

Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124705
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380961
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Geof Timms

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	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Georgina Strutt
Headteacher	Linda Curran-Spain
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
School address	Cherry Hill Kersey IP7 6EG
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geof Timms

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed ten lessons taught by four teachers and other staff, for a total of almost five hours. Meetings were held with pupils, staff 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 analysed a range of policies, assessment data and examples of pupils' work. In addition, 42 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who is at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average overall but very high in some year groups. The main needs are speech, language and communication difficulties, and behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. An above-average proportion of the pupils join or leave the school at times other than is normal. The school meets current government floor standards.

The school has Healthy School Status, an Activemark award and a silver Eco-school award.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It has maintained its strengths since its previous inspections and has also improved in many areas. Children have an excellent start to their schooling in the Reception Year and they make outstanding progress from their often broadly typical starting points. This strong progress continues throughout the school, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in all three subjects is often exceptionally high by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils’ outstanding progress is due to consistently excellent teaching over time. This is evident not only in lessons observed but also in the pupils’ work and the clear evidence the school has in tracking their progress. This picture of progress includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The best teaching is imaginative and holds pupils’ interest well. Teachers do not always involve pupils sufficiently in assessing their own progress and setting targets for improvement. Relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding and this has a very positive impact on learning.
- Pupils’ behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. They talk very positively about the lack of bullying at the school, the excellent relationships between older and younger pupils and with all of the adults in the school. The pupils’ and parents’ and carers’ questionnaires are equally positive about how safe pupils feel in school.
- The school is outstandingly well led and managed. The headteacher has a strong vision for the future of the school and very high expectations for the quality of teaching. This excellent focus on continual improvement is a feature of the school’s ethos. Subject leadership responsibilities have changed recently and staff have not yet had time to fully develop this role. The governing body provides an exceptional level of challenge and support. A well-planned curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide sufficient opportunities for staff to develop their leadership of subjects, to spread the existing excellent practice further and to improve their knowledge and use of available assessment data.
- Help pupils to develop more independence by involving them more in the assessment of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The achievement of almost all pupils in lessons observed during the inspection, and that reflected in the examples of their work scrutinised, was at least good and often outstanding. Although the small numbers mean that overall outcomes can change significantly from year to year, the progress pupils make from their varied starting points is outstanding. Most children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their learning needs are exceptionally well provided for in the wide range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Progress is particularly strong in developing their personal, social and emotional skills, linking letters and sounds and developing their calculation skills.

In Key Stage 1 progress is exceptionally high in most years although there was a dip in 2011 due to the underachievement of a small group of boys. This has been very well addressed in Year 3 and they are now making excellent progress. Pupils' communication skills are generally strong but their speaking skills are less effective when speaking to a group compared to their one-to-one communication. For example, when speaking to each other or an adult they are often fluent and articulate. However, when speaking to the class they are too self-conscious and do not ensure that what they are saying is heard and understood. They have a good ability to read unknown words and clearly enjoy reading.

In Key Stage 2 progress is outstanding due to some very imaginative and effective teaching and the teachers' experience and knowledge. For example, when pupils are creating a piece of original writing, teachers often create a quiet, calm imaginative atmosphere using music and candles. This is enjoyed by pupils and helps them concentrate as they draft and redraft their work. Reading skills continue to improve to exceptionally high levels; pupils talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about books and their reading matter is often very challenging. By the time they leave the school pupils are often over a year ahead of similar pupils of their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The interventions for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are highly successful. Many of these pupils retain a good enthusiasm for reading and develop effective skills in attacking words with which they are unfamiliar.

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Parents and carers are very positive about their children's achievements at the school. Pupils themselves say that the school helps them learn new things. There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of pupils and the school correctly ensures they are viewed as individuals in its tracking and in the planning.

Quality of teaching

All of the pupils say the school helps them to do as well as they can. This positive attitude is supported by the high quality teaching consistently evident throughout the school. One hundred per cent of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires said that their children are well taught. The inspection findings support these positive views.

Teachers provide a wide range of excellent activities that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. They learn about other faiths and cultures. The outstanding ethos that results is illustrated by the boys who, following a visit to a Christian residential centre to learn about Africa, set up a fund-raising business to improve water supply. This Christian ethos is also evident during an assembly in church, partly led taken by the minister, when pupils learned more about Lent. The provision in the Reception Year is very effective in developing children's early attitudes towards learning. They demonstrate genuine enjoyment when working outdoors and exploring how to transfer water between a range of containers, 'making an invention' as one boy said. Staff continually observe and assess progress, and use the results well to plan the next steps for children's learning. Excellent home-school partnerships are promoted through the provision of more information than previously about children's activities and the levels they are working at as they move through the early learning goals. Imaginative teaching is also evident when teachers plan for different learning styles in their activities. For example, in Year 2, pupils went outdoors to create a physical pictogram to support their understanding of the mathematical data they were working on in the class.

