

# St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124758
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	359764
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Summers

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms S Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Livingstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Back Hills Botesdale, Diss IP22 1DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01379 890181
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<b>Email address</b>	St.botolphs@talk21.com

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw nine teachers and 16 lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum and lesson plans, a range of school policies and records, and the 64 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well boys achieve in writing
- the extent of pupils' independence and involvement in their own learning
- the rigour and effectiveness of the systems by which the school judges its own performance.

## Information about the school

Most of the pupils who attend this average-sized primary school come from the immediate locality although a few travel from further afield. Most are from White British backgrounds with a very small minority coming from minority ethnic families. Although relatively few pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, those who do are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Fewer pupils than average are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many of those pupils identified have moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher is new since the last 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

This is a satisfactory school that promotes pupils' personal development well. Pastoral care is strong. Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and offering support to those who have significant problems or disabilities. Pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. They understand and respond well to the school's high expectations for their behaviour. Pupils feel safe and they have a clear understanding of what to do if bullying occurs, but they say this happens rarely.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with broadly average attainment. Progress is satisfactory although it is often good in Years 4, 5 and 6 where the teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics are improving because of recent initiatives to improve teaching methods and the mathematics curriculum. Teachers throughout the school have good relationships with pupils, which help them to manage behaviour effectively. Learning intentions are usually clear and pupils know what they have to do to succeed in lessons. In Years 4 to 6, teaching is exciting and stimulates pupils to work hard and do their best. In some lessons in other year groups, however, activities do not provide enough challenge for all pupils and teaching styles are too narrow to engage their interest and motivation. Opportunities are sometimes missed to explore pupils' thinking and extend their understanding through careful questioning.

The school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' writing skills. They realise that there have not been enough opportunities for pupils to work independently and write at length. Boys do not always reach as high levels as girls and are less well motivated to write at length. Sometimes the subject matter and activities do not motivate boys to work hard enough and do their best. Year 5 and 6 teachers plan extremely well to ensure that pupils have a range of good opportunities to extend their writing skills in other subjects but this is at the early stages of development in other classes. Some pupils are aware of their individual targets in writing and this motivates them to work harder but this is not consistent across the school.

Senior leaders have a satisfactory view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans in mathematics have been successful, because of the strong leadership of the mathematics coordinator and support from outside agencies. However, teaching remains broadly satisfactory because monitoring systems are not used rigorously enough to identify and tackle weaknesses. Examples of good and outstanding teaching are not shared well enough amongst the whole staff. Nonetheless, since the last inspection, pupils' achievement has shown satisfactory improvement. Computers are being used more effectively by pupils to support their learning. Parents and carers report that the atmosphere in school has improved and that they are now better informed about how to help their children at home. One wrote, 'The parent forums and presentations have meant

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that I am fully aware of teaching methods in maths and how to help my child with homework.' Overall, the school shows a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in writing by:
  - motivating boys more effectively by providing subject matter and activities that engage their interest
  - extending opportunities provided through the curriculum for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills especially in years 1 to 4
  - ensuring that pupils know their individual targets for improvement and what they need to do to achieve these
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently and write at length
  - (by the end of the summer term 2011)
- improve teaching and learning by:
  - improving the use of questions to explore pupils' thinking and extend their understanding
  - ensuring that activities provide suitable challenge for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that all teachers use a range of teaching styles to engage pupils' interest and motivation
  - (by the end of the spring term 2011)
- strengthen leaders' impact on teaching and learning by:
  - monitoring teaching more rigorously and regularly, providing clear points for improvement and reviewing subsequent progress towards these
  - sharing good practice throughout the school.
  - (by the end of the autumn term 2010)
- About 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.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children's skills vary considerably when they start in the Nursery but, overall, are typical for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 3. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress in Years 4, 5 and 6 because of the high quality of teaching that they receive. Progress in mathematics is improving and is seen in the higher results in tests and assessments this year. Pupils are usually keen to learn, and the vast majority apply themselves well in lessons. When given the opportunity to do so, they show a good deal of independence in their learning, for example when they used computers to access and develop their own web pages. However, such independent learning is less evident in their writing. Pupils also work well in pairs and small groups. In a literacy lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils worked

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together to develop a character in a story about George, a workhouse boy during Victorian times. They shared their opinions thoughtfully and listened to one another's points of view. With the teacher's expert questioning, they were able to refine their notes to provide a really exciting opening to their story. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in lessons. Sometimes, when teachers have provided teaching assistants with clear expectations of pupils' targets, progress is good. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language progress satisfactorily, often encouraged by helpful support from teaching assistants.

The school is currently working to gain Healthy Schools status and this has helped pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, which most adopt. Regular physical education lessons and good participation in after-school sport help to increase their fitness levels. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community through their work as school councillors and playground leaders. They play an active role in the local community, presenting concerts and assemblies for parents, carers and friends. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. The large majority of them enjoy school, as their good attendance shows.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences to make learning enjoyable for pupils. It contributes especially well to the development of their personal and social skills.

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Pupils particularly appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities on offer after school, especially those that involve sport and music. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils learned about the work of the artist Georges Seurat, when they experimented with the brush tool in a paint program during an ICT lesson. However, writing skills are not further developed or extended enough in other subjects.

