

Bardwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124687
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380957
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Trowell
Headteacher	Caroline Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
School address	School Lane Bardwell Bury St Edmunds IP31 1AD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. He visited six lessons taught by four different members of staff. The inspector held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and with staff and pupils. He observed the school's work, and looked at the following: pupils' books and records of their progress; teachers' lesson planning; playtime activities; and the school's documentation, which included records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 28 parents and carers were also considered.

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

- The consistency and rapidity of progress that pupils make throughout the school.
- The extent to which staff use assessment information effectively to plan challenging work to enable all pupils, particularly those identified as more able, to make good progress.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders and managers and the governing body in developing the school's capacity to make improvements.
- Whether subject leaders are now better informed about attainment and progress in their subjects.

Information about the school

Bardwell Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is a small, rural primary school. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding village. Pupils are predominantly White British and there are very few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals at present. The number of children entering Reception has been relatively low in the last two years. Currently, Reception children are taught alongside those in Year 1, Pupils currently transfer to middle school at the end of Year 4. Consultations are in progress with a view to Bardwell, and similar schools which currently cater for pupils from Reception to Year 4, offering full primary education up to the end of Year 6 from September 2013. The school has recently introduced an after-school club which is managed by the governing body and which was inspected as part of this 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

2

Main findings

Bardwell Church of England Primary School provides a good education. The pace of improvement has accelerated since the last inspection. Pupils' progress and achievement, attitudes and behaviour are good. Attainment is rising. Partnerships with parents and carers, who have frequent opportunities to find out how to support their children's learning, are good. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school, feel very safe and have an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles. They initiate 'fun-runs' for charity, while the 'walking-bus' is acknowledged as the longest-lasting and best supported in Suffolk. The Eco agenda is strongly promoted by pupils who recently won a major award for their greenhouse made from recycled bottles. Despite initial efforts, there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to engage with diverse communities within the United Kingdom or internationally.

Children make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their attainment on leaving the Reception Year varies considerably, given the small cohorts. Recently it has been broadly average although below in writing in 2011. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' progress has gained pace and is also good, reflecting the headteacher's relentless efforts to improve the consistency of teaching and learning. As a result, attainment is rising at both Year 2 and 4. However, while much work on display is of a high standard, not enough importance is placed on the quality of day-to-day written work. Improved attendance, currently high, also contributes to more rapid learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress, as do the few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school is proactive in supporting able and gifted pupils.

The school has an effective system for setting individual academic targets and pupils' self-evaluation skills are well developed. Teachers' marking is thorough in the evaluation of pupils' writing, providing clear guidance as to the next steps in learning. However, this approach is not consistently evident in other subjects. The curriculum is stimulating and engaging, with well-developed cross-curricular elements. Information and communication technology is now used effectively to enhance learning. For the size of the school, extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are particularly good and contribute strongly to pupils' good personal development.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders rigorously track pupils' progress, so maintaining a close oversight of their achievement. Under its current leadership, the governing body is now effective. It has a good understanding of its

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role and has good strategies for holding school leaders to account. While some aspects of its work are now outstanding, as with leadership and management in general, governors have not always been so aware of their responsibilities in the rigorous monitoring of health and safety requirements. School self-evaluation is accurate. Overall, the school has good capacity for improvement because school leaders have a convincing record of sustained success in improving teaching, in improving progress and, more recently, in raising attainment. There is also a clear determination to tackle issues and to sustain the pace of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed improved progress and rising attainment through:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and their presentation of work in exercise books
 - building upon existing good practice to ensure that teachers' marking identifies points for development in subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that governors have a rigorous approach to monitoring all aspects of health, safety and the premises and that robust records are maintained.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of diverse cultures and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally.

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

With small numbers, children's skills and experience on entry to Reception, and their outcomes at the end of the year, vary considerably between year groups. In general, children make good progress from their starting points. Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 is generally around the expected level, although there was a significant improvement in 2011 with rising, above average, attainment in both years. Achievement is now good for all groups of pupils.

The school has focused on improving teaching and learning in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and these efforts have had a significant impact. Effective organisation, accurate assessment, good pace, challenge and engagement by pupils were evident in most lessons. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson on the nets of three-dimensional shapes, pupils were greatly engaged by the activities, which were carefully planned so that the level of challenge was just right for each group. For instance, more-able pupils were working with very challenging shapes, such as pentagonal prisms, while other pupils were evaluating which nets could be reconstructed as cubes. Pupils were keen to work in pairs, often initiating lively mathematical discussion and, in turn, effective learning. In a challenging Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils were generating 'exciting adjectives' after viewing a video clip of a space shuttle launch. This evoked a significant moment of awe and wonder from pupils who were then keen to produce effective adjectives for their writing. The teacher had created a three-dimensional

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moonscape to engage the enthusiasm of one group. Another group tried to capture vocabulary which would evoke the challenges of a moon-walk by climbing on apparatus and brainstorming useful vocabulary. The lively teaching style ensured a high level of enthusiasm and good learning by almost all pupils.

Personal development is a strength. Pupils demonstrate very mature attitudes and treat each other with courtesy. The school council is active in generating ideas and represents a very effective channel for pupils’ views. Good social skills and average, but rapidly improving, basic skills ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for later life. The after-school club contributes satisfactorily to pupils’ care and personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils learn about different faiths, but have more limited direct engagement with the lifestyles of people from different faiths and cultures. However, spiritual development is outstanding, supported by strong church links.

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	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are well motivated to learn and relationships are consistently good. Staff question pupils effectively to explore their understanding and extend learning. Lessons have good pace and the school is strongly focused on ensuring that teaching provides high levels of challenge. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and support staff are effective and well-prepared. Regular reviews of pupils’ progress, rigorous tracking and well-embedded assessment strategies support accurate evaluation of pupils’ learning needs.

