive in the morning and eager to begin their lessons.

- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, adults and visitors. Older pupils provide good support for younger pupils on the playground to help keep everyone safe and happy.
- The headteacher has high expectations relating to pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils behave well in school, as pupils, parents and staff acknowledge. The school handles any misbehaviour swiftly and carefully to ensure that pupils understand why certain behaviours are not acceptable.
- The school places great importance on pupils' safety and has recently had an e-safety focus to help keep its pupils safe when using the internet. Pupils also understand road, water and 'stranger' safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends. They report there is no bullying in school and school records support this view.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision behave well in school and offsite, and attend school and their specialist resource units regularly.
- Attendance is broadly average but is not yet high enough – as the school recognises. Recent improvement has been brought about by close working with identified families and targeted support from a parent-support adviser through the local cluster to help promote higher attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership; he has successfully instilled a sense of pride and commitment in all who are involved in the school, including parents and the wider community. Responses to the staff questionnaire show morale is high.
- The new leadership team share the headteacher's vision and determination for the school to become outstanding. Subject leaders are leading improvements in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics and can show evidence of the impact of new initiatives on pupils' progress.
- The school makes regular checks on the quality of teaching as part of a rigorous monitoring programme linked to staff meetings and courses which further develop teachers' expertise. Observations of teaching and learning conducted by school leaders are of a high standard, their judgements are accurate and the next steps are accurately identified for teachers to enhance their skills.
- Teachers are provided with many opportunities to develop their skills. However, they do not have the opportunity to learn from the outstanding practice that exists in the school, itself, to lead to consistently outstanding teaching in all year groups.
- The management of teachers' performance is well led. Targets are clearly linked to pupils' progress and are reviewed every term.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are currently making much quicker progress; this is because funds are spent carefully on additional adult support and extra help to narrow the gaps in attainment between this group of pupils and their classmates. The school monitors these interventions carefully and makes swift changes if pupils are not making enough progress.

- Leaders and managers have successfully addressed the issues for improvement identified at the previous inspection, showing the school has strong capacity to secure further improvements.
- The school's view of its own performance is very accurate; it correctly identifies its own strengths and areas for development. This information is used to direct detailed improvement planning.
- Leaders and managers work closely with teachers at the specialist resource units to ensure good transition for pupils who attend this provision for part of each school week. Information about pupils' progress is shared and pupils are visited frequently by school leaders as they learn in their alternative provision. These good relationships and sharing of information help this group of pupils when they are learning at school or at the specialist resource units.
- The range of subjects and topics taught is a significant strength of the school. Teachers plan exciting opportunities for pupils to use experiences outside of the classroom, such as trips or the extensive school grounds, which are used to enliven the learning of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. These positive experiences all contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority correctly identified the school as requiring 'light touch' support. Frequent visits have not been necessary because of the strength of school leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has an excellent understanding of the school and demonstrates unfaltering commitment to school improvement. He provided successful challenge to hold previous leadership to account, and continues to do so with the current leadership. Governors successfully brokered the partnership arrangement with the local high school. A small core group of governors is planning systematically to amalgamate with a group of high school governors to create a single body under hard federation in September 2013. Governors manage the performance of staff well and rigorously apply the links between teachers' performance and salary progression. They know what the quality of teaching is. Policy documents are reviewed regularly, including those for safeguarding. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met. A good programme is in place to support new school governors. Governors ensure the school makes effective use of pupil premium funding and can explain accurately the impact of spending decisions. Governors receive all the information from the headteacher that they require, enabling them to ask suitably challenging questions focused on accelerating pupils' progress.

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	120865
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	413139

This inspection of the school 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	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike McGill
Headteacher	Alastair Ogle
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2009
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