

Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124746
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380971
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Rob McKeown

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	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Guelbert
Headteacher	Nyree Martin (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
School address	Church Street Wetheringsett Stowmarket IP14 5PJ
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Rob McKeown

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent time observing teaching, which included visiting eight lessons and observing five teachers and teaching assistants. The inspector heard some pupils read from Years 1 and 2. He held meetings with pupils and staff, including senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school development plan, monitoring reports, attainment and progress data, teachers' planning and pupils' work. He observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspector also analysed 23 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, 34 from pupils and six from staff.

Information about the school

Wetheringsett is a village primary school that is smaller than average. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is above the national average. Healthy Schools status was achieved in 2011. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher who joined the school in September 2011.

Government floor standards for attainment and progress have been exceeded.

Wetheringsett pre-school is located on the same site but is not managed by the governing body and is separately inspected.

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 where pupils achieve well and reach above average levels of attainment by the time they leave in Year 6. It has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and staff work well together to provide good care and support for all pupils. Almost all parents and carers returning the inspection questionnaire would recommend this school to another parent.
- Pupils make good progress in each of the key stages. Additional teaching time allocated to Year 2 and improved provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helping to raise the attainment of younger pupils.
- Teaching is good and particularly strong for the oldest and youngest pupils. Occasionally, teaching is satisfactory and leaders are providing helpful professional development and guidance to help improve it to good.
- The support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and this helps them make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. There are good systems for recording and reviewing any unacceptable behaviour. The school can point to significant success in providing pastoral support for improving the behaviour and personal well-being of pupils with particular needs.
- Teachers use their subject expertise effectively to provide pupils with a good curriculum. The teaching of basic skills, including letters and sounds (phonics) and the development of early reading skills, is well organised and promotes good progress in reading. Pupils make good use of the many opportunities they have to use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning.
- The acting headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have a clear view of the school's strengths and aspects that require development. Together,

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they have a collective aspiration and determination to achieve success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing, building on the improvements already introduced by:
 - increasing the focus of teaching and assessment on spelling and punctuation skills
 - encouraging pupils to aim for accuracy in word and sentence-level aspects of their writing in all subjects.
- Ensure teaching and learning are consistently good or better by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the contributions made by teaching assistants
 - checking on the success of the learning of all supported groups in all lessons.
- Improve attendance by adopting a more rigorous approach to reducing occasional and persistent absence.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents rightly believe their children are making good progress. When starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills and aptitudes vary from year to year but are usually at or below expected levels. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics in 2011. This year's Reception group started school at the level of development expected for their ages. They are making good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are also making good progress and are on track to reach higher attainment levels than the broadly average outcomes achieved by Year 2 pupils in 2011.

The systematic approach to teaching phonics is helping pupils to develop effective early reading skills. At the end of Year 2 last year, most pupils' attainment in reading was at or above average. In Year 6 last year, the reading levels were well above average. Writing is not as strong and attainment is lower than in reading in all key stages. The school has introduced improvements in the teaching of writing which are proving successful, although inaccuracies remain in pupils' spelling and punctuation skills. These word and sentence-level errors also occur when pupils are writing in other subjects.

There are no gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils within the school; all make good progress from their starting points. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable have good teaching and pastoral support. Disabled pupils and

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those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of the clear identification of their need and the good quality support they receive to help them succeed. More-able pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are provided with challenging activities to extend their learning, for example with multi-step calculations when solving mathematical problems. A strong aspect of pupils' learning is their ability to use ICT to support the tasks they complete in many subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. All parents and carers agree that their children are taught well and pupils believe they learn a lot in their lessons. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are supported well through the positive relationships between staff and pupils and the expectations made for good behaviour.

Teachers plan interesting learning activities using their good understanding of pupils' ability levels and what they need to learn next. They make it clear to pupils what they will be learning and identify the outcomes that will make their responses successful. Pupils are frequently encouraged to talk about their learning and they work well together in pairs and groups. Practical activities are used successfully to stimulate pupils' interest and engagement. For example, pupils in Class 1 enjoyed making animal movements and recording their thoughts on hand-held microphones before writing movement phrases. The expertise teachers have in different curriculum subjects is used well to enhance and extend pupils' learning. This was seen in a science lesson in Class 2, with pupils dressed in laboratory coats excitedly investigating the conditions in which bacteria may be found and thrive. There are many opportunities for pupils to use notebook computers to support their learning. This they do routinely, logging in to the school network to retrieve information or carry out research.

