

Cedars Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134787
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	360640
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Barren
Headteacher	Clare Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed nine teachers, visited 16 lessons and three sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and made six extra short visits to classes. Additionally the team met with staff, pupils and members of the governing body and analysed work in pupils' books. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records and school development plans. Responses from staff, pupils and 79 parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- The sustainability of pupils' improved attainment in Year 2 assessments, especially for boys.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment and the impact of topic work on meeting pupils' learning needs in the mixed-age classes.
- The school's strategies to give pupils knowledge and an understanding of cultural diversity.

Information about the school

The school has grown rapidly since the previous inspection and is now an average-sized primary school. There are now two classes for children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 and 2. At Key Stage 2 there are three mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Because of the school's rapid expansion, more pupils join the school in all year groups than is usual in primary schools and the staff team has doubled in size since the previous inspection. Five members of staff joined the school in September 2010, including half the staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Changes in the staff structure mean that the senior leadership team was extended at this time.

The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is typically below average. Most of these pupils have difficulties related to speech, language, communication and social skills. Children are admitted to the reception classes in September on either a full-time or part-time basis. All children have the opportunity to attend full-time from January. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including the proportion who speaks English as an additional language, is much lower than is usually found.

In 2008 the school gained Healthy School status and the Activemark award in recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles and physical education.

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

This is a good, well-led school that has improved since its last inspection. Attainment for boys and girls has risen and is above average throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. All groups of pupils, including children from the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good progress from their various starting points. Teaching is good because systems for checking how well each pupil is doing have become more detailed and are now used more rigorously by all teachers in their lesson planning. Higher expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve contribute to the good progress they make. 'We are extremely pleased' and 'we are thrilled' are typical of several comments written on questionnaires from parents and carers about how rapidly their child's individual needs have been identified and addressed. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to small group work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but are not always used effectively throughout lessons. In the small number of less effective lessons, opportunities for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning are limited.

The curriculum supports accelerated learning for all groups of pupils. Meticulous planning ensures that topics take account of pupils' interests while developing their key skills. This contributes to pupils' good behaviour and enjoyment of school, although topics are not used enough to deepen pupils' understanding of cultures and communities that differ from their own. The school successfully promotes positive attitudes and encourages pupils to reflect on their experiences. Pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong. The governing body and school staff recognise that plans to promote community cohesion are more successful at a school and local level than in relation to the diversity of communities in the United Kingdom and further afield. Pupils' direct experience of communities and cultures that differ from their own is limited. Work to address this has begun, but is at too early a stage to have had a full impact on pupils' learning.

The headteacher's strong leadership, combined with robust support from the governing body and deputy headteacher, has driven school improvement and minimised the impact of turbulence due to staff changes. The governing body and senior leadership team share a good understanding of the school's strengths and so priorities for development are well chosen. These strengths, combined with the track record of improvement, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. As the staff team has grown, new teachers have quickly absorbed the school's commitment to continual improvement and shared ambition for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school by:

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- giving pupils more consistent opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for their learning
- ensuring that teaching assistants are fully briefed and make equally positive contributions throughout all parts of each lesson.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of communities that differ from their own by:
 - providing pupils with more direct experience of people with different faiths
 - developing relevant topics within the curriculum that inform pupils about other cultures.

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

Most pupils join the school with levels of skill and understanding that are below expected levels nationally. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language, typically make good progress as they move through the school. Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed this picture of good achievement, and pupils in Years 1 and 3 were already working above expected levels in English and mathematics. For example, most groups of pupils in Year 1 applied their understanding of number and calculation to money with greater skill and accuracy than expected for their age.

Girls and boys are equally well motivated, concentrate well and persevere when work is challenging. They work constructively in small groups. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 maintained a good level of focus while sharing ideas with their classmates about how to improve the format and content of play scripts. On occasions when teachers direct pupils for longer than necessary, challenge for pupils is reduced and behaviour dips to become satisfactory. On other occasions behaviour is exemplary, as seen during a well-paced mathematics lesson when pupils were fired with enthusiasm because they all wanted to reach the clearly identified and challenging targets.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, reflecting the school's awards. They largely apply this understanding to themselves, especially in their enjoyment of energetic activity. They have a good understanding of safety issues and are entirely confident in approaching adults for support: as one pupil expressed, 'teachers care about you'. Older pupils have a good understanding of different views about the proposed construction of a new shopping mall, a current local community issue. They are interested in the recent exchange of letters with pupils in a London school and pupils in Sri Lanka. Although their experience of diversity within the United Kingdom and their understanding of other parts of the world are limited, pupils develop positive attitudes. During the inspection an older pupil defined racism as 'not liking difference' and other pupils strongly condemned such attitudes. Pupils' attendance is above average; they accept responsibilities willingly and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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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	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?

Good relationships between pupils and adults form the basis of positive behaviour management. Teaching assistants mostly provide valuable support to teachers with behaviour management, but are not always enabled to do so. Teachers routinely plan to meet the varying needs with their classes. While mostly good, the effectiveness of planning varies. When targets are not sufficiently clear to pupils or teachers' introductions to lessons are too long, pupils' independence is constrained and learning is satisfactory rather than good. The strongest teaching maintains a brisk pace and good level of challenge, with teaching assistants used constructively throughout the lesson. These lessons are also often characterised by pupils having an opportunity to assess their own learning, either during the activities or in a review at the end. Such strategies, allied with constructive marking, give pupils a good understanding of the next steps they are aiming for.

Previous strengths in pastoral care have been sustained and account for how secure pupils feel. The school provides increasingly clearly targeted support for those pupils who are facing challenging circumstances. Some have made significant gains in their attitude to learning and ability to conform in class as a result of such support. Arrangements for easing pupils' move into their next school are good, and staff are reviewing the currently satisfactory procedures to introduce children to school.

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The curriculum successfully engages the interest of boys and girls, and all groups of pupils within the school. Particularly noteworthy is the routine use of 'question trees'. Pupils use these after the 'wow week' topic launch to identify research areas of their choice, which evolve as topics proceed and pupils' interests develop. Because these are underpinned by an emphasis upon skill development and a focus on teachers' questioning skills, pupils make equally good progress in mixed-age classes. Enrichment activities and the vast range of available clubs are much appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers alike. A flexible response to pupils' individual needs contributes to the above-average proportion of pupils reaching higher attainment levels, and the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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's quiet but authoritative leadership provides a strong steer for school improvement in which she is well supported by senior colleagues and the governing body. New members of staff are rapidly embracing responsibilities for subject leadership and gaining an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in all subjects across the curriculum. Accurate and shared self-evaluation is a key factor in the school's successes. Teachers are responding positively to the increased accountability that arises from the rigorous analysis of each pupil's progress and the setting of challenging targets for all groups of pupils. This is a key feature in the successful promotion of equal opportunities and avoidance of discrimination, because it contributes to all teachers sharing an understanding of the progress made by different groups of pupils as well as individuals. As a result, gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils have been closed.

The governing body makes a valuable contribution to the school's good systems for safeguarding pupils. Clear and accurate records concerning child protection and staff vetting exceed national requirements. The governing body's comprehensive review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures with allied action points is exemplary. As a result the school has identified that the next step is to ensure that an awareness of safeguarding issues is equally strong among all support staff, and to raise pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe from good to outstanding. The governing body challenges senior colleagues regularly and constructively, but takes less initiative in contributing to the school development plan. It contributes effectively to the school's good understanding of its local community, as reflected in pupils' mature appraisal of local community issues. Work to extend community cohesion has been a recent priority, but the links created with communities that differ from the school's own are too recent to have had a full impact on pupils' personal development.

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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	2
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 leader has a good understanding of what works well in the provision and how to develop it further. This has helped the new team to accelerate children's learning in all areas. She recognises that the outside area is not as stimulating as the indoor environment, but has rightly prioritised ensuring that all children make good progress in key skills before tackling its development.

Children make good progress in well-planned adult-led sessions. Teachers make good use of eye-catching resources to hold children's attention. During the inspection, children made good gains in linking sounds and letters because the words used described an attractive Chinese coat, which appealed to them and linked with other learning about Chinese New Year. In sessions led by teachers, teaching assistants are not always deployed to support children's learning, so opportunities for extra individual attention are sometimes missed.

Children have regular opportunities to pursue their own ideas. When resources are stimulating, learning through these independent activities is good. During the inspection one boy explored several scientific principles about seeds, growth and light while discovering real vegetables that were partially hidden in soil. Some children demonstrated remarkable perseverance for their age in trying to meet challenges such as harnessing co-ordination skills to try and pick up grains of rice with chopsticks. Where learning at independent activities is not so good, resources are not sufficiently stimulating to accelerate children's learning. Occasionally adults over-direct children's ideas. Good use is made of children's interest, such as 'potatoes' as a topic. Adults record their interest of the moment as well as recent achievements, which inform planning for the next sessions. The team share a commitment to promoting children's well-being. Parents and carers

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appreciate the warm welcome children receive when they join school, which helps them to settle quickly. Adults set a consistently good example of how to behave and communicate with each other, and this is a key feature in children's security and readiness to learn.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who returned questionnaires were positive about most aspects of their children's education, and the overwhelming majority agreed that their child enjoys school. The inspectors investigated the small number of individual concerns raised. For example, a few parents and carers felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour and its management to be good, including the procedures for addressing the challenging behaviour shown by a very small minority of pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cedars Park Community 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	68	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	65	23	29	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	37	47	59	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	58	27	34	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	56	34	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	61	30	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	58	31	39	2	3	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)	22	28	40	51	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	46	40	51	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	29	37	47	12	15	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	37	43	54	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	46	35	44	5	6	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	58	30	38	3	4	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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cedars Park Community Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 5FP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your ideas about your school and your work, enormously. We agree with you that you go to a good school. Here are some of the best things we found.

You make good progress and reach higher standards than most children of your age in reading, writing and mathematics.

You feel safe in school because you know adults care about you.

You behave well and are kind to each other. You are very understanding about children who sometimes misbehave.

Teachers plan different challenges to meet everybody's needs well.

Your attendance is above average, which helps you to make good progress.

The 'question trees' work really well in keeping topics interesting.

The headteacher, the governing body and all the adults in school want to keep making it even better.

We know that you enjoy working independently when you have clear targets to work towards. We have asked your teachers to make sure they always give you the best possible opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for your own learning. We have also asked them to make sure they plan the best ways for the teaching assistants to help you. We have asked the governing body, the headteacher and staff to plan for you to have more direct experience of, and more opportunities to learn about, people who live in communities that differ from Stowmarket.

You can help the school to improve by continuing to behave and attend so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

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