



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Banham Community Primary School**

**Norfolk Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 29 and 30 September 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Banham Community Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs V Redgwell
Address of school:	Crown Street Banham Norwich NR16 2EX
Telephone:	01953 887293
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr P Rout
Local education authority area:	Norfolk
Unique reference number:	120782
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr P Brooker HMI
Dates of inspection:	29 and 30 September 2004

## Introduction

1. Banham Community Primary is a small school that serves the local village and the surrounding rural area. There are currently 107 pupils aged from four to 11, taught in four mixed-age classes. The number on roll has increased steadily in recent years and the reception class is over-subscribed. At around ten per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average: twenty-four per cent of pupils are on the school's register, including two pupils with a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, with 11 per cent from other heritages. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

2. The school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) and one Additional Inspector in September 2004 to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

3. Fourteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the local education authority (LEA). Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. The inspection assessed the quality of education provided by the school.

## Main findings

4. The main findings of the inspection are:

- Banham Community Primary is a good school which effectively meets the diverse and wide-ranging needs of its pupils;
  - although there is wide variation between different cohorts, taken over time, the ability profile of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. The pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the Early Learning Goals for five-year-olds. They make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress overall in Key Stage 2. Most pupils achieve well;
  - small cohorts cause wide fluctuation in annual results and make year-on-year comparisons unreliable. However, over recent years, standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 1 tests have been close to the national median for all schools. Results in 2003 were above those seen nationally, but a comparatively small proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in any subject. In the most recent tests in 2004, results declined. In recent years, the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 have not consistently achieved the higher levels of attainment of which they are capable;
  - standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 2 tests in recent years are above the median for all schools nationally. Results in 2003 were well above
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national average figures. The most recent test results in 2004 declined compared with the previous year. Nonetheless, the LEA's analysis indicates that the school's performance in each subject was well above the county average in terms of added value from Key Stage 1;

- the pupils who have special educational needs make good progress;
- in general the pupils make good progress in lessons. The quality of learning was at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in eight;
- the quality of teaching is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, and good or very good in eight. Teaching assistants provide good support for individual pupils and small groups;
- the curriculum is broad and includes all subjects in reasonable depth and balance. The school exploits good opportunities to extend the pupils' wider experiences with a suitable range of extracurricular activities, visits and external speakers;
- suitable systems have been developed to assess, record and monitor the pupils' progress. Assessment is good overall. The best marking is diagnostic and effectively guides the pupils' improvement. However, tracking information is not analysed with sufficient rigour in order to evaluate variations in pupils' rates of progress. Individual targets are sometimes well used to guide the pupils' progress in English and mathematics lessons, but procedures for setting and reviewing targets are inconsistent;
- the school is well led and managed. The headteacher sets clear expectations and monitors the work of the school effectively. She has skilfully rebuilt staff confidence and raised morale at a difficult time, and has carefully prioritised actions for school improvement;
- the roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators have developed well. There is effective leadership and management at all levels;
- the pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning. Their conduct around the school is excellent. Pupils of all ages interact well, co-operate sensibly and are happy to assume responsibility;
- the school has a positive ethos. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development. Good relationships between all members of the school community and effective pastoral care are at the heart of the school's strongly inclusive ethos. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- the pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good. At 95.8 per cent, attendance for the last academic year was above national figures. There were no unauthorised absences;

- systems for monitoring the work of the school are well established. The school has the capacity for self evaluation and for further improvement, but is not sufficiently self-critical;
- the governing body has clear aims and policies, and ensures that the school meets its statutory requirements. The governors are effective in supporting the school, are committed to its well-being and are well informed about its progress;
- the LEA has provided enhanced support over the last 12 months and has responded well to the school's needs. The LEA's effective guidance and external evaluation have contributed well to the school's burgeoning self-confidence.

### **Key issues**

5. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- make better use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils achieve well;
- improve the rigour and effectiveness of systems for monitoring and evaluation.

### **Inspection findings**

#### **Standards achieved by the pupils**

6. Although there is wide variation between different cohorts, taken over time, the ability profile of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. Most pupils achieve well. They make a good start in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the Early Learning Goals for five-year-olds. They make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress overall in Key Stage 2. The pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.