Work in pupils' books is marked regularly, with clear pointers for what has been done well and how responses could be improved. Pupils know they are expected to respond to their teachers' comments and they do. They also know the targets they have for improving their writing and mathematics. On the whole, teaching assistants provide pupils with good and sometimes excellent support. This is particularly effective for helping pupils to engage and complete the tasks set for them. On occasion, however, the guidance given can be too directive and assessments not precise enough to ensure pupils' responses are accurate. In some lessons, teachers give insufficient attention to checking the learning outcomes of supported groups.

Children in Reception are getting a good start to their education and are provided with a suitable range of indoor and outdoor activities. They undertake some of their learning with Year 1 pupils and some as a group on their own supported by a teacher or teaching assistant. Regular assessments are made of children's attainment in all the areas of learning and their progress is tracked thoroughly throughout the year.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good, and staff and the governing body give high priority to providing pupils with a safe and secure learning environment. Parents agree that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school and that their child feels safe when they are there. Older pupils help the youngest children settle into school acting as mentors; some also help to run clubs at lunchtime. Most children listen well and show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Pupils who may display challenging behaviour are guided and supported very well, and the school can point to how the behaviour of individual pupils has improved appreciably over time. A small number of parents commented in questionnaires on a bullying incident that had occurred in the past. The governing body acted on the concerns raised and the school tightened its procedures for identifying, monitoring and recording any incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils say that staff would act on any concerns they may have about behaviour or bullying, and older pupils know about the different types of bullying, should any occur. They also understand that it is important to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have many opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through playing cooperatively together, taking turns and listening to each other when learning. Assemblies are used well to promote pupils' social and moral development by, for example, asking pupils to reflect on the importance of friendship and responsibility. Attendance over the last three years has been broadly average but absence levels have been higher than the target the local authority agreed with the school.

Leadership and management

The school is in a transition period pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher. Strong leadership and management are provided by the acting headteacher who is well supported by the school's senior teacher and other members of staff. A tightly focused school improvement plan has been drawn up this year to promote improvements in the overall quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, including the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Key staff contribute well to the school's overall effectiveness and take responsibility for leading developments to improve provision and raise standards. For example, staff, led by the literacy leader, have worked together on strengthening the teaching and assessment of writing, and this is already having a positive impact on pupils' attainment.

Leaders undertake regular observations of teaching to keep a check on the overall quality and provide useful feedback on any aspects that may require developing. Pupils' attainment and progress are monitored systematically and rigorously. Teachers' assessments are recorded on the school's attainment tracking system and these are scrutinised and discussed in progress meetings. Action is taken to provide targeted support for any pupils whose progress may have slowed or who may need

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additional provision to help overcome any learning difficulties.

The curriculum is good and includes a broad range of learning experiences across the full range of subjects, contributing well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is developed through thematic topics and good use is made of the outdoor environment. Outdoor learning facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been improved well since the last inspection. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs available for pupils at lunchtime and after school. There is no discrimination and all pupils are given equal opportunities.

Members of the governing body have a broad range of skills that enable it to provide a high level of challenge, as well as strong support. Individual governors make regular visits to school to see it in action and, in some cases, support pupils with reading and other learning activities. Members of the governing body involve themselves well in the life of the school and, as a result, have a good understanding of the priorities and how well they are being tackled. The governing body has been instrumental in helping to develop the school's forward thinking approach to pupils' use of ICT by investing in up-to-date equipment and making it possible for pupils to access the internet for their learning anywhere on the school site, including outdoors. The governing body ensures, together with senior staff, that safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. Strong governance and effective senior leadership give the school a secure capacity for further improvement.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 5PJ

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. I enjoyed visiting your lessons and assembly, talking to you about your learning and looking at your work. This helped me decide that Wetheringsett is a good school. These are some of the best things:

- you make good progress and reach high levels of attainment
- all the staff care a lot about you, give you good support and want you all to be successful
- you get on well together and behave well
- most of the teaching is good and you enjoy the interesting lessons your teachers prepare for you
- the acting headteacher, senior staff and governing body lead and manage the school effectively and are aiming to make it even better.

There are some things I asked the staff and governing body to do. These are:

- make sure that all the teaching is at least good, and checking the support you have in lessons is successful
- helping you to improve spelling and punctuation in your writing
- improve your attendance.

You can help by being in school every day, working hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown
Lead inspector

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