

Scole Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121055
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380156
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Hughes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Buck
Headteacher	Mark Carlyle
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Hughes

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector sampled 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring information, improvement plans, analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, and records of classroom observations. She also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked attendance.

Questionnaires submitted by 10 staff, 52 pupils and 57 parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

Scole Church of England Primary School is a much smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and a lower than average proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who are supported on school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is also below average. The current headteacher started at the school in September 2010 and two of the four class teachers started in September 2011. The school meets the government's current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress. It has gained the bronze Eco award and achieved Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because, although progress is good, standards in mathematics and writing are not consistently high throughout the school and boys' attainment in writing is not as good as that of girls.
- Achievement is good. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics for most pupils. Although the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is closing, attainment for some pupils is average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because provision for them is well tailored to their specific needs.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are exciting and stimulating, and teachers plan the work well to meet the needs of most pupils. Marking in books is always encouraging, but comments directing pupils to the next step in their learning are sometimes too vague to be helpful. Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in order to improve their work.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are courteous and polite and show a mature sensitivity to the needs of others. In lessons, they are interested and attentive. They have a clear understanding of what constitute safe and unsafe situations both in school and in the wider world.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school to be outstanding and understands how to achieve this. Effective leadership of teaching and management of performance have resulted in accelerated progress throughout the school and rising attainment in most areas. The governing body effectively holds the school to account through challenge and support.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment to raise standards in English and mathematics through:
 - ensuring that marking identifies clear next steps in learning and that pupils are given time to respond
 - delivering a consistent approach to developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - establishing a whole-school approach to the teaching of calculation methods.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel their children make good progress and almost all pupils say that the school helps them do as well as they can. During the inspection, good progress was evident in the majority of lessons and work in books showed above-average standards in most subjects.

Children generally join the school with skills and understanding at the levels expected for their age. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been recently improved and children get a good start to their school life. The good progress made by the current group of children means that they are expected to join Key Stage 1 in September with above-average standards. The teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) is thorough, and most children are able to read simple words and form many letters correctly.

Continued good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 have resulted in above average standards in reading in all year groups. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed obvious enjoyment of reading as they were keen to share books about virtual worlds and adventure stories. Older pupils were able to talk about both non-fiction and fiction texts with enthusiasm and interest.

Standards in writing and mathematics are above average in most year groups but this is not consistent for all pupils. In a challenging mathematics lesson, pupils in Key Stage 1 were tackling multiplication of large two digit numbers using the box method. Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrated their knowledge of the six and seven times tables through a computer-generated timed quiz. Boys attain slightly higher than girls in mathematics and girls attain higher standards than boys in writing, but the gaps between boys' and girls' attainment are closing.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted

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support and make good progress. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are sensitively supported and make good progress, in line with their classmates.

Quality of teaching

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well, and almost all pupils agree that teaching is good. One pupil said, 'Most lessons are really active and if you're stuck the teacher always helps you.'

The enthusiasm and energy of the teachers in the school engages pupils in their learning and makes lessons interesting and exciting. Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged through role play or drawing on their own interests. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were introduced to the idea of scientific enquiry by their teacher in the role of a visiting scientist. In Years 1 and 2, boys and girls alike were excited by the use of cars and ramps to investigate friction.

Pupils are given opportunities to write in different genres, such as play scripts, television reports and adventure stories in English lessons. However, developing these skills further across other areas of the curriculum is less well established and marking in topic books does not generally identify how writing can be improved. Mathematics teaching is based on practical activities where possible. In most lessons, it is made relevant through such tasks as reading Olympic timetables. Pupils develop key calculation skills to tackle more complex problems, but a whole-school approach to calculation is not yet fully embedded across all classes.

