

Freethorpe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120808
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380106
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Jones
Headteacher	Rachel Quick-Gunning
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six teachers, while visiting 11 lessons. Two of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, the members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documentation, monitoring and assessment information, plans for improvement, important policies and pupils' work. The inspection team also looked at 73 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

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

- Is the progress pupils make consistently good, particularly for more-able girls in mathematics in both key stages and in writing at Key Stage 2?
- It assessed the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- It examined how well informed are pupils in knowing how to improve their work.
- It explored how well leaders at all levels evaluate the quality of the school's work in order to drive ongoing improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Virtually all the pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, while the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school runs a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. An independent pre-school shares the same site as the school, but is subject to a separate inspection report. The school has gained several awards, including Healthy Schools status, Eco-Bronze Award and Active Mark.

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

Freethorpe is a good school. A number of significant strengths include community cohesion, and consequently the school is held in high esteem by the local community it serves. The needs of the pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable are met exceptionally well through a range of outstanding partnerships to promote their well-being. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living, keenly taking part in many sports. Furthermore, pupils feel exceptionally safe and almost all pupils enjoy everything that the school offers, as their high attendance demonstrates. A parent who says, 'My child has been welcomed wholeheartedly by the staff and children and I couldn't have wished for a better start to school. He has come out of school every day with a big happy smile on his face,' reflects the inclusive nature of the school. One of the main factors contributing to the school's success is the work of the highly committed headteacher, whose continual striving for excellence is shared and supported well by the assistant headteacher. Staff morale is high. Governance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders and the governing body share an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be achieved next. The school's good track record, combined with a focus on striving for further developments and accurate self-evaluation, provides it with good capacity to continue to improve.

Achievement is good, because good quality teaching and an exciting and creative curriculum ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning. Pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average in mathematics and average in English. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. This is because the school rigorously tracks pupils' progress and intervenes swiftly to ensure that all pupils are well supported and receive personalised programmes of learning. The most significant differences in achievement are within subjects, for example, in writing not enough pupils achieve the higher levels in Key Stage 2. Some teachers use marking and ongoing assessments effectively in order to secure good or better progress, and are adept at assessing pupils' progress within lessons. These teachers identify key concepts or skills which pupils need to acquire in order to achieve the learning outcome. This ensures that pupils of all abilities are effectively challenged. Pupils are encouraged to use these small steps in their learning to assess how well they are doing, even in writing tasks. However, practice varies because leaders do not monitor pupils' progress in lessons consistently well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By 2012, raise the quality of teaching so that at least 50% is outstanding and improve progress in writing for more-able pupils, by:
 - planning graded steps to success in lessons which challenge all abilities, particularly in writing in Key Stage 2
 - using these steps to provide more opportunities for pupils to understand exactly what they will be learning in lessons and how to achieve the learning outcome
 - ensuring that teachers and pupils use the steps to assess progress
 - sharing existing best practice in teaching and the use of assessment through coaching and modelling.
- Refine the monitoring of lessons by ensuring that:
 - strategies to improve assessment are effectively and consistently implemented in lessons through focused monitoring of the quality of pupils' learning and progress
 - high-quality marking consistently provides clear guidance to pupils on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils typically respond enthusiastically in lessons because there is a relevant link between subjects, they can use their basic skills in a real-life context, and they are collaborating and are actively involved. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were engaged and highly motivated when they explored the emotions and motivations of people who lived through war-time Britain through drama and lively discussions. In an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities. The resources were suitably adapted and the teacher, whose enthusiasm and subject knowledge were infectious, made good use of questioning. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. The excellent support and targeted interventions enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to participate fully in lessons. More-able pupils rise to the challenge provided for them in mathematics, where the school has introduced a greater focus on problem solving to ensure that pupils apply their mathematical concepts fully.

Children begin the Reception class with skills, knowledge and abilities below national expectations in all six areas of learning. By the time pupils enter Year 1 their basic skills are average. Good progress ensures that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is rising and is now above average. This impetus of improvement is now being realised across Key Stage 2 and particularly in mathematics, where attainment is well above average. Attainment in English is also improving but not as quickly as in mathematics, particularly at the higher levels in writing, and as a consequence the school has revised how this subject is now taught.

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Pupils’ understanding of different cultural values is strong. They have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of the United Kingdom and the global community, through many first-hand experiences. For example, the school has a national link with a school with a different social, ethnic and cultural intake, and international links such as hosting a visit of Chinese teachers last year. During this time many pupils learned to speak Mandarin. Pupils behave well, have an appreciation of equalities and are caring and supportive of one another. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. For example, they relish being peer mediators and as school councillors, they contribute much to the day-to-day running of the school and to the process of decision making. The school has created strong links with neighbouring villages through a wide variety of sports clubs, such as bowls and cricket. The broad range of well attended extra-curricular and enrichment activities have enabled most pupils to have an outstanding appreciation of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The effective partnerships and activities that the school has developed, for example with the local police and the Safer Neighbourhood team, simultaneously promote pupils’ contribution to the community and enables pupils to appreciate how to stay safe.

