

St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121149
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358943
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Umfreville
Headteacher	Susan Sweet (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
School address	The Street North Lopham, Diss IP22 2LR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and observed three teachers. The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, a representative from the Norwich Diocesan Board for Education, staff and a group of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring, such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspector scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 32 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Why pupils appear to do better in English than in mathematics.
- The extent to which data is used to set work that matches the abilities of pupils, especially in mixed age classes.
- The effectiveness of the school's systems and procedures for promoting improvement after many changes of leader.

Information about the school

St Andrew's is a very small school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with hardly any from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has Healthy Schools' status and the Activemark award.

In the past three years the school has had six headteachers. There have also been frequent changes of teaching staff. The present acting headteacher comes from the county headship service and assumed the role in September 2010. The school has been in partnership with another local primary school for the past six years, but this is due to finish at the end of this academic year. A privately run pre-school on site is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Andrew's is a satisfactory primary school. It has been through a long period of upheaval with a succession of temporary headteachers, who have also run a larger primary school as part of the partnership arrangements. This has meant that systems and procedures have changed frequently and have not become established enough to bring about rapid improvement. The most recent acting headteacher is building on the work of her predecessor in bringing greater stability to the school, through the support of the county headship service. The school has benefited greatly from the passion and commitment of its governing body, which has given a very strong strategic lead and worked hard to reduce any ill effects of all the changes on pupils' education. Leaders are supported by parents and carers who, whilst missing a permanent headteacher, recognise that their children are happy and enjoy school. A typical comment was: 'I do believe the governors and teachers have dealt with unsettled staffing at the school extremely well. However, there is no denying the issue.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress from typical starting points, so that attainment is broadly average across the school. In general, pupils do better in English than in mathematics because teaching is more confident in English lessons and marking is more thorough. The school does not have clear strategies to teach pupils how to calculate effectively, which slows the progress of pupils in tackling mathematical problems. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good elements, especially in the older year groups. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but sometimes the pace of lessons is slow and work is not matched precisely enough to their needs, especially in challenging more-able pupils. Marking and target setting are variable, with some good examples, but not enough indication is given to all pupils how they can make the next steps in their learning.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school, and are considerate towards one another. Behaviour is good, having improved in response to the consistent approach from staff. The award of the Activemark and Healthy Schools status point to pupils' awareness of keeping healthy, with a good range of clubs for them to enjoy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and to village life, taking part in the memorial service on Armistice Day. Their attendance is outstanding. Increasingly their views are taken into account when curriculum topics are being planned, but they have limited experience of carrying out independent research and taking the initiative in their learning. While pupils' social development is good, their appreciation of other cultures and traditions is underdeveloped, with little direct experience of pupils from backgrounds different from their own. The school is a friendly and harmonious community and cares effectively for pupils, who are known very well as individuals.

The acting headteacher has quickly identified the school's strengths and areas to develop, and is focusing on a few key priorities. Self-evaluation is accurate. Subject leaders are

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very new to their roles, and have not had time to make an impact. The arrangement of job-shares and class organisation is complex; the deployment of staff is not making best use of adults' skills and unhelpful situations have been created where Year 2 pupils, for example, have four different class teachers in any given week. The governing body and the acting headteacher have worked together well to steer the school through a difficult period in its life, and they demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for ensuring further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment and achievement in mathematics by:
 - ensuring work is challenging for all pupils, especially the more able
 - implementing a whole school calculations strategy.
- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - using data effectively to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all pupils
 - injecting pace into lessons so that pupils are fully engaged
 - promoting pupils' independence in their learning
 - through marking and target setting consistently showing pupils the next steps in their learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - bringing greater stability through the appointment of a permanent headteacher
 - developing the roles of subject leaders
 - reviewing the deployment of staff and class organisation to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- Promote community cohesion further by developing pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions that exist in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to participate in lessons. For example, pupils in the Key Stage 2 class showed empathy when acting out the long trek made by Shackleton across South Georgia to seek help for his stranded crew. They could talk about how they were feeling under the strain. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 enjoyed holding up cards to show rounding up to the nearest ten as part of a lively starter to a mathematics lesson. However, too often pupils are expected to complete worksheets that do not sufficiently challenge the more able, and only relatively recently they have started to become more actively involved in their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, receiving the support they need to take a full part in lessons. There are no differences in how groups of pupils perform, although progress is generally better in English than in mathematics.

