

Brancaster Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121131
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380174
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Rob McKeown

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	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophie de Winton
Headteacher	Sarah Bocking
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons were observed, taught by two teachers and support assistants. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised pupils' books, assessment records and a number of key documents including: the school's self-evaluation statement, the school development plan, monitoring records, governing body minutes and 26 inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, particularly boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether teaching was matched sufficiently well enough to meet the learning needs of all pupils to enable them to make good progress.
- The accuracy of teachers' assessments and how these are used to set learning targets for pupils.
- The contribution made by leaders at all levels, including key staff and the governing body, to help bring about improvements in the learning and achievement of pupils.

Information about the school

This is a village primary school that is much smaller than the average of its type. All pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with more significant special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes and numbers vary considerably from year group to year group. Since the last inspection, fewer pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are travelling to the school from outside the immediate area. In the last year, there has been a change of headteacher and changes in the teaching staff. The school gained a number of awards in 2010 including, the Artsmark, Eco-Schools and International School awards.

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

Brancaster is a caring and friendly primary school, which is currently providing its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Some aspects of the school's work are good and almost all parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are happy with what the school provides. Since its last inspection, the school has experienced a number of unforeseen changes that have slowed down the pace of improvement. The headteacher, staff team and governing body are working well together to improve provision and secure better outcomes for pupils.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although their progress as they move through the school is variable. Some lower-ability pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress in English and mathematics than most other pupils. This is because the teaching and support they receive are not always matched precisely enough to their specific learning needs. Most other aspects of pupils' personal development are good. All pupils say they feel safe at school and many enjoy their learning. Behaviour is good in lessons and outdoors at playtimes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 commented on how much better behaviour was this year than last, and how they appreciate the opportunity to call 'a circle' to discuss and resolve any disagreements. Attendance is broadly average, although the persistent and occasional absence of a few pupils is affecting the overall level.

Teaching and the use of assessment to support learning are satisfactory. Learning is better in the focussed sessions led by teachers. Changes in the make-up of classes and the introduction of new teaching programmes for English and mathematics have been introduced this year to help secure better progress and higher attainment. These initiatives are having a positive impact on improving the organisation of teaching and learning. Other aspects of provision are good. There are many positive features in the curriculum, for example, in physical activities and the creative arts. The pastoral support given to pupils is particularly good and characterises the 'family' atmosphere the school provides.

Leadership and management are, in general, satisfactory. Some aspects are good. A new leadership team is putting in place a programme for improvement, including establishing more effective leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with other local schools and the community, particularly the local church, are good. There are strong links with parents and carers. Good governance has provided the school with stability, which has helped overcome many of the challenges it has encountered in

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the last two years. Management of the day-to-day running of the school is good and is reflected in the efficiency of the school's safeguarding checks. Currently, the school offers satisfactory value for money; its track record since the previous inspection and the quality of its leadership indicate its capacity to sustain improvement is also satisfactory.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics to close the gap between the higher and lower attainers by:
 - improving the overall quality of teaching and support, particularly for lower-ability pupils
 - matching tasks more precisely to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities by:
 - introducing precisely focused learning programmes that help pupils learn more effectively and make faster progress
 - improving the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils
 - carrying out plans to strengthen the leadership and management of this aspect of the school's work.
- Improve attendance by adopting a more rigorous approach to reducing occasional and persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils join Reception with skills and aptitudes that are typical for their age, although this varies from year to year. Progress in Reception last year was good. Last year, Year 6 pupils left the school having reached broadly average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. This represented at least satisfactory progress for almost all pupils from their starting points. In 2010, outcomes were well-below average. Progress, particularly for lower-attaining pupils, some of whom had special educational needs and/or disabilities, was less than it should have been. The school's tracking data show that progress made by pupils from year to year is satisfactory, although less than expected progress is being made by one or two pupils in each year group, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons, most pupils show an interest in their learning and engage well, enabling them to make satisfactory and, sometimes, good progress. The very few who speak English as an additional language have made good progress in learning to speak the language and satisfactory progress in developing other key

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skills.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and see it as a friendly, secure place in which to learn. They like their teachers and know they can approach them with any concerns they may have. Pupils know about how to keep themselves healthy and they take part in a broad range of activities, including swimming to develop their physical skills and fitness. They also get the chance to eat produce grown on the school allotment. The school and class councils play an important role in promoting pupils’ views. Pupils raise money for local and national charities and take part in village events through the year. Spiritual, moral and social development are particularly strong and supported well in assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons. There are good proposals to extend pupils’ cultural awareness by establishing links with schools from communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning are satisfactory. Some aspects of teaching are good, for example when teachers are working with the whole class or leading sessions planned for groups of pupils. It is less effective when group sessions are led or supported by classroom assistants. In these sessions the pace of learning can be too slow and pupils make less progress. At times, teaching is not precise enough to meet the needs of all pupils, for example being too challenging or not challenging enough for individual learners.

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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Improvements in assessment have been introduced this year, including revising the school’s marking policy. There are good examples of marking that link well to the targets pupils have been given to improve their writing. Assessment in lessons varies in quality. It is better when adults target their questions because they want to assess what individuals or groups know or have learnt. Overall, resources are used well to support and focus pupils’ learning, including recently purchased learning materials and the classroom interactive whiteboards.

A well-organised curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities planned to suit mixed-age classes. It contributes well to pupils’ good personal development and well-being. Theme weeks are introduced to extend pupils’ learning experiences and include inviting visitors to school to share their expertise. Good use is made of teachers’ strengths, for example in physical education, science and music, and adaptations have been made to help engage the interests of boys. Pupils also take their learning into the local area and further afield during residential visits. A good range of enrichment activities provided at lunchtime and after school cater well for the interests of almost all pupils.

The pastoral care, guidance and support given to pupils are particularly good. Staff know all the pupils well and this ensures that they receive good support for their personal development. Clearly targeted care for potentially vulnerable pupils has helped them develop their confidence and adopt more positive attitudes to learning. Checks are made on pupils’ attendance, absences are followed up with parents and carers and rewards are given for high attendance. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that attendance for some children should be higher.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff work well together. They know all the pupils and their families, and see the school as an important part of the local community. They appreciate the changes they need to make to improve the school’s overall effectiveness and these are set out in a well-organised development plan. There are suitable systems in place for monitoring pupils’ progress. These have identified the improvements required in provision, for example for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils are included in what the school offers, but leaders acknowledge that the achievement outcomes are too variable. Good partnerships with other schools and local groups, including businesses have been used effectively

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to improve aspects of provision.

There are positive relationships with parents and carers who are kept well informed about school events and their children’s learning and development. Community cohesion is promoted well and pupils make a strong contribution to events that are held in the locality. There are good plans to extend pupils’ engagement with contrasting communities beyond the immediate area. The governing body is well organised, influential and provides very good support for the school community. There are good systems in place for monitoring and reporting on the quality of the curriculum. These involve regular visits to classes to see the school in action. Safeguarding is given high priority; the procedures in place are robust and monitored regularly by the member of the governing body responsible for safeguarding. All parents and carers responding to the Ofsted questionnaire recognise the school is a safe place for their children.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Numbers in the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year and children learn alongside other pupils in Key Stage 1. Children get off to a good start in their first year at school, although the school’s assessments show that attainment varies from year to year. Outcomes in 2011 were above average and almost all children met or exceeded the expected level of development in the key areas of learning. This represented an improvement on the attainment profile for 2010. Most children made good progress last year and good progress is being made this year. In the last year, attention has been given to developing children’s early literacy skills resulting in better outcomes in reading and writing. Relationships are very good and children enjoy working together and behave very well.

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The quality of provision is good. It has improved since the last inspection because there are more opportunities for children to engage in learning activities outdoors. There is a good range of resources available to enable children to make good progress and to develop their skills and aptitudes across all the areas of learning. There are suitable opportunities for children to learn independently and under the guidance of staff. Good records are kept of children’s attainment and progress with detailed notes and photographs collected in individual learning records. Adults care for children extremely well and they provide good guidance to help them to stay safe and develop good personal skills.

Leadership and management are good. Adults work well together and meet regularly to plan, review learning programmes and discuss children’s attainment and progress. Regular checks are made to ensure the accommodation is safe and that resources are suitable for effective learning. There are also good links with parents, carers and support agencies to help meet children’s individual needs.

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

About three quarters of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire, which is a greater proportion than that usually found for primary schools. Almost all the responses to each question were positive. All parents and carers believe that their children enjoy school and that it keeps them safe. A very small minority of responses indicated that their children’s progress and the support they receive for their particular needs could be better. Inspection findings on this aspect of the school’s work are reflected in the report. Several parents and carers wrote additional comments on their questionnaires; almost all of these were positive, particularly about the friendly, ‘family’ atmosphere and the care provided by the staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brancaster Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	21	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	69	6	23	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	77	6	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	73	7	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	73	7	27	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)	20	77	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	21	81	2	8	3	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	73	7	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	85	4	15	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 08 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.



25 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brancaster Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brancaster, PE31 8AB

Thank you for your help with the inspection and for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed the two days I spent with you. Please thank your parents and carers for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school. Thank you also to those of you who completed questionnaires. Your responses were very positive and told me that you enjoy school and think it is a safe place to learn. There is a positive family atmosphere at Brancaster, which was illustrated well in the assembly I attended.

At the moment, your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. Some things are good and there are other things that can be improved. The staff at the school care for you well and want you to be successful. They provide you with some interesting things to learn and give you the opportunity to take part in many activities outside of school. Having a school allotment is a great idea, so you can grow healthy foods. I was pleased to see how well you get on together in your lessons and at break times. I was very impressed with what pupils in Class 2 told me about how they can call 'a circle' if they want to discuss an issue that might have upset them. It was good to know that so many of you attend clubs. The school council does a good job in thinking about and discussing how the school might be improved, and in raising money for charities.

At the end of the inspection, I asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to keep working on some improvements so that all of you manage to make good progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. I also asked your teachers to try to make sure all the activities you do are exactly right for you, especially if you are finding it hard to learn something new. You can help by being in school every day, doing your best and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown
Lead inspector

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