

Queen Emma Primary School

Gunhild Way, Cambridge, CB1 8QY

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress in Reception, and develop a wide range of important skills.
- Pupils make good progress in Year 1, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Teaching is consistently good, with an increasing amount that is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a statement of special educational needs make outstanding progress.
- Behaviour is outstanding. From a very young age, children develop high levels of respect for each other and their teachers.
- Pupils feel very safe in school, and feel that their teachers listen to them and respond to any concerns that they have.
- The executive headteacher has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The senior leadership team and governors have created a good and rapidly improving school, in a short period of time. The standard of teaching and the work undertaken by the learners has, therefore, risen sharply since the school opened.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in English are lower than in mathematics because pupils make slower progress in writing.
- The standards reached by pupils eligible for the pupil premium are lower than those of other pupils in the school.
- Although leaders have accurate information that shows how well pupils are doing, the learning needs of pupils who arrive mid-year are not established quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Three joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work on display.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and a Partnership Governor from the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and talked to parents during the inspection. In addition, 22 responses to a staff questionnaire were considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Read, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school was started on 1 September 2011. It is part of the Queens' Federation, which also comprises Queen Edith Primary School in Cambridge. The two schools are led by an executive headteacher, one governing body, and three shared assistant headteachers. Some of the teaching staff also work in both schools.
- The school currently has a Nursery, two Reception and two Year 1 classes. The current pupils will move up the school, creating new classes in Years 2 to 6 over the next five years. As a result, the school is currently smaller than the average-sized primary school, but is growing rapidly.
- The Nursery was added on 16 April 2013, and at the time of the inspection had only been open for 3 weeks.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces).
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at a time other than the beginning of Nursery or Reception is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, and thus further increase pupils' progress by:
 - making sure that the rate of progress made by pupils in writing continues to improve, so that attainment in writing matches that in mathematics and reading
 - further accelerating the rate of progress made by those pupils entitled to the pupil premium
 - ensuring that teachers have good information that shows the learning needs of those pupils who arrive during the school year.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Considering pupils' different starting points, the majority of pupils are making good or better progress across Reception and Year 1. The progress made by children in Nursery is too early to judge, as at the time of the inspection the Nursery had only been open for three weeks.
- Current information collected by the school shows that, for all ability groups, rates of progress have accelerated since the school opened 18 months ago. This is due to on-going improvements being made to teaching and the management of behaviour.
- Children enter with skills, knowledge and abilities which are below those expected for their age, with very few at higher levels. In addition, many pupils are learning English as an additional language, and thus levels of development in spoken English are also low. However, by the end of Reception the majority are working within, or just below, expected levels in all areas, including early language and reading skills. This represents good progress.
- In Reception, children have good opportunities to develop skills and understanding in all areas of learning, developing particularly good skills in mathematical problem solving. The newly opened Nursery is providing a similar quality of development opportunity for those aged three and four.
- The good rates of progress seen in Reception are continued into Year 1. Pupils make particularly strong progress in mathematics and reading. This is reflected in higher attainment in mathematics and a confidence to sound out and experiment with letter sounds when reading new texts.
- In Year 1, progress in writing remains behind that in mathematics and reading, but has accelerated in the last year in line with all subjects as new teaching strategies have been introduced as the school has grown.
- Pupils who enter the school mid-year do not initially progress as fast as might be expected. Once a clear understanding of their needs has been established, these pupils make good progress in line with their peers.
- Pupils with a minority ethnic background, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in all classes. As with their peers, their progress is strongest in mathematics and reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make a strong start in Reception. They maintain consistently good rates of progress across Year 1, doing particularly well when supported individually. Pupils in receipt of a statement of educational needs make outstanding progress, because their learning is very well matched to their particular needs.
- The support given to pupils eligible for the pupil premium is resulting in good or better rates of progress. However, given their low starting points, and the fact that their peers are also making good or better progress, these pupils remain a term behind their peers in mathematics, and a term and a half behind in reading and writing. Thus, while these pupils are making good progress overall, they are still achieving at a lower standard than their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the 18 months that the school has been open, leaders and managers have made considerable improvements to the quality of teaching. For example, the percentage of outstanding teaching observed by the school is increasing each term.
- During the inspection, about a quarter of the teaching seen was outstanding, which matches the school's own record of recent lesson observations. Teaching is never less than good, and is of consistent quality across all classes.
- The teaching of mathematics is particularly strong. During the inspection, pupils were seen to apply a range of strategies to their problem solving, and were able to explain their thinking clearly to the inspector. This is because teachers make sure that every pupil has a good level of understanding before being allowed to move on to a new area of learning.
- The teaching of reading is better than that of writing. Children are taught about the sounds that letters make from a young age, and are given very good opportunities to practise their skills. As a result, children have well-developed strategies to cope with unfamiliar words, and tackle new texts with confidence. Pupils say that they enjoy their reading.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium receive extra help and resources from teachers and support staff which enables them to make at least good progress. While the progress made by these pupils is improving, it is not yet consistently outstanding, as would be required to close the gap in the standards between these pupils and their peers.
- While the teaching of writing is never less than good, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their new writing skills. Pupils seen on the inspection lacked time to experiment with their own writing, despite having some exciting and well-thought-through topics to write about.
- Teachers mark and assess work regularly, providing feedback in a form that young learners find easy to understand. As a result, pupils say that they know how to get better, and feel that teachers value their work. The initial review of the learning needs of pupils who arrive mid-year is not always undertaken quickly enough, however. Once ascertained, these pupils make good progress, demonstrating that such an assessment should be undertaken as soon as possible on arrival.
- The use of support staff is very good. Such staff are both knowledgeable about, and well prepared for, the lessons planned by the teacher. The school is particularly good at making use of these additional adults and, as a consequence, pupils are benefiting significantly from well-planned interventions. For example, short, targeted 'pre-learning' sessions are being used to prepare individual pupils for particular lessons, thus enabling them to engage more quickly with the lesson as it unfolds.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. From a young age, pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and discuss moral issues. The school continues to develop very good links across the federation, celebrating the diverse nationalities reflected in the intake of both schools, thus widening pupils' awareness of other cultures. The spiritual development of the pupils is particularly strong, and assemblies are used effectively to promote the consideration of other belief systems, and to reflect on world issues at an age-appropriate level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Starting in Nursery, consistent behaviour management and high expectations mean that children are very keen to support each other pastorally and in their learning. During the inspection, children in Reception were seen supporting children in the Nursery, who were very new to the school.
- Parental surveys and interviews during the inspection show that parents, staff and pupils are unreservedly positive about both behaviour and safety. Pupils feel safe in school and are able to raise any concerns with teachers whom they see as very approachable.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is almost always impeccable. For example, pupils were seen demonstrating excellent conduct during an unplanned school evacuation caused by a fire alarm.
- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Even from a young age, they are active in preventing it from occurring. Pupils, consequently, say that bullying in all its forms is rare, and is dealt with quickly.
- Skilled and highly consistent behaviour management by all staff makes a strong contribution to a very positive climate for learning. Pupils who have specific behavioural problems show excellent improvement over time as a result of the specialist support provided.
- Attendance is currently slightly below average; however, this has been skewed by the fact that the school has mainly very young pupils, and illness has affected the figures over the winter period. The school is doing all that is reasonable to increase attendance to average levels.
- All groups of pupils feel safe at school in a calm and stimulating environment. They understand very clearly what constitutes unsafe situations and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe, including an emerging awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. For example, pupils in Year 1 were clear that they were not to use a computer without adult supervision.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers have created a good school that is rapidly improving. An experienced and highly effective executive headteacher has been overseeing developments as leader of the Queens' Federation, with the day-to-day running of the school managed by a very competent and effective assistant headteacher, ably supported by two other visiting assistant headteachers from the federated school.
- The school has shown an excellent capacity for continued improvement. For example, the school now has very good tracking processes which are overseen by all managers and subject leaders and which enable them to identify quickly any emerging under-performance, and to develop and implement new strategies to address any issues.
- Teaching is monitored effectively, and the quality of teaching has risen sharply. Processes to manage the performance of teachers are robust and are clearly linked to pupils' progress. Teachers say they feel very supported, and can talk articulately about the improvements brought about through lesson observations and professional dialogue with colleagues across the federation of schools.
- The coordination of English, mathematics and science is very good, and leaders ensure that all