7. Small cohorts cause wide fluctuation in annual results and make year-on-year comparisons unreliable. However, over recent years, standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 1 tests are close to the national median for all schools. Results in 2003 were above those seen nationally when comparing pupils' average points scores. When compared with national figures, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 was very high: all pupils achieved at least Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a comparatively small proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in any subject: the proportion who achieved Level 3 was broadly in line with national figures in writing, but was below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. In the most recent tests in 2004, results declined: ten of the 13 pupils achieved the expected Level 2 in reading, and 11 did so in writing and in mathematics. The higher Level 3 was achieved by six pupils in reading, three in mathematics but by none in writing. In recent years, the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 have not consistently achieved the higher levels of attainment of which they are capable.

8. Standards of attainment in end-of-Key Stage 2 tests in recent years are above the median for all schools nationally. Results in 2003 were well above national average figures: all pupils achieved at least the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. When compared with those schools that achieved similar average points scores at Key Stage 1, standards of attainment in Key Stage 2 tests were very high in 2003. The most recent test results in 2004 declined compared with the previous year. The school exceeded its ambitious targets in English and science, but did not achieve its more modest Level 4 target in mathematics. Nonetheless, the LEA's analysis indicates that the school's performance in each subject was well above the county average in terms of added value from Key Stage 1.

9. Standards in literacy are broadly in line with and often above expected levels. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, and the quality of discussion and debate is often very high. Most pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, construct full oral responses to questions in class. Standards of reading are generally high, although some younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have a secure grasp of letter sounds and phonics, and lack confidence in working out new or unfamiliar words. In general, written work is neatly presented and handwriting is of a satisfactory standard. Many pupils write fluently and with reasonable complexity and accuracy, and higher-attaining pupils adapt their writing for a wide range of different purposes and audiences. In a Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson, for example, the pupils applied the conventions of journalistic writing to a newspaper report about Roman archaeological finds; the pupils in Years 2 and Year 3 selected and applied suitable verbs for their instructional writing; and Year 1 pupils composed good captions to describe key features of their school. However, there remain weaknesses in literacy. The school's analysis of the most recent statutory tests highlighted weaknesses in the pupils' ability to use inference and deduction in their written responses. In addition, there is an unsophisticated use of vocabulary in many pupils' writing and there are common weaknesses in spelling.

10. Standards in mathematics are broadly in line with age-related expectations and pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. In general they have a good grasp of mental arithmetic and are aware of different strategies to use when solving problems. The school's analysis of test results has helped to identify weaknesses in pupils' mathematical knowledge, such as two-dimensional shapes and subtraction at the end of Key Stage 1, and mental arithmetic and problem-solving at the end of Key Stage 2. The focus of teaching has been adjusted accordingly, with a particular emphasis on strategies for manipulating numbers and solving problems, and using the correct mathematical vocabulary. The standards achieved by the pupils in the mathematics lessons observed were mainly sound, with the exception of Year 6, where there is a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, a number of whom are performing below the expected levels. Many of these older pupils lacked confidence in handling mathematical data: they were unsure about the place value of decimals and were hesitant in estimating answers when checking the accuracy of their calculations in science. In all year groups, the pupils were developing their mathematics through the use of different strategies to tackle problems. Most selected and applied appropriate methods for solving number problems and explained their working to others. In all classes, the pupils displayed a real enjoyment of the subject and the challenges presented to them; this was particularly true of the most-able pupils.

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11. In science, most pupils are achieving the national expectations and they make satisfactory progress overall. All are given good opportunities to develop their skills of critical thinking and to apply their scientific knowledge to everyday situations. The pupils in the reception class, for example, have been set the puzzle of how to make wind chimes work indoors. Science teaching covers a suitable range of topics and lessons include a good variety of practical investigations. The pupils in Key Stage 2 have a basic understanding of the steps in scientific enquiry and the need for fair testing, and make predictions to guide their investigations. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a sound knowledge of a good range of scientific facts and processes, but there were evident weaknesses in their investigational skills. Year 6 pupils spoke knowledgeably about forces and demonstrated a basic understanding of gravity and air resistance. However, when investigating the influence of air resistance on different paper shapes, they accurately predicted the results, but lacked confidence in explaining the design of the investigation and were unable to apply their prior learning to suggest reasons for their results.

12. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are sound. In lessons, the pupils made extensive use of computers to support their learning within other subjects; such as working out percentages and creating graphs in mathematics, researching facts for history, and word-processing their stories. In one ICT lesson the pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked on different aspects of searching a database using fields, operators and values, and made their own databases. There was a high level of interest and the pupils worked well collaboratively.

