

Scole Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121055
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313856
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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 on roll	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Blowstone
Headteacher	Mr A Berry
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Norwich Road Scole Diss Norfolk IP21 4ED
Telephone number	01379 740654
Fax number	01379 740654

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a semi-rural community on the outskirts of a market town. The low proportion of pupils taking free school meals does not fully reflect the broad and comprehensive range of backgrounds of the school's intake. Nearly all pupils are White British with none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average as is the proportion with a statement of special education need. However, some year groups have higher proportions of pupils with learning difficulties than others. Given the small numbers, the attainment on entry varies from year to year. When children start at the school attainment of most, but not all, is below that expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils and as a result, they achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress in developing early skills in literacy and numeracy. The positive and friendly atmosphere does much to nurture and support pupils. Consequently, their personal development and well-being is good. Skilful teaching contributes well to pupils' progress. Lessons are well organised and carefully prepared. However, work set does not always match the needs of pupils carefully enough. Occasionally, the challenge is not as good as it could be, particularly for higher attaining Key Stage 1 pupils in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. They take full part in all activities and make good progress.

Standards vary from year to year because of small numbers in each age group. In 2007, standards in Year 6 were well above average. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are a little above average and pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Standards in Year 2 are above average, though not many pupils reach Level 3, the highest level. Throughout the school, progress in writing is good and it is often very good in reading. As a result, standards in reading are better than in writing especially for older pupils. Pupils enjoy school and learning immensely, as indicated by their excellent attendance. The school has recognised that pupils are not as enthusiastic in writing as in other lessons because many find them difficult or uninteresting. In response, the school is beginning to harness the use of drama and film to make writing lessons more appealing and purposeful. Nonetheless, pupils make good progress overall in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) which prepares them well for the next step in education and future life.