teachers have a good understanding of the different subject areas. This is because their own specialist subject knowledge is very good. Mechanisms for transferring this expertise to other teaching members are particularly well developed, with excellent cross-federation professional development practices.

- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is particularly strong, and is structured around an efficient and effective mechanism for identifying those pupils in need of additional support. A further 'Extra-Mile' programme also identifies and provides intervention support for those who have wider contextual needs that may serve to inhibit pupils' access to learning. For example, excellent counselling support is provided to any child or parent suffering emotional trauma, or having family difficulties.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is very good. The leader has a particularly good knowledge of the needs of young children, and ensures that provision is both good and well tracked in terms of outcomes for learners. In recent times, practice has been improved still further through good monitoring and professional development, and no children fall behind in their learning.
- A local authority officer has been providing effective challenge in the short period since the school has opened. This has been typified by accurate and timely monitoring of the quality of provision, and meetings with the school's senior leaders.
- The school's teaching programmes provide very well for the needs of the pupils, ensuring that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. For example, very good provision exists to develop learning across a well-planned, skills-based curriculum. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy the wide variety of learning opportunities available to them, listing gymnastics, art and music as among their favourite areas of learning.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding exceed statutory requirements. They are a testament to the rigorous approach taken to the identification and resolution of care issues affecting the pupils. Processes are multi-disciplinary, and staff are relentless in ensuring that sustainable provision is put in place to support pupils at risk.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors demonstrate an uncompromising drive to improve and maintain the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period. The governing body is led well by the Chair, along with a Partnership Governor who has an expert knowledge of the education sector. Roles and committee responsibilities are closely linked to priority areas, and governors hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors have put in place reporting procedures that ensure that the executive headteacher keeps them well informed about the quality of teaching and how well different groups of pupils are doing. For example, governors recognise that they need to ensure that teachers' pay and promotion are systematically linked across the Federation to their performance in helping pupils to achieve well. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent, and that while it is leading to good levels of progress for the pupils eligible for this funding, they are aware of the need to further accelerate progress. Through rigorous planning and controls, governors have completed the creation of impressive new facilities in both federated schools, and managed the movement of pupils across both sites during this period. This has led to the excellent deployment of staff and resources at Queen Emma.

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	136241
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	400316

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abigail Crampton
Headteacher	Caroline Peet
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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