Teachers' subject knowledge is supported by a strong curriculum framework. They use visits and visitors very effectively to support and promote learning. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils have recently visited a re-created Anglo-Saxon village and this has proved an excellent, imaginative way of introducing the topic. Very imaginative teaching was evident in one outstanding lesson in Years 3 and 4, when the teacher created a Viking longboat shape on the floor for pupils to sit in as they watched a film about the Vikings, before making models of the boats. This engaged pupils' interests and enthusiasm for the topic even further. Teachers have a wide range of assessment information, including the detail from a recently introduced tracking system, and they use this information exceptionally well. However, they miss opportunities to involve pupils more in self-assessing their learning, responding to marking and feedback and understanding what they need to do to improve further.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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The school is a very harmonious community. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding and this is typical over time. They are very polite and friendly to those they know and extremely respectful towards visitors. Their excellent behaviour in lessons helps their learning and they co-operate and collaborate very effectively. This is evident, for example, in Years 5 and 6 when the class spontaneously praise the responses of pupils who have special educational needs. In their questionnaires almost all pupils said behaviour was good in lessons and most said it was good at other times as well. Parents and carers are also very positive about the behaviour in school. These views are supported by the inspection evidence. One parent wrote that their children, 'have become more confident and mature and also independent, which I feel is a sign of happiness and positive discipline'.

Pupils feel safe and secure at school and say there is no bullying or significant bad behaviour. This is borne out by the school's records over time. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, they enter school happily and punctually, building good habits for the future. A strong focus on routines, a well-structured day and excellent planned opportunities to learn and play together in the Reception class helps prepare children well for Year 1. Attendance is consistently above average. Firm efforts are made to ensure all pupils are safe and able to learn effectively. Training for staff in child protection is wide-ranging and detailed. Staff ensure pupils are aware of the dangers of computer misuse and cyber-bullying. When out of school, such as walking to the playing field all possible safety aspects are considered.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has built on the school's previous strengths and created more of a focus on consistent achievement in all year groups. One parent reflected the view of the majority by saying, 'I cannot praise the head teacher enough, she is just what the school needed, forward thinking and progressive'.

Among other initiatives the headteacher has introduced a detailed tracking system that enables staff to see clearly how well all their pupils are progressing and to share this information more with parents and carers. This means any underachievement is quickly recognised and addressed through interventions in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This is happening, for example, in Year 3 where a small group underachieved at the end of Year 2 but are now making excellent progress as a result of the school's focus on their needs. All members of staff say they are proud to be at the school. Although a small number of staff are unsure how well the school provides for their professional development, effective systems for staff training and the excellent leadership of teaching is raising standards still further, and has ensured that teachers are continually improving their practice. Successful actions such as these, with many clear improvements over a sustained period building further on what was already an outstanding school in the past, show that the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

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The school's self-evaluation is very accurate and honest. Staff work well as a team in this very small school. Even so, due to staff and responsibility changes, subject leadership is at an early stage of development and more remains to be done to ensure leaders are fully familiar with the teaching and progress in their subjects in classes other than their own. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well, including the excellent promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong and decisive leadership has resulted in attendance that is above average.

The governing body has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. A very effective system for visiting the school and monitoring its work has clear protocols for governors to follow. The outcomes of these visits help inform the judgements and decisions made at governing body meetings. The school is very effective at promoting equality and tackling any discrimination. Every effort is made to develop pupils' views and experiences of the wider world. The close contact between governors and the school also ensures that safeguarding arrangements fully meet current government requirements.

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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Kersey, IP7 6EG

Thank you for the way you welcomed me to your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit, reading your questionnaires and talking with many of you about your school. I especially enjoyed walking to the playing field with you at lunchtime. You are lucky to have access to such a good place to play. Your behaviour there, and in lessons and around the school, is outstanding. This is important because it helps the teachers provide you with interesting and challenging work as well as keeping you safe and happy in school.

Kersey is an outstanding school. I am sure that it will continue to improve in the future because you are all working so hard together to make it successful. This is especially evident in reading, writing and mathematics, in which you do really well. You make outstanding progress and reach very high levels by the time you leave the school. You can make one small improvement in your excellent speaking and listening skills by being more confident and clear when you speak to the class or a group.

Some of the teachers have taken on new roles recently and I have asked the school to help them develop the ways they lead their subjects. Teachers mark your work well and they provide you with some good feedback about your learning. I have asked them to get you to do more assessment of how well you are doing, and to see more clearly what you need to do to improve and to set yourselves targets.

The headteacher and governing body provide outstanding leadership. Your teachers work very hard to give you some excellent, interesting lessons. You are learning your basic skills well and this is helping you to be ready for secondary school and your future lives. Thank you again for your friendliness and help. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Kersey and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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