

The Nene Infant & Nursery School

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes have declined since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders, the trustees and the local governing board have not ensured that the school provides a good quality of education. They do not work closely enough together to ensure rapid improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning has not been consistently good over time. Too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have gaps in their basic reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Teachers have not provided sufficient challenge for pupils, including the most able. Consequently, they have not made the progress they should have done.
- Phonics is not taught well enough because some staff do not have sufficiently strong subject knowledge.
- Teachers do not use assessment information as well as they should to plan learning that meets pupils' different needs and abilities.
- Leaders and governors have not systematically evaluated the impact of additional funding, including the pupil premium funding, to ensure that eligible pupils make the best possible progress.
- Some senior and middle leaders are not as effective as they could be in driving school improvement.
- In recent years, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been well below the national averages at the end of Year 2.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent support from the trust, alongside new teaching and learning strategies and professional training for staff, is beginning to show improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes this academic year.
- The quality of the early years provision is good, with many stronger elements in the Nursery.
- The school is a happy, friendly place. Pupils like coming to school because leaders and governors provide an interesting, well-thought-out curriculum.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff ensure that pupils' personal development and welfare needs are well met. Consequently, pupils behave well and show respect to each other and adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, thereby raising pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics to at least the national average, by ensuring that:
 - pupils receive consistently good teaching as they progress from year to year
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve so that they provide them with sufficient challenge, especially the most able
 - teachers use assessment information to plan appropriate activities to meet pupils' needs and abilities so that they make accelerated progress, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - all staff have the strong subject knowledge necessary to teach phonics effectively
 - adults consistently reinforce basic skills to fill gaps in pupils' learning so that they can catch up more swiftly.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors are more strategic when measuring the impact of additional funding, including the pupil premium funding and funding for SEND
 - the new strategies which are starting to improve teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes are consistently implemented to enhance school improvement further
 - senior and middle leaders play a full role in school development, with clear lines of accountability to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility effectively
 - senior leaders, governors and the trust's personnel work more closely together to ensure rapid improvement in all areas of school development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has undergone many changes since the previous inspection. These include expansion to three-form entry, a Nursery unit, a new build and key stage 1 pupils moving on to a second site. While leaders, the trust's personnel and governors have focused on these changes, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes have declined.
- However, recent intensive support from the trust, combined with additional professional training from the local authority, is improving the school's leadership capacity, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement this academic year. Nonetheless, leaders, governors and the trust's personnel are not working closely enough together to ensure that these improvements become more rapid and sustainable.
- In a short time, the trust's improvement personnel, working with leaders and teachers, has improved assessment systems, ensured more aspirational pupil targets and formed more rigorous procedures to evaluate teaching and learning across the school. The monitoring of teaching is more robust and frequent. Appropriate plans are in place to improve the skills of weaker teachers. Pupil progress meetings are more effective, identifying more quickly underachieving pupils who require targeted support.
- The executive principal, leaders and governors know the strengths and areas to develop in the school. The development plan contains many appropriate actions for school improvement. However, the evaluation and impact of these actions in the past have not been rigorous enough to stop the decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The effectiveness of senior and middle leaders varies too much. Middle leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic but they do not analyse pupils' performance rigorously enough or take a strategic view to ensure that they drive improvement in teaching and learning and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- The leader for pupils with SEND ensures that these pupils receive appropriate targeted support. However, leaders have not always checked the support that is provided carefully enough to ensure that it is impacting positively on the progress pupils make. This has caused variance in the progress some pupils with SEND make from their starting points, with some doing much better than others.
- Systems for checking and monitoring how well pupils are doing are more accurate in identifying pupils who require further support, especially in Year 2. Teachers in this year group are led by a strong senior leader. They have successfully completed local authority moderation training so that they are fully aware of the expectations for pupils by the end of key stage 1. As a result, pupils in this year group are making better progress this year, enabling standards to improve.
- Leaders are aware that disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as they should. An external review last May evaluated the school's pupil premium strategy to improve provision for eligible pupils. The new pupil premium leader has taken the recommendations from the review to form a more effective plan. For example, the use

of funding for an additional teacher is improving teaching and learning in Year 2 for disadvantaged pupils and others, raising their progress, attainment and self-esteem this academic year.

- The executive principal is passionate about the broad, exciting curriculum the school provides, including more opportunities for sport and outdoor learning. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by trips and visitors. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well. Pupils from different heritages show tolerance and respect to one another. The school celebrates different cultures and faiths, as well as ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. The school has developed purposeful links with the local community and pupils enjoy their walks in which they learn about their local area.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school, especially the work of the executive principal. All those who responded to the online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Parents who spoke to inspectors agreed with this.