13. In general, the pupils make good progress in lessons. The quality of learning was at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in eight. In most lessons there was a good balance of input by the teacher and well structured independent learning, and the pace of learning was brisk and challenging. However, in a few parts of lessons the pace of learning was too pedestrian. When whole-class sessions were over-long, the pupils were slow to start on independent tasks and higher-attaining pupils could make accelerated progress only when they settled to their independent work.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. The school has high expectations of all pupils and provides them with good support and guidance. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal development. Good relationships between all members of the school community and effective pastoral care are at the heart of the school's strongly inclusive ethos.

15. The pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning. In all of the lessons, their behaviour and attitudes were good or very good. In general they settled quickly to their work, listened attentively, were keen to respond to questions and showed a real enthusiasm for learning. When work was interesting they responded enthusiastically and worked hard. During whole-class sessions they sustained their concentration well, even when these were lengthy or when the pace of learning flagged. Pupils of all ages showed good levels of independence, were prepared to ask questions and concentrated for suitable periods of time. Many were keen to offer their own ideas and were not afraid to seek help when they had problems. All pupils are encouraged to be inquisitive and to develop an independent approach to their learning, and most are well motivated by the challenges presented to them by the teachers.

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16. Around the school, in assembly and at break periods the pupils' conduct was excellent. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Pupils of all ages interact well, co-operate sensibly and are happy to assume responsibility. Social skills are well developed from an early age, for example, tidying up at the end of lessons, and following rules and expectations within the classroom and school. The behaviour management policy was reviewed by the staff and shared with the pupils at the start of the school year. The pupils are well able to distinguish right from wrong, based on knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures. They are involved in agreeing rules for the classroom and the whole school, and have opportunities to discuss behaviour such as bullying and how to deal with it. Teachers and teaching assistants deal sensibly and sensitively with pupils who have specific behaviour problems. There were no fixed-term exclusions over the last year.

17. There is an active school council in which the older pupils deal with issues pertinent to their interests. For example, they organised a fundraising day to raise money for a charity for children in Kenya, linked with the geography work they were doing in the classroom. Council representatives raise a wide range of issues, mostly in connection with improving facilities and widening activities for the pupils. In addition they have influenced the introduction of a word book to be used in literacy lessons, and are at present discussing the possibility of a friendship seat for the playground, so that children with no-one to play with can be joined by others.

18. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies and lessons in religious education and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) teach the pupils about different values and beliefs, and the way in which these have an impact on the lives of people. For instance, in religious education lessons the pupils learn about Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. In assemblies this term, themes have included the Jewish New Year, harvest time, and black history. In PSHE lessons the pupils are encouraged to think about and discuss their own feelings and to become aware of and respect the feelings of others. During the year, there are visitors to the school, including members of the clergy and musicians. Many aspects of the curriculum help to enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures, for example, how people lived in the past in history lessons, harvest festival in religious education, and an awareness of culture through art, music and literature. There are well-established links with a school in Kenya and parents from different cultural backgrounds help in the classrooms and share their knowledge with the pupils. Prominent displays in public areas raise pupils' awareness of and interest in other cultures. In the assembly hall there is a stimulating display of Japanese artefacts and interesting photographs of Travellers that emphasise their importance as part of the community.

19. The pupils' attendance and punctuality are good. At 95.8 per cent, attendance for the last academic year was above national figures. There were no unauthorised absences.

### **The quality of education**

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, and good or very good in eight. All lessons had good features: classes have a positive climate for learning; lessons are well planned and suitably structured; the quality of exposition is good; the pupils are well managed and directed; and there are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The best lessons were lively, challenging and interesting. Many

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lessons made good use of resources: Year 1 pupils responded enthusiastically to using digital cameras to record their selected features of the school. Short-term planning is good: work was well differentiated to meet the wide range of needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. Moreover, lesson plans considered carefully how the pupils would best learn, and many were based on interesting and stimulating activities that captured the pupils' enthusiasm. Numeracy work, for example, was linked to real life mathematical problems; pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked out the percentage reductions of the prices of items in a sale, and Year 1 pupils made an envelope to the appropriate size to hold the birthday cards they had made. Drama and role-play activities are included in lessons to encourage the pupils to participate fully and to develop opportunities for collaborative, experiential and independent learning. A science lesson for the youngest pupils was set in a darkened room, to encourage them to think about light and dark; the newspaper reports written by the pupils in Year 5 and 6 were stimulated by a clever role-play exercise; and the pupils in a Year 4 and 5 literacy lesson performed their own dramatic reconstruction of the story as a rehearsal for their writing, while their hot-seating activity encouraged individuals to ask questions and think critically about key aspects of the plot. Group and paired work are a strong feature of many lessons: the pupils collaborate well to develop their ideas. In general, teachers modelled work skilfully, and used good questioning to engage and promote the pupils' understanding. In the Year 2 and Year 3 class, the need for clear written instructions was cleverly demonstrated using sandwich ingredients. However, some writing was poorly modelled by teachers and key vocabulary was not always properly displayed for the pupils.

