

Little Munden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117402
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358131
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Taylor
Headteacher	Jessica Balado-Lopez
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
School address	Church Lane Ware SG12 0NR
Telephone number	01920 438271
Fax number	01920 438055
Email address	head@littlemunden.herts.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Inspection number	358131

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed 11 lessons or part lessons taught by five different teachers. Two assemblies were also seen. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment of pupils' progress data, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils, and informal conversations with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 47 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well assessment is used to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' different abilities so they all make good progress.
- How well teachers use individual target setting so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- To what extent all leaders and managers are successfully evaluating performance and taking effective action to improve provision and to raise pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils in this much smaller than average school are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A low proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. The school is organised in four mixed aged classes. The headteacher was appointed in Sept 2008. All the full-time teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. Some pupils move on to a local 9-13 middle school at the end of Year 4 and this can significantly reduce the numbers in Years 5 and 6.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Effective leadership by the headteacher and strong teamwork among the staff has led to good improvements since the last inspection. Little Munden is now a good school. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Good care, guidance and support and the school's very positive atmosphere contribute well to pupils' personal development. Parents and carers are very happy with the care and education provided and appreciate the improvements made.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a sound start and make satisfactory progress in the areas of learning. Recent staffing changes mean that this area is at a developmental stage. At times, activities are not sufficiently challenging and purposeful to fully engage all children. There are plans to update learning resources and improve provision. Pupils are making good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. Teachers establish very good relationships with their pupils and convey clear expectations. Lessons are well focused so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Assessment is used effectively to plan lessons and match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils are set specific learning targets in English and mathematics and these are used effectively so they know what they need to do to improve.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly, polite and supportive of others. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe at school and adopt healthy lifestyles. Community cohesion is promoted successfully on a local level and pupils make good contributions to the school and to local events. The promotion of pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and life in the wider world is less effective but there are plans to address this area. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Most subject leaders are new to their posts but they are already fully involved in the monitoring and development of their areas of responsibility. Self-evaluation is accurate and robust and findings are used well to inform improvement planning. Effective action is taken to bring about improvements where needed and good use has been made of local authority support in the drive for improvement. Since the last inspection there have been clear improvements to assessment, individual target setting and to the quality of teaching. These have all helped to improve pupils' progress from satisfactory to good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from satisfactory to at least good by:

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

- improving the planning and resourcing of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
- ensuring that all activities and tasks are challenging and purposeful.
- Extend the good work on local community cohesion by broadening pupils'
 - knowledge and understanding of different cultures and the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. Discussions and lesson observations confirm that pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They confidently told an inspector, 'Lessons are fun and enjoyable'. School assessments, pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Different groups of pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress because they are well taught.

Pupils make good gains in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities they have to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. Pupils enjoy reading the wide range of books available and benefit from the structured approach to the teaching of reading. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' performance in writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes and they are increasingly applying their writing skills in other subjects. In a good English lesson for Years 5 and 6, pupils wrote interesting main sections of a story. After skilful input and demonstration by the teacher they used adjectives, openers, time connectives and paragraphing to good effect. The quality of handwriting is inconsistent and the new English leader has identified this as a priority in improvement planning.

Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of good teaching and they are provided with tasks which are well matched to their abilities and needs. They use and apply numeracy skills successfully to solve a range of problems. In an effective Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils' used number lines and 'counting on' strategies to solve subtraction problems.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. In Year 1 and 2 in a personal, social and health education lesson, pupils acquired a clear understanding of the importance of seeing things from another person's view point and listening to the whole story in resolving disagreements. While satisfactory, pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths is not as strong as other areas of their personal development. Pupils choose healthy foods and show a good understanding of balanced and healthy diets. They participate enthusiastically in a range of physical exercise. Pupils feel very well cared for at school and are confident that there are always adults they can turn to if they need help. They take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council. Pupils support those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a range of appeals and charities. Pupils are well prepared for the future. Their personal and social skills are well developed and they are making good progress in acquiring and applying literacy and numeracy skills. Attendance levels are above average.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching successfully promotes enjoyment and good learning for pupils. Teachers effectively share the purpose of lessons with the class, so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate key teaching and learning points. Teachers' clear explanations, demonstrations and instructions promote learning effectively. Questioning is used well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding as lessons progress. Pupils are challenged well and their interest is sustained because activities are well tailored to their abilities. In some lessons, learning support assistants are well deployed and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This good practice is not consistent in all classes but the school has started to address this issue. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress for pupils and contributes well to their personal development. Provision for English and mathematics is good. In partnership with other similar local schools a creative curriculum is being developed. There are good links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to learning. The teaching of French contributes well to pupils' language and cultural development. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the good opportunities to enrich learning, such as attending art, badminton, country dance, football, netball and poetry clubs. A residential visit for Years 4, 5 and 6 provides interesting outdoor activities and helps to build team and social skills.

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

Care, guidance and support are important elements of the school's very clear ethos. The well-organised and secure environment provided is recognised and valued by pupils, parents and carers. A parent wrote, 'The headteacher and teachers are always accessible'. The pupils informed inspectors, 'There are always people to support you here'. Pupils falling behind in literacy or numeracy receive well targeted one-to-one support. Clear expectations by staff and consistently implemented procedures lead to positive behaviour. There are effective systems to monitor and promote good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has brought good experience to the school and has successfully steered the improvements needed with staff. She and the teachers demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement and all are firmly focused on promoting high quality provision and good outcomes for pupils. Subject leadership roles and responsibilities are effectively delegated among the small number of staff. The new subject leaders bring enthusiasm and clear direction to the school.

Through effective monitoring, the headteacher has a clear overview of the quality of teaching. There are productive partnerships with similar sized local schools where teachers work collaboratively in revising and developing the curriculum. The teachers involved in this partnership benefit from the sharing of good practice and the sharing of subject expertise of different staff.

Members of the governing body are supportive and are kept well informed of the school's performance by the headteacher. All statutory requirements are met. However, the governors are not sufficiently challenging and questioning about pupils' progress in order to hold the school to account.

There have been improvements to safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and safeguard children meet requirements and are satisfactory. The school has well developed quality assurance and risk assessment systems. All staff are appropriately trained in this area and safe practices are promoted well through the curriculum. There are clear plans to further develop safeguarding.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the staff strive to ensure that all groups of pupils do as well as they can. Discrimination is tackled effectively. The school has a clear understanding of the community it serves. There are strong partnerships with the local community. The school has identified the need to extend community cohesion beyond the local level.

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

Positive partnerships have been formed with parents and carers and the school strives to meet and exceed their needs. Parents have welcomed events such as numeracy workshops and participation in class assemblies. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciate the improvements made. Parent comments included,

'The head is very professional and approachable. I am pleased with the way that she has handled any concerns' and 'We are pleased with the school's direction'.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. Children settle quickly because of good induction arrangements and the positive partnerships with parents and carers. Adults form good relationships with the children and pay good attention to their care and welfare. Children enjoy their learning and most of the activities provided. They benefit from clear and focused instruction by adults in developing early reading and numeracy skills. However, the setting lacks a prominent writing area with a wide range of writing implements for children to acquire and practice writing skills. Teaching, assessment and the planning of the curriculum are satisfactory, consequently most children are making satisfactory gains in their learning. On occasions, children are not sufficiently engaged in their learning because activities lack challenge and a clear purpose. Some of the furniture and learning resources are old and well used, and there are plans to replace these. The outdoor learning areas are well resourced but the learning activities outside are not always sufficiently linked to the main topic or theme. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there are well-thought-out plans for improvement.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Over a half of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. All parents and carers who returned them are happy with their children's experiences at the school. They are particularly pleased with the sense of enjoyment, safety in school, the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. These views are consistent with the inspection findings. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that most pupils are well behaved because of clear expectations and the positive relationships between adults and pupils. The few pupils with challenging behaviour are well managed and supported.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Munden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	53	21	45	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	62	18	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	34	28	60	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	36	28	60	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	49	24	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	40	25	53	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	40	28	60	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	40	24	51	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	40	26	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	26	30	64	4	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	43	26	55	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	53	20	43	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	49	24	51	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Munden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Ware, SG12 0NR

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a good school. It has made good improvements.

These are the school's main strengths.

You thoroughly enjoy school and the activities provided.

You make good progress because you are taught well.

A good range of learning activities is provided, including clubs and visits.

You get on very well with each other and behaviour is good.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.

You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you and provide good guidance and support.

You make valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community.

The school is well led by your headteacher and she receives good support from other teachers.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do a few things to improve areas of the school's work.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage could be making more progress and the school has plans to make this happen. For example, the school is keen to improve some of the equipment and make sure that learning activities are always challenging for you.

More topics should be included to increase your knowledge and understanding of different cultures and how people live in the wider world.

You can all help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.