

Palgrave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124740
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380970
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
Lead inspector	Graham Preston

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Wells
Headteacher	Andrew Berry
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
School address	The Green Palgrave Diss IP22 1AG
Telephone number	01379 642507
Fax number	01379 652089
Email address	Paloffice@gispalfederation.com

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	1–2 May 2012
Inspection number	380970



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Graham Preston

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by three teachers as well as carrying out a number of 'learning walks' to listen to pupils read, evaluate the quality of pupils' writing and observe the teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics). The inspector held meetings with representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils and staff. He observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. The inspector also took account of the views of parents and carers in 30 returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is much smaller than the average-sized primary in Palgrave village. It supplements its small site with the use of the local community centre, church and village green for sports and other activities. Most pupils come from the local area with a significant minority from the nearby town of Diss. Palgrave is part of a federation of two primary schools that share the same governing body and headteacher. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years. Almost all pupils are White British and over a quarter of these are disabled pupils or have special educational needs and are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Most have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A fewer than average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has several awards including the Suffolk Green School award and Healthy Schools status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Palgrave is a good school. It provides a very supportive learning environment for its diverse intake and has made significant improvements under the current leadership, including the introduction of very effective procedures to track and monitor the pupils' progress. It is good rather than outstanding because there are still aspects of teaching that can be further improved.
- Pupils now make good progress over the time they are in school. Year 6 pupils have above-average attainment in mathematics and English by the time they leave. A third of pupils attain the higher Level 5 while disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make significantly better than expected progress.
- Pupils are very positive about school reflected in their above-average attendance and obvious enjoyment in lessons, assemblies and participation in many extra-curricular activities. Parents and carers appreciate the efforts made to ensure their children are happy, safe and well supported.
- Good teaching ensures children are interested and engaged and this together with effective additional learning support enables them to achieve well. However, some lessons are not always as well organised as they could be to provide sufficient time for individual and group work that allows different levels of challenge in the mixed-age and ability classes. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are generally well taught but pupils do not have the opportunity to practice their phonics skills every day.
- The significant progress the school has made in the last two years has been a result of new and very effective leadership. This has established a culture of rigorous self-review and improvement and the effective management of staffing performance and resources within Palgrave and its partner school. The leadership and management of teaching are good, based on accurate evaluation and a readiness to use the outstanding subject leadership that exists

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

across both schools to improve teaching practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is good or better by:
 - making the best use of lesson time to provide different levels of learning challenge and assistance in the mixed-age and ability classes.
- Help children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 to 3 make the best progress they can in developing their language and communication skills by the daily use of effective phonics learning schemes.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Despite the limited outside space, teaching and support staff provide stimulating and effective learning that enable children in Reception and Year 1 to make good progress in most areas including personal and social development and physical and creative development. An above-average proportion of children start school with particular learning needs and progress in Reception is not quite so strong in language, communication and numeracy, as in other areas of learning. Despite these initially weaker literacy and numeracy skills, most pupils make good progress to attain broadly average standards in mathematics and English by the end of Year 2. However, few pupils demonstrate significantly above-average standards in those subjects. Attainment in reading is average at this stage. In the last two years, the school's considerable efforts to improve pupils' achievement have resulted in every Year 6 pupil making or exceeding the national expectation for progress in mathematics and English, including pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs. This good progress resulted in attainment that was significantly above average in 2011 and current pupils demonstrate similarly high outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, Year 5 pupils are making good progress and are on target to achieve similarly positive outcomes. This was evident in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson where all pupils understood different angles and could use a protractor with considerable accuracy to measure them. Year 6 pupils benefit considerably from well-targeted extra support and booster classes in English to accelerate their progress. Most read with considerable fluency and in a history lesson about Henry VIII, could extract key information explaining causes for historical events. At the same time, those with significant learning needs were able to read with increasing confidence helped by regular sessions with support staff.

Despite pupils making mostly good progress in Years 3 and 4, the rate of progress in these years is slowed on occasion, by a lack of sufficiently varied challenge in some lessons. There are no differences in performance between boys and girls and the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and additional one-to-one and small group

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

support for reading, writing and number work, ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. In the last two years pupils with very significant learning needs have been able to make exceptional progress to attain broadly average standards. Parents and carers appreciate the school's efforts and rightly believe that their children make good progress at the school.

Quality of teaching

Parents recognise that teachers and support staff work hard to ensure pupils make good progress. Considerable effort has been made over the last two years to improve the quality of teaching including the use of local leading teachers for mathematics and English. These senior staff from the partner school teach alongside Palgrave staff developing effective work schemes and modelling good teaching and assessment practice. Learning support staff are well used, particularly in Reception/Year 1 where the teacher and skilled teaching assistant routinely teach different groups according to children's abilities and levels of maturity. A Year 6 English lesson also reflected most of the good features the school has been working to develop. Pupils worked in three distinct groups on well-matched tasks which helped them write a story using a play script structure. The teacher identified clearly what he wanted pupils to achieve. Pupils were well supported throughout by both the teacher and teaching assistant, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The end of the lesson was used well to share and evaluate progress made. Despite these considerable strengths, on occasion, over-long whole class teaching reduces time more varied challenge in group work, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively to show them how to improve their writing, and give them sufficient opportunity to respond to their comments. The best practice links improvement points to pupils' National Curriculum targets.