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	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In all lessons observed during the inspection, relationships between teachers and pupils were highly positive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well. In the best lessons, they ensure the pace of learning is brisk and

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

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encourage pupils to talk about their thinking with each other to consolidate ideas. Regular feedback is provided through questioning and they make specific references to the steps to in their learning. In these lessons, pupils are made aware of their progress towards the learning outcome. Teachers also provide high quality marking so that pupils are well informed about what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve further. In a few lessons, learning slows especially for the more able, as teachers occasionally talk too much and tasks do not take sufficient account of the pupils’ prior learning.

The creative curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT across a wide range of other subjects. This thematic approach sometimes uses the local community as a rich and relevant context for pupils’ learning and it has resulted in some high quality work, especially in art.

Outstanding care, guidance and support make a major contribution to pupils’ personal development. There is a significant focus on relationships through the systematic teaching of emotional and social aspects of learning. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils access all that the school offers, including those pupils with complex learning difficulties. Specific support strategies for pupils and their families are highly effective and supplemented by the skilled work of the parent support adviser who works for the group of local schools. One parent’s comment reflects the appreciation felt by parents and carers for this work: ‘They are a support network for us.’ Links with a range of agencies are very strong. The breakfast club provides a safe and stimulating start to the day. Transition arrangements and links with secondary schools are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive for improvement is guided by the clear vision of the headteacher, who has secured the commitment of staff at all levels. Target setting is ambitious and challenging, leading to improved outcomes for all pupils. The rigorous analysis of the school’s performance illustrates that gaps between pupils’ achievement are being closed, and although there is still more work to be done in challenging more- able pupils in writing this represents effective promotion of equality of opportunity. The work of the school is regularly reviewed and priorities are well planned. Middle leaders are now taking on more responsibility for specific areas of work. The governing body provides professional and determined challenge and support,

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enabling it to hold leaders to account. It is developing robust systems to enable it to review the work of the school more comprehensively. Safeguarding procedures have improved due to the recent audit and action plan, led by the safeguarding governor. All recommended good practice is adopted.

The school has highly positive relationships with parents and carers, ensuring that they are fully involved in their child’s learning and progress, and they are involved in the decision making of the school. For example, parents and carers requested more information about the curriculum and the school responded by hosting well attended ‘curriculum mornings’. The extensive range of partners, including the strong cluster school partnership, provides experiences that could not be provided by the school alone. This is particularly so for the promotion of community cohesion, which is exceptionally strong. Together with other schools, pupils experience a myriad of community events such as working with artists in a multicultural festival and a carnival club.

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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Due to the effective support and intervention of skilled adults, all children make good progress in their learning, enjoy everything they do and feel safe. As a consequence, by the time they enter Year 1 attainment is broadly average, especially in early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children quickly become confident, play cooperatively and are becoming increasingly independent. Adults use their ongoing assessments well to ensure that all children’s needs are effectively met. Children settle quickly into school life because of strong links with the on-site independent pre-school and with parents and carers. The stimulating activities provide active

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exploration of concepts. For example, children enjoy counting and learning about numbers and shapes, both inside and outside the classroom. However, the writing area is not sufficiently stimulating to motivate children further to write independently. Good leadership ensures that adults work well as a team.

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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school. Almost all comments made by parents and carers showed that they appreciate the work of the school and the headteacher. A very small minority expressed concerns about some aspects of the school's work, but there were no apparent trends to indicate weaknesses in the school's procedures, nor were any witnessed by inspectors. Nevertheless, inspectors pointed out some of the issues of concern to school leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. Although inspectors endorsed most of the parents and carers' positive views, they judged that some pupils should be making more progress in their writing.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Freethorpe 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	66	25	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	74	19	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	51	70	22	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	58	29	40	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	71	21	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	46	63	24	33	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	62	24	33	1	1	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)	52	71	21	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	41	56	30	41	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	47	33	45	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	58	26	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	67	22	30	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	54	74	18	25	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 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.



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freethorpe Community Primary School, Norwich, NR13 3NZ

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and the help you gave to us in finding out more about your school. We think your school offers a good standard of education and that it is led and managed well by your headteacher. Here are some of the good and outstanding things in your school.

- You all feel extremely safe and most of you have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- You all make good progress and you have positive attitudes to your learning.
- You behave well and your attendance is outstanding.
- You have good teachers and staff who care for you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher works very hard and the school has developed excellent partnerships with your parents and carers, the local community, other schools and beyond.

In order to ensure your school continues to improve, these are the things I would like it to do.

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching so that you all make more rapid progress, especially in your writing.
- Make sure that teachers' marking gives you clear pointers on what you need to do next to improve your work.
- Develop both your teachers' skills and yours in assessing how well you are learning in lessons.
- Ensure that leaders check how well teachers are assessing your progress and learning in lessons.

I hope you continue to enjoy coming to school and trying your very best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Lead inspector

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