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Pupils help by taking responsibility for looking after specific parts of the school. They grow their own vegetables, although healthy eating does not always extend to the contents of lunch boxes. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, with strengths in social and spiritual, the church school ethos being well developed. Pupils are soundly prepared for secondary school, acquiring the expected basic skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 is satisfactory. Teachers plan for different abilities, but this is not always precise enough to deal with the very wide range of learners, in mixed-age classes. While relationships in lessons are good, the pace of learning is often inconsistent. Teachers talk for too long, not leaving enough time for pupils to complete their tasks. The use of assessment information to match work to pupils' abilities is variable, partly as a result of data not being sufficiently available or accessible. New systems introduced by the acting headteacher are enabling teachers to use data more effectively this term. When teaching is good, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and work independently, although this is uneven across the school. Older pupils, inspired by their re-enactment of Antarctic exploration, produced writing of fine quality: 'In the year 1914, Ernest Shackleton attempted to go on a journey that would twist the fabric of time. He wanted to pierce the mist of discovery.'

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Marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work. Pupils generally know their targets. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is becoming more responsive to pupils' interests and contains more lively elements, such as role-play and drama. While pupils make reasonable use of the local area, there are not enough trips to places of interest further afield to widen their horizons. A start has been made in developing links across subjects, especially through information and communication technology. Because of the good pastoral care, pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable make good progress in their personal development. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory and meets requirements. The promotion of attendance is very successful through activities such as a weekly class competition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is about to enter a new phase in its development with the dissolving of the long-standing partnership with another local school. This has been affected by all the changes in leadership, and the governing body is working effectively with the local authority and Diocesan Board for Education to map out a viable way forward. Governance is good. The vision and direction provided by the governing body has been a thread of continuity and tenacity through turbulent times, and good support from the county headship service has given the school strong leadership while it seeks a permanent replacement. The acting headteacher has developed good communication across the school community, and has built strong links with parents and carers. She has reinforced the school's culture of respect, and brought in systems to track pupil progress clearly. This has resulted in better use of data by staff when planning, although still at a relatively early stage. New staff have fitted in well and there is a positive team spirit. The complicated staff structures are rather unsettling for some of the younger pupils, who have a succession of different teachers during their week. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Safeguarding arrangements are good. All staff are trained and up to date and child protection procedures are robust. Meticulous records are kept of all matters relating to health and safety. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. There are good local links and some international work, but the extent to which pupils experience the diversity of cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom is more limited.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly because of the positive relationships in their class, and the support they receive from older pupils. They have a good range of resources to choose from when selecting their own activities, and their interests are taken into account when work is planned. There are sometimes too few opportunities for children to choose their own learning experiences as opposed to those led by adults. There have been improvements to the outside learning area, although this work is not complete. Careful assessments are made of children's progress, showing that they achieve satisfactorily from starting points in line with national expectations. There is satisfactory leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, with consistent planning across the job share. There has not been the opportunity for observations of the teachers' practice to take place to share good practice and develop professional dialogue.

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

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Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. They were generally happy with the school's provision, particularly valuing the teaching and the way the school responds to their suggestions and concerns. Several parents and carers expressed concerns about the lack of a permanent headteacher, but in the context that their child was not perceived to be disadvantaged as a result of it. A few parents and carers felt their children could be challenged more. Inspectors found that there was inconsistency in how well more able pupils were challenged in particular.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham 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 inspector received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	78	5	16	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	66	9	28	2	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	56	12	38	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	53	13	41	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	53	12	38	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	59	10	31	2	6	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)	18	56	8	25	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	53	9	28	4	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	41	15	47	3	9	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	44	16	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	28	17	53	4	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	56	10	31	4	13	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham, Diss, IP22 2LR

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently and for sharing your views with me. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things it does well and some things it needs to improve. Here are some of its particular strengths:

You feel safe at school and look after each other well.

Your behaviour has improved and is now good.

You help around school and are well involved in the local community.

Your attendance is outstanding.

The school cares for you well, especially if you are having difficulties.

The governing body and the acting headteacher are working together well to improve the school.

The school involves your parents well, and listens carefully to their views.

Here are some things you need to improve:

You could do better in mathematics so I have asked the school to develop ways to teach you how to calculate successfully and show you how to solve problems more quickly. I have asked your teachers to make sure they set work, for you, that makes you think, and to give you enough time to get your work done. It would also be good for you to do more independent research and have more of a say in your own learning. I have asked teachers to make sure marking and target-setting show you how to improve. I would like you to have more opportunities to find out about other children from different cultures who live in the United Kingdom. I have asked the governors to do all they can to appoint a permanent headteacher for the school, as you have had a lot of changes. I have also asked them to take a look at the way the classes are organised so you do not have quite so many different teachers each week.

You all can help by telling your teachers what you enjoy about learning and continuing to work hard. Thank you once again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector

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