Governance of the school

- The local governing board has not monitored and evaluated school improvement strategies over time precisely enough. It has not held leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. However, governors are aware of the need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress, quickly.
- Governors have not always ensured that additional funding, including pupil premium funding and the funding for pupils with SEND, has been spent effectively to ensure that eligible pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points. The pupil premium governor is now working more closely with the new pupil premium leader to analyse the effect of the expenditure on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are passionate about the school and its work in the local community. They visit the school on a regular basis but their visits tend not to evaluate aspects of the school's work rigorously enough.
- The trustees and governors are aware of the importance of the role of governors, with the trust initiating a review of governance in the autumn term. However, governors have not yet had time to improve their skills to ensure swift school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have highly robust systems in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. They have created a strong culture of safeguarding. All statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe are met, including robust checks on all staff.
- Staff are trained regularly and this training is effective. The safeguarding leader liaises with external agencies to ensure that any concerns are swiftly followed up. Intervention and response to concerns are timely and carefully monitored. Inspectors observed this to be the case during the inspection.
- Pupils say that school is a safe place, and parents and staff agree. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Inspectors became part of a fire

evacuation during the inspection. The key stage 1 pupils sensibly and quickly left the school building for the emergency fire point. Once it was safe to return, pupils entered the building to continue their learning. The fire drill procedures for pupils and staff were highly effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across and within year groups. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of, especially the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Sometimes, teachers do not match tasks well enough to the broad range of abilities in their class, and their expectations of pupils' work are too low. Some pupils, especially the most able, are given tasks which do not challenge them sufficiently, while others are given work that is too difficult for them. In both instances, the progress pupils make is weak.
- Adults do not always pick up on pupils' mistakes or misconceptions during lessons. They do not intervene to address gaps in pupils' basic skills swiftly enough, such as number reversals, spaces between words and handwriting. In these cases, pupils' books show that they do not make good progress. Occasionally, pupils are given inappropriate resources in mathematics, with unclear explanations of how to use them. Consequently, these do not support pupils' learning well.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Some staff have a good understanding of how to teach phonics and, where this is the case, pupils are making better progress. However, some adults have weak subject knowledge and this leads to inaccuracies of pronunciation or the task not matching the learning focus. This weakens the progress pupils make.
- Early indications of improvement in teaching and learning include teachers showing pupils how to write well and encouraging pupils to use a wider range of vocabulary in their writing. In mathematics, pupils are given more opportunities to develop their arithmetical and reasoning skills to solve appropriate mathematical problems.
- Teachers plan topics which pupils enjoy. They provide interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematics skills through other subjects, such as science, geography and history. Pupils enjoyed singing about dinosaurs and used some of the information gained to enhance their writing. Pupils use electronic technology confidently to support their learning from Nursery to Year 2.
- Pupils behave well in lessons across the whole school. They want to succeed. They listen to their teachers and they work well together.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils have increased in Year 2 this academic year. Pupils of all abilities are being given different challenges, especially in mathematics. This is enabling more pupils to work at the expected standard and greater depth. For example, pupils wrote high-quality acrostic poems for the word dinosaur, using a wide range of vocabulary. Year 2 pupils read age-appropriate books for their ability with confidence and fluency.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported by bilingual adults. Year 2 intervention involves support from an additional teacher. Thoughtful and

responsive practice is enabling disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with SEND to make better progress this academic year.

- New assessment systems and more robust pupil progress meetings are supporting greater accuracy of teacher assessment this academic year. This is carried out effectively in Year 2, where teachers are now trained key stage 1 moderators.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well supported at school. They feel safe and have chosen an adult to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because this is taught in personal, social, health and economic education lessons and discussed during assemblies. They learn how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with behavioural, social or emotional issues are supported by trained staff within school and external professionals. The care for the school's many vulnerable pupils is of the highest quality. This helps pupils to become 'ready to learn'.
- Pupils said that the few incidents of poor behaviour, bullying or racist comments are dealt with effectively by adults. This is evident in the records kept by the school.
- The executive principal has ensured that the school is fully inclusive, where pupils are welcomed, whatever their needs. She has ensured that the school is a nurturing place where children will be listened to when they want to talk.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a friendly, happy place. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite, respectful and well mannered. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Fixed-term exclusions are rare. Pupils' behaviour usually improves over time, including for those arriving from other schools, where their behaviour may have been a significant issue.
- Attendance is improving to become broadly in line with the national average. Leaders and the family support team monitor absences carefully. They support parents to improve their child's attendance. Term-time holidays are unauthorised and fines are given out if required.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and attainment vary across year groups and subjects. Too many pupils do not make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. After arriving in the early years with skills that are well below those typical for their age, too many pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2 with learning still well below

national averages.

- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is too low. Results for all pupils have been in the bottom 20% nationally for the previous three years.
- The decline in standards was halted in 2018, with results being slightly better than in 2017. School performance information and the work in current Year 2 pupils' books indicate that pupils are making stronger progress. Already this academic year, a greater proportion of pupils have reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years.
- By the end of key stage 1, too few pupils reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to improved teaching and greater learning challenges for the most able in Year 2 this year, more pupils are already working within elements of greater depth than last year.
- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been well below the national average for the previous two years. Pupils are not acquiring their early reading skills as well as they should. This academic year, leaders and teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils should achieve. Pupils currently in Year 1 are working at a higher standard than in previous years.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make steady progress from their various starting points. Additional adults, including bilingual teaching assistants, provide effective support for these pupils, many of whom are new arrivals to the country.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as others nationally or within the school by the end of key stage 1. The pupil premium leader is ensuring that funding is now spent more effectively so that these pupils are making better progress, improving their standards and beginning to close the gaps between them and others in school.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND varies across year groups. Too few achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2, but more are making better progress from their various starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start to school life, especially in the Nursery. Early assessment shows that most children enter early years with skills well below those typical for their age.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development, the expected standard at the end of the Reception Year, has been well below the national average for the previous three years. However, evidence collected during the inspection indicates an improving picture. These children are making good progress from their starting points and are better prepared for Year 1.
- The Nursery provision is of the highest quality. All children are supported very well, including those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. The Nursery leader is passionate and highly skilled. She

knows the children and their families well. She has created a strong team in which everyone is involved in the education of children and ensure that all children make strong progress from their individual starting points. For example, where children start with lower skills and abilities in speech and language, adults provide language-rich environments and tasks so that these children can succeed. Activities are planned to meet individual children's needs. Early reading skills and speaking and listening are taught well. Children have many opportunities to share high-quality books with adults and each other.

- The Nursery and Reception classes are warm and inviting. Children follow routines well and behaviour is good. They are motivated to engage well in their activities. Children behave well indoors and outside. They are kind and patient with each other. They respond well to adults' instructions.
- The Nursery and early years classes share high-quality learning areas, such as the water investigation area and a room for children who require a calm, supportive environment with a sensory focus. In the latter, children were fascinated by blowing bubbles. They accessed clear word prompts to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- Staff offer a wide range of exciting activities across all of the early years areas of learning. These enable all groups of children, including disadvantaged children, those who speak English as an additional language and those with SEND, to use their skills independently. Skilful questioning helps children to explain and expand their learning.
- Reception teachers have recently been focusing on children's writing. Children spoke enthusiastically about their work around a vegetarian superhero. They wrote words independently to describe the superhero. A high proportion of these children are likely to reach the expected standard in writing by the end of the year.
- Reception staff have recently had phonics training from the local authority to reduce the inconsistency in the teaching of phonics. They are working with a senior leader on a regular basis to further improve the provision, teaching and learning, and children's achievement in Reception.
- Children's work in books demonstrates that all staff are involved in supporting children's progress. Adults capture how well children are progressing personally, socially and academically.
- Relationships with parents are strong in the early years. Staff encourage parents to learn about aspects of their child's learning.
- All safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met.

School details

Unique reference number	140174
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10046396

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

Type of school	Nursery/Infant
School	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Caroline Whalley
Executive principal	Karen Crawley
Telephone number	01945 583 907
Website	neneandramnothschool.co.uk
Email address	office@nenerjs.org
Date of previous inspection	19–20 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school is a sponsor-led academy within the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. It is federated with Ramnoth Junior School, which is inspected separately. The two schools share an executive principal.
- The previously independent on-site Nursery became part of the infant school in September 2016. This increased the number of pupils on roll considerably.
- The school is on two sites. The early years provision is on one site and key stage 1 has moved to a separate site, sharing buildings and a playground with the junior school.
- The trustees are responsible for the quality of education provided by the school. The trust delegates the day-to-day running of the school to the local governing board. The regional director of the trust visits the school regularly to provide both support and challenge.
- Children in the early years attend full-time in the Reception Year. The Nursery children attend for part of the day, including the two-year-olds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of

pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The majority of pupils are White British and White from any other background.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with leaders from the school and the multi-academy trust.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal, senior and middle leaders, governors and representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including: teachers' planning; the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; information on pupils' attainment and progress; records of behaviour and safety; minutes of governing body meetings; and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils, and informal conversations with pupils took place during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as eight free-text comments. Views of parents were informally sought at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the views of 31 staff who responded to their online survey.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector

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