The school's good curriculum contributes well to the provision of an all-round education for pupils. Their moral and social development is strong and they form very good relationships both with one another and with staff. The school's positive ethos encourages pupils to contribute to their school and wider community. They enthusiastically take on responsibilities around the school as well as in the local community. Links with the local church are especially strong, enabling pupils to engage effectively in village activities and events. Pupils develop in confidence and self-assurance as they move through the school. However, there is scope to improve their knowledge and understanding of other cultures to prepare them even better for life in today's multi-cultural society. Pupils have a good understanding of elements of healthy lifestyles and most make strenuous efforts to adopt good habits. They are well aware of how to keep themselves, and others, safe. Pupils are cooperative and well behaved. This, together with the good levels of care and support for pupils' welfare helps them to feel safe while at school. Support for academic development is improving. Targets are set for pupils and teachers provide useful checklists to help pupils assess their own work but overall, not enough guidance is given to pupils on how to improve their work or how to achieve their targets.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear steer for its future development. Good analysis of a wide range of monitoring information and performance data enables senior leaders to form an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, the school focuses on the right priorities for improvement and has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is led and managed effectively. Careful assessment of children's work promotes good progress in their learning, particularly in calculation, counting and reading. Children make good progress in personal and social development because they are consistently encouraged to share and take turns. Most children concentrate well and sustain good levels of interest in activities. They are taught well and enjoy their learning experiences. Good interaction with adults successfully develops their speaking and listening skills. The practical nature of tasks successfully engages children's interests but occasionally the structure of activities does not help children achieve the desired learning outcomes. The broad curriculum covers all areas of learning well and promotes good links between activities. For example, the use of storybooks effectively promotes interest in other learning activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Stimulate pupils' interest in writing so that standards reached match those in reading.
- Ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs especially the more able in mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that pupils know and understand their targets and what to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results in the 2007 national assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above average though few pupils attained the highest level in mathematics. This is also the case in the current Year 2. Results for pupils in Year 6 in 2007 were well above average. They were particularly high in mathematics and reading. Current standards indicate that pupils are achieving well across the school. Whilst progress in writing is good for most, many do not find it easy to write for different purposes and audiences, their preference being creative writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported. Additional catch-up sessions in Years 3 - 6 enable these pupils to make good progress particularly in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school and enjoy all it has to offer. Outstanding levels of attendance are indicative of their love of school. They particularly enjoy subjects that promote their active involvement such as art, design and technology and ICT. Their enjoyment of sports and physical education engenders good habits for a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils also enjoy one another's company and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good levels of independence mean that pupils can get on with work on their own. Their attitudes to learning are good though occasionally they lose focus when pace in lessons slows. They readily engage in lively discussion especially when teaching is good. Although some pupils are rather boisterous at playtimes, pupils generally feel safe from bullying or harassment and are confident that staff deal effectively with such incidents on the rare occasions they occur. Good behaviour overall is contributing effectively to a good learning environment. As part of the excellent contributions pupils make to their community, the active school council ensures that pupils have good opportunities to express their views and put forward ideas to improve the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships mean that pupils respond well to teachers. Learning objectives in lessons are clear and explained well so that pupils understand what they are going to learn. The skills of support staff are used well to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to grasp fundamental ideas such as how to produce a good opening paragraph when writing. In the best lessons, questioning develops and extends pupils' thinking well. Teachers often pose questions at varying levels of difficulty to enable low and high attaining pupils to participate. However, activities are not always as well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. This is particularly so in mathematics at Key Stage 1 where able pupils are sometimes not extended enough. Marking in English is used well; constructive comments help pupils understand what they need to do to improve but marking is not as effective in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad curriculum meets the needs of mixed age classes well. Work in English and mathematics is successfully planned to develop new skills and knowledge systematically. The topic-based approach to learning with cross-curricular links to literacy is motivating both staff and pupils. The school recognises the need to improve the curriculum in writing by adopting approaches that interest and motivate pupils more effectively. The curriculum is enhanced well by modern foreign languages, a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. These contribute well to pupils' good personal development although there is scope to widen opportunities for pupils learn about a greater range of peoples' different traditions and customs. The school's strong curriculum in art and ICT results in pupils developing good skills in these areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and caring environment and ensures that there is always a helpful adult for pupils to turn to. Requirements for child protection and safeguarding children are met. Effective links with parents and external agencies supports pupils well, especially the most vulnerable. Parents are very positive about the work of the school and its contribution to their children's learning and welfare. Good progress is being made in developing the use of assessment to help pupils learn and guide their academic progress. Pupils are increasingly assessing their own work in English. However, this practice is not applied consistently across the school and in other subjects. Consequently, pupils are not always sure of their targets or how to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the assistant headteacher. There are robust procedures to evaluate how well the school is doing. These include good

systems to regularly check on pupils' progress to ensure they are on track to meet the challenging targets set by the school. Pupils, staff, governors and parents are regularly consulted. The views of pupils in particular are exceptionally well used to understand the impact of the school's work on their learning and personal development. Subject leaders maintain a good overview of planning across the school and increasingly effectively monitor teaching and learning. There is scope to use their skills in analysing data more robustly to ensure they make an even greater contribution to school improvement. Governors provide good oversight of the school and have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. The school provides good value for money.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

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

I enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you. I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome. Your school gives you a good education and prepares you well for your next school.

These are some of the best things about the school.

- You enjoy school and particularly enjoy subjects where you can take an active part such as art, design technology and ICT.
- Children in Reception get a good start to their education.
- You make good progress and achieve well during your time at school.
- There are lots of opportunities for taking responsibility around the school and for becoming involved with the local community which you are extremely enthusiastic about taking on.
- Teaching is good and promotes your learning well.
- Staff take good care of you and help you with your work.
- Your headteacher listens very carefully to what you have to say about the school and works well with other staff to make sure that you are happy and enjoy learning. This is one of the reasons why you are always so very keen to come to school and your attendance is so good.

There are a few things that need to be improved.

- Making writing more enjoyable so that you can make even better progress.
- Ensuring that work in lessons is not too easy especially in mathematics.
- Making sure that you know your targets and what you have to do to achieve them.

It was very nice to meet you and I wish you well for the future.

Yours truly

Mrs Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector