

Sculthorpe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121126
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358934
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Kath Beck

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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Coates
Teacher in charge	Christopher Allen
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector, who observed seven lessons taught by three different teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, samples of pupils' work, and documentation that showed their attainment and progress. The inspector also scrutinised the school development plan, procedures for safeguarding children, the school's self-evaluation form and a report from the School Improvement Partner. The results of 40 parental questionnaires were analysed, together with responses to questionnaires completed by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

- The inspector investigated the action the school is taking to enable pupils throughout the school to reach higher standards in mathematics.
- As the school is admitting an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the inspector looked at the impact of provision on their progress.
- The inspector explored the developments to the curriculum since the last inspection and the degree to which it is imaginative, creative and enjoyable for all.
- Since the school is federated with another school, the inspector considered the impact this is having on provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a very small rural school where the number of pupils on roll is rising. Most live within the locality, but some travel to the school from further afield. The vast majority are of White British heritage. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and, of these, none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that found in most schools nationally. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is much higher than that normally found. Their needs include specific, profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. One contains Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; the other Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. There are more pupils in the Reception Year and Year 1 than in each of the other year groups. The school federated with West Raynham Church of England Primary School in January 2011. There is one governing body and one headteacher for both schools. West Raynham was not inspected at the same time as this school. An assistant headteacher is responsible for managing the school when the headteacher is carrying out his duties at West Raynham. All of the teaching staff and some of the support staff are 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Sculthorpe Primary is a good school. Since the last inspection the school has faced significant challenges, especially with regard to the stability of staffing and improving the quality of the learning environment. These have largely been overcome and the school is highly regarded in the community. All staff, leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the development of the school and, following rigorous self-evaluation, take sharply targeted action to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can. Morale is very high and belief in the ethos of success runs through all levels of leaders, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to consistently good, and is at times outstanding. Pupils' exemplary behaviour contributes significantly to their good or rapid progress, as well as the happy atmosphere. Pupils are proud of their school, particularly the new, innovative and ecologically friendly log cabin classroom. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes much to the family atmosphere.

Outstanding care, guidance and support leads to well-targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable or who have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has a positive impact on their attitudes and confidence. Highly positive relationships with very supportive parents and carers ensure that they are engaged fully with their children's learning and the school's work. One wrote: 'My child has grown in confidence and enjoys school very much because the relationship between staff and pupils is very strong.' Exceptional partnerships with professionals from a range of services and the partner school are enabling pupils to take part in activities that would not otherwise be available to them. Consequently the curriculum is creative, enjoyable and motivating.

The federation provides many benefits. The headteacher has no class teaching responsibilities and can focus on raising the quality of provision. Pupils have many opportunities to develop friendships with children beyond their immediate locality and this helps to ease their transfer to secondary school. Pupils can also take part in physical education activities that require a sports field, and join in subject-themed weeks to extend their knowledge and understanding of science, religious education and mathematics. Staff work closely together and share their expertise to enhance provision and raise standards. This has been successful in improving provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, although children do not have enough chances to use their initiative in their creative work. Observations and notes of what children of this age group know and can do are helpful to staff, but are not used sufficiently to plan the next steps in children's learning and so further enhance their good progress.

In the past year staff have implemented a sharply focused action plan to enable pupils to reach higher standards in mathematics. This has been very successful as teaching in this

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subject is often outstanding. Adaptations to the curriculum for mathematics allow staff to make the subject practical and purposeful so that pupils recognise its importance to their daily lives. High-quality support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that their rate of progress increases as they become settled and confident. One-to-one tuition and small group learning programmes are helping them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy.

Leaders and managers have clear, well-targeted plans for developing the school within the federation so that pupils benefit fully. The school promotes community cohesion within the immediate locality strongly, but an action plan to enhance pupils' learning about the way other children live and learn nationally and in other parts of the world is at an early stage of development. Rigorous self-evaluation procedures involve all staff, the governing body, parents, carers and pupils. These factors, together with strong teamwork and the very significant improvements since the last inspection, mean that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using assessments effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning
 - providing more opportunities for children to use their initiative in creative activities.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the different ways in which children live and learn in other parts of this country and abroad by:
 - completing the action plan for community cohesion, including ways to enable pupils to make links with schools in this country and abroad.

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

Children start in this small school with a very wide range of attainment when compared to national expectations. Overall they make good progress in relation to their individual starting points. As a result of high-quality teaching, by qualified and well-trained support staff who take account of clear and tightly focused targets, some pupils make exceptional progress in writing and mathematics. Others make small but positive steps in their learning, developing their social and emotional skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding appropriate to their particular needs.

Pupils' high standards of behaviour and above average attendance contribute much to their achievement and enjoyment of school. All pupils, including the younger children, are sensible and can be relied on to carry out duties around the school reliably and responsibly. Older pupils enjoy serving the younger ones at lunchtime and they often play happily together. Pupils contribute good ideas about how and what they would like to learn, but their involvement in decisions to improve the school and wider community is more limited. They have a keen understanding of healthy lifestyles. Arrangements through the federation and partnerships with other schools enable pupils to take part in an extensive range of sporting activities in and out of school. There is a high uptake of nutritious school meals, and by growing vegetables and fruit in school and on the allotment pupils know the importance of healthy eating.

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As part of the recent initiative to raise standards in mathematics, pupils are developing workplace and other skills that contribute effectively to their economic well-being. In a high-quality mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked well together in pairs to separate a number of different types of seeds into groups of two. They knew the cost of each seed and calculated the amount it would cost to buy the seeds they had been given from their 'market stall'. They paid the 'stall holder' the correct amount for their differing number of seeds using real money, before planting the seeds in pots. This complex and challenging task involved pupils working co-operatively together, negotiating and discussing ideas, counting in sequence, multiplying and dividing as well as understanding odd and even numbers. The task made learning enjoyable because it was linked to pupils' everyday lives. It enhanced achievement and contributed significantly to their spiritual and social development.

Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that any concerns they may have will be dealt with quickly by staff. They are considerate to others, raise funds for a range of charities and know their local community, but their interaction with the wider world is relatively limited.

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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?

Staff draw from the ideas of the pupils to ensure that the curriculum is engaging, captures their interest and meets their particular needs. For some pupils with special educational

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needs and/or disabilities the curriculum is highly individualised. Staff monitor the curriculum carefully to ensure it meets statutory requirements. Information and communication technology is used to enhance knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as help pupils to make links between subjects and carry out research and record their work. Residential trips and frequent visits to a local nature reserve, to learn about nature and other life skills at first hand, contribute successfully to pupils' personal development. Trips to local places of interest and visitors to school, as well as a good range of after-school clubs, deepen pupils' learning.

Teachers make good use of assessment to plan work to meet pupils' needs. Pupils have clear targets and these, together with good-quality marking and feedback in lessons, ensure that they know what they do well and what they need to do to make faster progress. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the variety of imaginative ways that staff capture their interest. For example, in a successful science lesson, the teacher made a paper cup from kitchen towel and tried to pour water into it. This sparked considerable discussion about the distinctive properties of materials and led to pupils devising their own experiments. To promote high-quality writing pupils wrote letters to famous people and are eagerly awaiting replies. Teachers and teaching assistants liaise very well so that pupils are well supported and make the most of the opportunities provided for them.

Parents and carers value highly the way in which staff know their children as individuals and help them, especially when facing challenging circumstances. Close links with the local pre-school groups enable children to settle quickly into Reception, and pupils are prepared well for their transfer to secondary school. Advice sought from a range of professionals is targeted to keep pupils safeguarded and overcome any difficulties they face in learning.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

High levels of drive and ambition, innovative ideas and a clear vision for the development of school are proving very successful, leading to a rapidly increasing number of pupils on roll. Leaders, managers and staff are strongly committed to taking action that enables pupils to do as well as they can. Teaching and support staff are reflective about their practice, implement new skills learned on courses and respond quickly to improvements suggested during visits to their lessons by senior managers. This has resulted in a significant improvement in teaching quality.

Thorough self-evaluation procedures lead to the identification of highly appropriate key priorities for improvement, such as enhancing the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics and improving the use of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Training,

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advice from a range of organisations, and expertise drawn from across the two federated schools are enhancing provision well.

A commitment to ensuring equal opportunities is at the heart of the school's work. A simple but very clear assessment system tracks pupils' progress and is monitored closely so that when amendments need to be made to provision, they are made quickly so that variations in performance are tackled effectively.

The new governing body, formed at the time of the federation, includes members who have worked with the school for a considerable period of time. They use their wide range of skills and expertise to challenge and support the school with regard to its provision and budget. Good safeguarding procedures are audited annually. Training is up to date with regard to safer recruitment and first aid. Community cohesion within the immediate locality is promoted well through links with the church. That said, plans to promote community cohesion nationally and globally are at an early stage of development, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop contacts with children who live very different contexts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

Good leadership and management mean that skills in teaching children of this age group have improved in recent years. Children make good progress from their different starting points, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Practical activities such as sowing seeds and growing plants enable them to be active, enjoy their learning and extend their vocabulary successfully. Since the last inspection young children have a designated outside area that is covered and can be used all year around. A 'trim trail' built on an all-weather surface adds to opportunities to promote their physical development.

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Relationships between the adults and the children are warm and trusting. Exemplary behaviour means there is a very positive atmosphere. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated into the provision and play with their classmates very happily. Children enjoy choosing activities that allow them to apply their developing literacy and numeracy skills. For example, one child delighted in finding stones with numbers painted on them buried in sand. She wrote down the numbers, told an adult what they were and then added them together accurately. This positive ingenuity is not always extended to creative activities led by adults, and this limits the opportunities for children to use their initiative and express their own ideas.

Staff know children well and direct them to activities that they know will take their learning forward. Good assessment records show what children can do, but are not used well enough to plan the precise next steps children need to take to maximise their progress.

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 proportion of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire is much higher than normally found. Those who responded to the questionnaire and met with the inspector are fully supportive of the school. Very few parents and carers who disagreed with aspects of the school's provision added comments to explain their concerns. Written comments praise the school for the excellent way it cares for the children and supports their families. Parents and carers say that the children have grown in confidence since joining the school because relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. The findings from the inspection show that children make good progress, that staff work closely with the families to help them and their children overcome the challenges they face, and that the school is led and managed well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sculthorpe Church of England 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 inspector received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	88	5	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	75	9	23	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	75	8	20	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	85	6	15	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)	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	78	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	75	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	78	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	85	4	10	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	83	7	18	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sculthorpe Church of England Primary School, Fakenham NR21 9NQ

Thank you for giving me a very warm welcome when I visited your school. You told me that you are very pleased that you attend Sculthorpe Primary School because there are many interesting things to do and learn. You said that all the children are kind to each other and that all the adults help you to learn a lot. You are very proud of your new log cabin classroom and you enjoy your trips to the local nature reserve where you can make shelters, find out about how wild animals live and make campfires. You also enjoy your visits to your partner school to see your friends and take part in many sporting activities.

Sculthorpe is a good school and all the grown-ups are determined, with your help, to make it an outstanding one. Your behaviour is exemplary and this helps to make everyone happy so that you can learn well. You are very good at knowing how to keep yourselves healthy, taking part in many sporting activities in and out of school, as well as growing fruit and vegetables in your school garden and on the allotment.

All staff are really keen for you to do as well as you can. This year teachers have been using lots of new ideas to help you do better at mathematics. These are proving really successful and many of you have a good idea about the importance of mathematics in your daily lives. I have asked the grown-ups to use their good knowledge of what the youngest children know and can do to plan what they need to learn next, and to give them more chances to use their imagination in their creative work. I have also asked them to help you all to understand what life is like for children who live in places that are very different from Sculthorpe, in other parts of Britain and abroad. I know you will help by continuing to be helpful and sensible, and attending every day.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck

Lead inspector

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