Teachers know their pupils well and planning ensures that work is well matched to their needs. In the best lessons, teachers make cross-curricular links to develop and consolidate learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson on reading scales, the teacher drew on previous learning about water displacement. However, the approach to developing cross-curricular links is not systematically planned and consistently applied throughout the school.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are exceptionally well supported to ensure they make good progress and are fully included in all class activities. Additional adults in the classroom are well briefed and support unobtrusively and proactively. They mirror the good questioning techniques demonstrated by teachers and make observations which help inform teacher assessment.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education underpins much of the teaching. Social skills and appropriate behaviours are promoted in all lessons, and the use of well-chosen videos helps develop in pupils a fascination for the world around them. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 gasped at the demonstration of how to reduce friction by creating a cushion of air, while children in the Early Years Foundation Stage showed how well they listen to and supported each other with their spelling and writing.

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Pupils can talk about their targets and levels at which they are working but are not always clear about the individual steps that can move them on towards the next level. Marking in books is always encouraging, but the next steps in learning are not always evident. Some teachers provide clearer steps than others but they are predominantly confined to English and mathematics books and some steps are too broad to be helpful. Where helpful comments on how to improve are provided, pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say that their children feel safe in school and almost all pupils agree with them. The school provides a safe environment for pupils through its attention to the needs of individuals. Pupils talk about how to keep safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet, on the roads and safe places to play. They are very clear about what constitutes bullying and can talk about a range of bullying including verbal, physical and 'when people force you to do things you don't want to'. In discussion, pupils were adamant that bullying does not happen in the school but said that adults help in any 'falling out' situations. The school council recently led an assembly on bullying, and council members feel that their key messages were understood. Most questionnaire responses from pupils, parents and carers agree that any bullying is dealt with well.

Behaviour around school is good and pupils demonstrate good learning behaviour in lessons. They are respectful of each other's views and listen to what others have to say. All staff and pupils know each other well. This contributes to a generally harmonious atmosphere where pupils look out for each other. For example, rather than have specifically designated people, pupils see it as everyone's responsibility to talk to anyone who sits on the 'friendship bench'. They say that they would not hesitate to get help from an adult if anyone was in difficulty or if pupils were falling out.

The school has worked closely with parents and carers to improve attendance. This has resulted in above-average attendance this year.

Leadership and management

The drive and ambition of the headteacher to move the school to outstanding is shared by the whole staff and governing body. This consistent drive for school improvement, supported by good professional development opportunities for staff, means that the quality of teaching and attainment is rising for most pupils, demonstrating a secure capacity to improve. Standards in mathematics and writing have yet to become consistently above average throughout all years in the school but the gap between girls' and boys' attainment is narrowing. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and is both supportive and challenging. Leaders have ensured that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and the arrangements for safeguarding comply fully with

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current requirements.

The planned curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to learn through practical and first-hand experiences. The recently developed thematic approach means that pupils make links between different subjects. Careful planning ensures that all areas of the curriculum are covered, either through topic work or subject-specific teaching. The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not yet fully embedded.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength of the school. This is reflected in the good links with the church: pupils talk enthusiastically about services they hold there. Pupils take an active role in leading assemblies and writing prayers. In lessons, they demonstrate good collaborative skills and are given the opportunity to discuss wider global issues in relation to fundraising activities such as Sport Relief. The school helps develop pupils' understanding of different communities and cultures through practical experiences. It has strong links with schools in France and New Zealand, and Key Stage 1 pupils wrote a welcome guide for the visiting French pupils. The recent African day led to an understanding of African music, art and theatre.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school and say they would recommend the school to other parents.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scole Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Diss, IP21 4ED

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and joining you in some of your exciting and interesting lessons. It was good to see how well behaved and respectful you are to visitors and to each other.

Yours is a good school with good teaching. The headteacher and the governing body lead your school well and are very keen for the school to get better and better. You are making good progress in most lessons and that means that standards are rising to being above average. However, boys and girls are not always achieving as well as each other in writing and mathematics in every year group.

To help improve this, I have asked your teachers:

- to make sure that comments in your books are clear about what you need to do to improve, and you are given time to respond to these
- to give you more opportunities to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
- to make sure that, when you learn different calculations in mathematics, every teacher follows the same pattern.

You can play your part by reading what your teachers have put in your books and trying your best to follow their guidance.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hughes
Lead inspector

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