

Ixworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124704
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380960
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daniel Jones
Headteacher	Anna Richards
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
School address	Crown Lane Ixworth Bury St Edmunds IP31 2EL
Telephone number	01359 230228
Fax number	01359 230352
Email address	anna.richards@ixworthprimary.suffolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Additional Inspector

Nichola Perry

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers and held meetings with the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line survey (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, the school's development plan, assessment data, self-evaluation and monitoring records, arrangements for safeguarding and a range of policies and procedures. Inspectors listened to pupils read. In addition to replies from pupil and staff questionnaires, questionnaires from 59 parents and carers were received and analysed.

Information about the school

Ixworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the average, including the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school has breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body. It has the Gold Sing-Up Award, the Eco Schools Silver Award and national Healthy Schools status. The school is currently going through local authority reorganisation to a two-tier system.

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

- Ixworth Church of England Primary School is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governing body work well as a team in driving school improvement. The curriculum and promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strengths of the school. Nevertheless, the school is not yet outstanding because teaching is mostly good and staff are developing their use and understanding of data to provide the best possible match of work to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils achieve well. Standards are rising quickly and attainment is now more consistently above average. Rates of progress are good and improving in all key stages and across all subjects, helped by effective support strategies.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Sharing of best practice is at an early stage in order to raise all teaching to the highest levels. Teaching usually meets the needs of all groups of pupils but on occasion, expectations and challenge are not sufficient to enable all pupils to make rapid progress. Thorough marking and good assessment procedures ensure that pupils know where they are in their learning journey.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes to learning. They get on well with each other and with adults and have a growing sense of responsibility for their school. Pupils feel safe and their parents and carers agree that the school looks after them well.
- The headteacher is determined to improve the school. She is fully supported by staff and the governing body. Roles and expectations of middle managers have developed well, including in the leadership of teaching and management of performance. Data are regularly collected and reviewed but teachers' understanding of how to use them to match work best to pupils' learning needs, especially for the more able, is a work in progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and increase the amount of good or better teaching, with at least 40% outstanding, by April 2013 by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils in all year groups can do so as to ensure that all pupils continue to make more rapid progress year on year
 - sharing practice so that all lessons contain more features found in the best teaching
 - improving teachers' understanding and use of data to ensure that they plan activities which more closely match the learning needs of all pupils, but especially more-able pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is slightly below average. Children settle well and make good progress in the Nursery, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills. Focused teaching and good resources mean that good progress continues in the Reception class. Over time, children have entered Year 1 with average skills but they now leave Reception with above average attainment in all areas of learning, though with slightly weaker skills in communication, language and literacy.

Significant improvements in teaching since the previous inspection are leading to faster rates of progress in all year groups and subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making good progress, and attainment at the end of Year 2 is rising. Attainment in the current Years 3 and 4 is now above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, indicating that pupils are making good progress. The trend over time is upwards with significant improvement in 2012 in end-of-year school assessments. There have been inconsistencies in progress across the school but progress is now more often good and standards are rising rapidly.

Pupils develop into confident readers who reach above average standards in reading by the end of Year 2 and increase in fluency by the end of Year 4. Diary entries indicate regular reading, often supplemented by work at home. Books chosen reflect pupils' abilities and interests and help to lead all pupils into improved writing.

Pupils make good progress in most lessons. This is because they enjoy school and are engaged by interesting approaches to topics and themes. Whole class and independent work are carefully balanced and expectations are rising to ensure that progress is more rapid over time. Interventions and the good support provided ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their fellow pupils. Pupils use information and communication technology

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effectively to support and enhance their efforts in and out of class. Nearly all parents and carers say their children are making good progress and that the school helps them support their learning. Most pupils say they learn a lot in lessons and are helped to do as well as they can.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel their children are taught well. The inspection findings support this view. Teaching is good and improving with some outstanding teaching. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. The teaching of reading is good. In an excellent Reception class lesson matching sounds and letters, children participated excitedly in the challenge of finding words around the classroom in quick response to the teacher's expert delivery. The consolidation of skills from one key stage to another was shown in a good Year 1 literacy lesson. The teacher continued the emphasis on pronunciation and expression as the class developed a story orally, leading to high quality extended written work. Teachers make confident use of questioning and of information and communication technology to take learning forward. Making questions into a challenge by asking what happens next with sums in a good Year 4 mathematics lesson drew pupils into the lesson so that they were oblivious to the passing of time. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Carefully-focused additional support ensures that all pupils make equally good progress. Planning is good and carefully incorporates aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

The match of work to pupils' different abilities in some classes, especially for more-able pupils, is not accurate enough to quickly take good rates of progress to the very highest levels. The school is working to ensure that consistently good teaching is the norm with increased examples of outstanding teaching but best practice is at an early stage of being shared across the school to extend teachers' confidence and skills. Pupils feel that their contributions are valued because teachers use praise effectively to stimulate further efforts.