21. Teaching assistants provide good support for individual pupils and small groups; although their expertise was occasionally underused when whole class sessions were over-long. They have a good knowledge of the pupils' different needs, and give effective support to those who have special educational needs and to those capable of high attainment.

22. Suitable systems have been developed to assess, record and monitor the pupils' progress. Assessment is good overall: work is conscientiously corrected and teachers' comments are positive and encouraging. The best marking is diagnostic and effectively indicates areas of strengths and weakness. However, the pupils do not adequately understand what they need to do to improve. Individual targets are sometimes well used to guide the pupils' progress in English and mathematics lessons, but procedures for setting and reviewing targets are inconsistent and are not systematic. Some targets are inappropriate because they do not present sufficient challenge. Tracking of the pupils' progress over time effectively informs the organisation of learning groups within classrooms and informs appropriate end-of-year targets. However, although there are well established systems for monitoring the pupils' progress, tracking information is not always analysed rigorously in order to evaluate the pupils' varying rates of progress. Assessment data in mathematics shows uneven progress, notably in Year 3, but this has not been sufficiently analysed or addressed.

23. The curriculum is broad and includes all subjects in reasonable depth and balance. The school exploits good opportunities to extend the pupils' wider experiences with a suitable range of extra curricular activities, visits and external speakers.

24. ICT resources have considerably increased over the past year so that all aspects of the programmes of study can be appropriately covered. The acquisition of six wireless laptops added to the existing fifteen desktop computers in classrooms enables ICT skills to be taught to whole year or class groups. New software such as remote control buggies for the

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youngest pupils and a control station pack for the older pupils gives opportunities to control IT-based models and simulations.

### **Leadership and management**

25. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher sets clear expectations and monitors the work of the school effectively. She has skilfully rebuilt staff confidence and raised morale at a difficult time, and has carefully prioritised actions for school improvement. The school's development plan identifies key areas for development, based on evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and focuses on further developing creativity and critical thinking in the curriculum. The headteacher's lesson observations provide an accurate analysis of the strengths of individual teachers as well as constructive feedback on areas for development. However, the evaluation needs to focus more critically on the quality of learning in order to identify and replicate the factors that most effectively accelerate the pupils' progress. The budget is prudently managed through judicious forward planning.

26. The roles and responsibilities of subject leaders have developed well. There is effective leadership and management at all levels. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and curriculum co-ordinators have developed procedures for monitoring and evaluating the pupils' progress, including lesson observations and scrutinies of work. Subject co-ordinators regularly monitor classroom practice and the pupils' workbooks. As a result, they have a sound overview of the strengths and weakness within the teaching of their subjects, and are able to give appropriate advice and guidance in order to improve practice. The co-ordinator of ICT has been very effective in developing and advancing the subject within the school over the last year. He gives helpful support to teachers and has established good quality software to facilitate lesson planning. As a result, other teachers are now confident in teaching the subject.

27. Systems for monitoring the work of the school are well established, and include governors, the LEA and school staff. The school has the capacity for self-evaluation and for further improvement, but is not sufficiently self-critical. The established systems are not sufficiently rigorous: assessment information needs to be analysed more critically to identify areas of underachievement; and monitoring needs to focus more sharply on the pupils' rates of progress and the factors that affect their achievement. The school's policy for performance management is well established and operates effectively. The continuing professional development of the classroom learning support assistants has recently been introduced.

28. The governing body has clear aims and policies and ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities. The governors are effective in supporting the school, are committed to its well-being and are well informed about its progress. Individual governors are linked to subjects and aspects such as special educational needs and they meet with the co-ordinators to gain a better overview of strengths and weaknesses. Their findings are fed back to the governing body. The governors are well informed of the standards and progress that the pupils make by the end of each key stage; they are advised about the targets set each year; and they have a good understanding of the added value in the progress made by the pupils over the period of time they are in the school.

29. The LEA has provided enhanced support over the last 12 months and has responded well to the school's needs. The LEA's effective guidance has contributed positively to the

school's development since the previous inspection report was withdrawn, and their rigorous external evaluations have skilfully rebuilt the school's self-confidence over a difficult period.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

In September 2004, one HMI and one Additional Inspector inspected the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Fourteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the LEA, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided by the school.