Much of the teaching underpins the school's strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. With just 46 pupils in the school, assemblies are in effect, lessons taken by the headteacher and used to inform and develop. This was well illustrated by a very good assembly on the life of Buddha that helped pupils understand the religion and provided them with a good opportunity for reflection. These experiences are further extended in both the philosophy and religious education classes. The school works closely with the adjoining church which provides a valuable additional learning area as well as frequent opportunities for pupils to participate in music and drama. Given the predominantly monocultural and geographical context of the school, teachers make a special effort to promote a wider cultural awareness through its 'Black History' month, recently celebrating the life of Mary Seacole, the West Indian pioneering nurse in the Crimean War. Residential trips to partner schools in France provide valuable cultural experiences for Year 5/6 pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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

Parents and carers rightly talk about the school's 'family atmosphere and caring environment' and praise its work 'promoting pupils' confidence and developing them as warm, capable individuals'. This is more remarkable for the fact that over a quarter of its pupils come with significant behavioural and learning needs. A few of these pupils come from other schools where they have been unsettled. Parents are very appreciative of the effort the school makes to settle each child and meet his or her individual needs. Attendance is above average and improving. Parents value the care shown by the headteacher and his staff who know each child well and carefully track their progress through the school. When pupils gather for assembly they readily contribute and behave considerately to each other. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Some new pupils take a little longer to adjust to the school's ethos and expectations and, as a consequence, a few parents believe a few are too boisterous. However, pupils say they feel very safe in school and have no concerns about bullying. School records show no incidence of any type of bullying in recent years. Pupils are grateful for the efforts the headteacher and staff make to deal with any worries and concerns and to ensure that there is a safe environment.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has been in post for two and a half years as head of a two-school federation. He has secured considerable change that has led to sustainable improvement in provision and outcomes. He is well supported by a well-informed governing body that takes an active part in the school's self-evaluation and development. The governing body's understanding is based on a close involvement in the life of both schools through their involvement in monitoring and supporting developments, and by their individual attachment to each class. The safeguarding governor works closely with the headteacher to ensure all safeguarding requirements are met in a school that has no grounds and relies on the use of the local community centre, church and village green for its outdoor and physical education provision. The leadership team, including the assistant heads in both schools, has established clear performance management procedures, regular shared observations of practice across both schools and introduced a full range of professional development. This training has supported rigorous whole-school tracking of pupil progress, improvements in teaching and assessment practice and the development of a broad, balanced curriculum and work schemes used jointly in both schools. Much of the curriculum development supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contributes extremely well to the school's good achievement. Particularly strong is the development of numeracy across the curriculum, especially in science and design and technology. Writing across the curriculum is being similarly well developed with good examples of extended writing in history which are used as part of the school's assessment of pupils' progress and attainment. A key strength of the school is its continuous tracking of pupils' progress which is used to identify need and run various interventions including very successful booster classes for year 6 pupils. This information is well used to keep parents informed of their children's progress. There are no gender differences and the careful monitoring and support of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they achieve well. Through these arrangements the school actively promotes equality. Overall, this is a

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

well-regarded, inclusive school that has made considerable progress in improving provision and pupils' achievement. These strengths are well established and constantly reviewed indicating a strong capacity for further improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



3 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Palgrave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Diss, IP22 1AG.

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school. Your school gives you a good education, and ensures that most of you achieve well by the time you leave.

All of you like coming to school and attend regularly. In lessons, I could see that you like to work together and are prepared to listen carefully to the teacher. I was impressed by your good behaviour and readiness to help each other. All of you say you feel safe in school. It was good to see how many of you enjoy sports in spite of the need to walk to the nearby community centre. You also like the different activities including wire sculpture in art and were keen to show me your science projects including crystallisation and growing plants. Like you, I enjoyed the assemblies taken by Mr Berry and were impressed by the thoughtful contributions you made.

I spent most of the time looking at how well you are making progress in lessons and what could be improved. I could see how much you enjoy and are being helped by your phonics sessions where you learn to link letters and sound. I have asked your teachers to do this every day and in more classes to help you with your reading and writing. In most of the lessons I saw, the teacher and teaching assistants were doing a good job in helping you learn. I could see that you enjoy your lessons but have asked teachers to better match some of the learning activities to your different ages and abilities. I was impressed with the care your teachers take to mark your work regularly and explain what you need to do next to improve it. You can help by always taking care to read and follow your teachers' advice.

Thank you again for your help. Make sure you attend school regularly and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**