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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Individual learning targets are well-established and pupils know what they are.

The curriculum is a major strength. The school has developed a stimulating and highly successful cross-curricular approach, which promotes a high level of enjoyment and contributes strongly to rising standards and improved progress. High-quality displays reflect the broad curriculum, the diversity of topics and the imaginative teaching. Pupils’ work in art and design is of particularly high quality. They also sing with great enthusiasm. The school provides well for pupils identified as gifted. Teachers’ planning focuses on providing for the most able as a first requirement, while the headteacher offers regular ‘master classes’. In addition, these pupils attend courses promoted by other schools. Personal, social, health and citizenship education has a positive impact upon pupils’ personal development.

Staff are very responsive to pupils’ needs. Transition arrangements are good. The school works well with external agencies to support pupils who need additional help. There is good practice, evident in case studies, in supporting the health, social and behavioural needs of pupils in challenging circumstances. The after-school club provides satisfactorily for pupils’ after-school care.

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 determination and effective leadership of the headteacher has been key to the school’s sustained improvement. Priorities are clear and well-judged. Staff have high expectations of pupils’ learning and of their personal development. They are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities. Subject leadership, in the context of a small school, is now well-established and all staff take responsibility for areas of the curriculum. The school has worked successfully to develop its partnership with parents and carers. Partnerships with other schools are good and contribute, for example, to the support of able or gifted pupils. Good leadership and management of teaching and learning have ensured a consistent approach to planning and the management of pupils’ behaviour, so supporting improved teaching and learning.

The governing body has undergone considerable change recently but, with a highly effective chair, has made rapid progress, drawing upon the skills of committed members. Governors are thorough, highly organised and now provide the expected challenge to school leaders. They are actively involved in defining a direction for the future development of the school through school self-evaluation and development

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planning. Statutory responsibilities are met. The after-school club offers a high ratio of staff to pupils and is satisfactorily led and managed. The governing body ensures that, in many respects, safeguarding practice is good. However, the monitoring and record keeping relating to aspects of health and safety lacks rigour.

Links with agencies ensure good support for pupils with specific needs. The school is cohesive and pupils have good links with the local community, including the church. Community cohesion is promoted through opportunities to study diverse faiths and lifestyles. However, little has yet been done to build a closer engagement with other groups nationally so as to increase pupils’ first-hand experiences of others from backgrounds different to their own. Other than an emerging connection with a New Zealand school and some charitable activities, there are few international links.

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	3
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

Since the last inspection, improvements to the provision and environment, including a new outdoor area, has greatly enhanced children’s opportunities for learning. Staff have a good understanding of the learning, development and welfare requirements of children this age. Welfare arrangements are good, ensuring that children receive sensitive, caring support. Well-planned induction arrangements contribute to an effective partnership with parents and carers and ensure that children feel safe. Children understand daily routines, behave in a mature way and relationships with adults and with other children are good. Good teaching typically supports mostly good progress. Although Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils they receive a high level of individual attention. However, despite generally good teaching, progress is constrained by the relatively short time children spend in the Early Years Foundation Stage – sometimes only the equivalent of two terms of full-

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time attendance.

Currently, children respond well to good levels of challenge and lesson observations indicate that progress is good. Staff take every opportunity to engage children’s attention. For example, several children were engrossed by the opportunity to programme a small robot and to record its journey. Writing is planned for effectively, with good opportunities for children to embed their writing skills and additional support for those who find writing more difficult. The teaching of sounds and letters is effective.

The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a positive impact on children’s outcomes. Observational records accurately reflect children’s learning. The school maintains good-quality assessment files, or ‘learning journeys’, which track the progress of individual children and are shared with parents and carers. Staff make good use of this information to plan the next steps in learning and this helps promote a good pace to children’s learning. Planning for the youngest children in the after-school club is not always sufficiently aligned to the areas of learning. Overall, there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff intervene effectively to promote learning in the outdoor area. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well.

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

Just over half the parents and carers responded to the survey, well above average for a primary school. Although a small number raised issues specific to individual children, the very large majority of those who responded are very happy with the school and with the care it provides for their children. They feel that the school engages well with parents and carers and that their children greatly enjoy attending. One said: ‘A great school with a nurturing and friendly ethos. My little boy says, “The whole school is my friend!”’ A few parents and carers felt that their children are not making enough progress. The inspection evidence shows that, while that may have been the case in the past, progress has accelerated significantly and is now mostly good. To that extent, and taking into account the well-planned programme to support those identified as gifted or talented, the school is now working hard to meet the full range of pupils’ needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bardwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 50 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	23	82	3	11	1	4	1	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	68	6	21	3	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	68	6	21	2	7	1	4
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	20	71	6	21	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	82	5	18	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	71	4	14	2	7	1	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	68	6	21	3	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	75	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	64	8	29	1	4	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	71	6	21	2	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	23	82	2	7	3	11	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.

5 December 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Bardwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1AD

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views and spending time in lessons. I found that yours is a good school and these are some of the best things about it.

- You have good attitudes to learning and make good progress; attainment across the school is rising.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- You feel very safe in school and you behave well.
- You undertake lots of jobs, make a good contribution to the school and have good links with the local community.
- Staff care for you and support you well.
- You really understand the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- The provision for visits, clubs and after-school activities is good.
- The curriculum is really exciting and you greatly enjoy your lessons as a result.
- The leadership of the school and partnerships with other schools are good.

So that you do even better, we have asked the school to do the following things.

- Improve the quality of your handwriting and written work to make sure your good progress and rising standards continue.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives you clear pointers for improving your work in all subjects.
- Help governors to keep a really close eye on all aspects of health and safety.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about other cultures and communities within the United Kingdom and further afield.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. I hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

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