Assessment practices have improved and are now stronger following whole school work in this area. Marking is thorough, with a growing emphasis on the quality of presentation, and includes opportunities for pupils' self-assessment. Teachers' comments both encourage pupils' efforts and indicate ways in which pupils might reach the next steps. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. They have a growing number of opportunities to explain their work to the whole class and confidently do so.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are well behaved, welcoming and confident. High expectations are reinforced by the school's reward systems and the close attention given to individuals in and out of the classroom. Careful monitoring, and provision of external support where necessary, effectively address potential behaviour issues. Pupils are proud of the school and enjoy contributing to good behaviour as playground leaders or on the

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school council. Their efforts are reinforced by consideration of issues like what it is to have responsibility for the Earth in a good Year 4 philosophy lesson. Pupils are confident that they can always turn to an adult who will help them to quickly resolve any issues that arise. Most parents and carers believe that behaviour is good, that lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour and that the school deals effectively with all types of bullying. The large majority of pupils share this view and consider that behaviour is good. Records show that bullying of any sort, such as name-calling or racist comments, is extremely rare and exclusions are rare. Discussions with pupil groups showed the very high standards they bring to judging their own and each other's behaviour and their keen sense of right and wrong. Pupils get on well with adults and each other, work cooperatively within their groups and listen to their fellow pupils. The school is looking at ways to develop pupils' contribution to behaviour management, thereby promoting a sense of community responsibility. Attendance is above average. The rate of persistent absence has fallen sharply following whole school actions such as earlier interventions.

Most parents and carers feel that their children are safe at the school. Pupils know how to stay safe, including in all aspects of e-safety. Good safety procedures were illustrated during the inspection by the excellent care taken to ensure the welfare of the smallest children in physical education sessions in the school hall. The school has good arrangements in place to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Good breakfast and after-school clubs provide further support for pupils and their families.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear vision. The development plan focuses clearly on continued improvement and raising standards. There is strong support and challenge from a recently renewed and articulate governing body. Members of the governing body are involved in many different ways with the school's work, including through regular visits. The good and developing role of middle managers in leading teaching and learning means that monitoring of progress has increased in rigour to ensure progress rates continue to rise. Regular training sessions and pupil progress meetings have enhanced the skills of all staff. Understanding and use of data are still developing to ensure the best possible match of activities to pupils' learning needs. The school has good capacity to improve because results and teaching are better, and leaders at all levels are increasingly focused and effective. Self-evaluation is accurate and improvement since the last inspection has been good. All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements.

The strong focus on basic skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics is linked to very effective curriculum development via topics and themes which cover several subjects. The school has used staff strengths and interests to deliver the broad, balanced curriculum, for example, incorporating yoga, bee-keeping, cooking and nutrition in mixed-age sessions for 'healthy week' during the inspection. Pupil engagement is obvious from the bright school displays they have created which link

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subject areas through varied approaches. These approaches ensure that all groups of pupils have equal access to learning and that there is no discrimination. The school's focus on taking learning beyond the individual subject serves to make spiritual, moral, social and cultural development a strength of the school, as evidenced by the sense of awe and wonder with which pupils approached opportunities to use their imagination in lessons. Good relationships and partnerships with parents and carers and local services ensure that transitions into and from the school are thoroughly prepared. Pupils' clear desire to understand more about the world around them is catered for by a rich range of visits and visitors.

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.



11 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ixworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bury St Edmunds IP31 2EL

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us on our recent visit and to tell you the result of your school's inspection. Thank you for filling in your questionnaires and for talking to us about your school and the many ways you are trying to help.

Ixworth Church of England Primary School gives you a good education. These are some of the things which your school does well.

- Your school is led and managed well. Your headteacher and her staff are working together with the governors to make the school better.
- You enjoy learning because the curriculum is delivered in ways which interest you and which bring in a lot of different ideas.
- Teaching is good and there is extra help whenever you need it.
- You are very keen to help develop your school in every way you can.

In order to help your headteacher, staff and governing body to continue improving the school and to help you make faster progress, we have asked them to:

- make all of the teaching good and even more of it outstanding so that teachers share their best ways of helping you to learn
- improve the way teachers use the results from your work and tests to match activities with the skills you have, especially if you are very good at any subject.

We are sure your pride in the school and desire to do your best will help it to improve. You can all help by always working well with your teachers, support staff and fellow pupils and by regularly contributing in class and asking questions.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper
Lead inspector

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