Although teaching remains satisfactory overall, there are clear signs that it has improved in mathematics and this has had a significant impact on pupils' learning and progress. Teachers are developing their use of interactive whiteboards as a tool to make lessons more stimulating and to explain and illustrate teaching points. Teachers question pupils well to assess their learning but do not always build on this to extend their thinking and understanding. Pupils' learning is sometimes hindered when tasks are too easy and fail to challenge them sufficiently. They occasionally lose concentration and become restless when teaching lacks variety and involves them listening to the teacher for long periods of time.

Pupils receive good levels of support and advice which make them feel very comfortable about school. Staff are active in finding out how best to support pupils with significant medical or learning problems so they are able to play a full part in school life. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are supported appropriately; a bilingual support assistant has proved useful in helping new pupils, whose first language is Russian, settle into school effectively. Pupils are well supervised at break and lunchtimes and equipment is checked carefully to ensure its safety. Effective systems are in place to ensure smooth transfer to secondary school. Good links with other local primary schools help pupils to get to know each other before they transfer. A small minority of pupils say they would like further information about how well they are progressing and the school is currently addressing this through better target setting and marking.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher drives the school's work satisfactorily and shares her vision effectively with staff. She has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has prioritised improvements appropriately. Subject leaders do not always plan rigorously enough for improvement or monitor teaching and the curriculum well enough and this leads to slower development for example, in literacy.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. There is a strong sense of community within the school and locality and links with communities overseas are well

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established. Links with another school in a contrasting location in the UK are developing. Governors provide satisfactory support to the school's work. They bring a good range of skills in, for example, finance and computing with which to help the school. The new chair has a clear view of the developments needed to ensure that governors have a thorough view of the school's performance so that governors are able to take a more active role in self-evaluation procedures.

There are clear procedures to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding policies are good and reviewed regularly to ensure their full effectiveness. Staff are trained regularly in safeguarding and new staff checked carefully to ensure their suitability. Staff promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily, checking carefully to see whether pupils, whatever their background or needs, make enough progress. They have already identified the need to improve the effectiveness of their work in literacy to ensure that boys reach as high standards as girls.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly and develop their self-confidence. Parents and carers appreciate the warm welcome given to their children and adults' efforts to make them feel safe and happy. The children come into school happily each morning, keen to share their achievements with their parents and carers and carers have good opportunities to learn about what is happening in Nursery and Reception through a well organised system of open mornings which happen over the year.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy all the activities organised for them. Most reach the levels expected of them in many areas of their learning. They enjoyed making the houses of the 'three little pigs' for example, out of straw and sticks and experimenting to see which was the stronger. However, opportunities for children to

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develop basic literacy skills often lack excitement and interest and consequently progress in reading and writing is not as rapid as in other areas of learning. Children develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds but sometimes the teaching lacks excitement and vigour to really engage the children's interest.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children's progress is assessed regularly and this builds into a clear picture of children's achievements over the year. Although this information is used to identify children who need further support, it is less well used to make sure that the more able are challenged and extended sufficiently. Although there have been improvements to resources and the outdoor areas in recent years, many resources inside and outside are old and worn and do not stimulate children's interest and motivation to learn.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about the school's work. Nearly all agree that children enjoy school and are kept safe. They are happy about the teaching and say that the school helps children to develop healthy lifestyles. They agree that the school helps them to support children's learning at home. Inspectors agree with nearly all of their positive views although judge teaching as satisfactory, rather than good. A small minority of parents and carers are concerned about children's progress and how the school keeps them informed about this. Inspectors found that children's progress varied according to the quality of teaching they received and that there are appropriate systems in place to keep parents and carers informed about children's progress.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Botolph's 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	53	28	44	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	56	27	42	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	30	37	58	6	13	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	36	31	48	6	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	39	35	55	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	38	35	55	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	26	41	3	5	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)	24	38	36	56	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	31	37	58	5	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	25	39	61	4	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	33	33	52	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	45	26	41	3	5	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	42	31	48	4	6	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Diss, IP22 1DW**

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school recently and telling us your opinions about your school. Thank you also to those pupils who returned questionnaires. Your views, along with everything else that we saw, helped us form a clear view about how well your school works. You go to a satisfactory school and these are some of the important things we found out about it:

- all the adults take good care of you and help you if you have any problems
- you understand what it means to be healthy, and many of you enjoy the nutritious school lunches and take part in after-school sport
- you play an active role in your community and understand what life is like for children in different communities overseas
- your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- you attend school regularly so you do not miss important parts of your education.

Many of you, especially the boys, should be making better progress in writing and we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to develop your writing skills in other subjects and to encourage you to write longer pieces of work. You also need to be absolutely sure about your writing targets so you know what you are trying to improve. We have asked teachers to make sure that lessons are more interesting and that you all receive the right sort of work to help you make better progress. Finally we have asked your headteacher to make sure that she and other leaders keep a close check on what is happening in lessons so they can help teachers support your learning even more effectively.

You can play your part in helping your school become even better by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well and attend school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead inspector

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