



Blakeney Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121108
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280935
Inspection dates 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Marina Gough LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wiveton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		NR25 7NJ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01263 740531
Number on roll	53	Fax number	01263 740531
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Jeremy Gates
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue Dubois

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 31 January 2006 - 1 February 2006	Inspection number 280935
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Most children come from Blakeney and villages close by, and their home circumstances are very mixed. Their attainment when they start school varies from year to year, so although the attainment of the current reception children is average, the attainment of the Year 1 group when they started school was below average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is higher than the national average. The school holds the Investors in People Award. It is part of the Intensive Support Programme and receives additional support from external consultants to improve some aspects of its work. The headteacher also has responsibility for leading and managing another local primary school. She splits her time evenly between the two schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Blakeney is a satisfactory school that is now improving well after a period of decline following its last inspection. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and, under the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher, the staff are beginning to work together to bring about necessary improvements. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest, and has identified clearly the next steps to be taken. As a result of the enthusiasm and commitment of staff and governors, the school is well placed for further and continued improvement. It gives satisfactory value for money. Children make satisfactory progress overall, but in some cases they could do even better, especially in the Reception year. Attainment when they leave school at the end of Year 6 varies from year to year. Throughout the school children do not attain as highly in mathematics as they do in English and science. The school has introduced a range of good strategies to raise standards in mathematics, and there are already promising signs of improvement. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The activities do not always meet the children's needs. Not enough use is made of assessment information when planning the next steps in their learning, and so they do not always make enough progress or attain the standards of which they are capable. The school has taken positive steps to improve the provision, but there is still more to be done. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Whilst in one class the teaching is of a consistently good standard, in others it is more variable, and although there are good features, there are also some weaknesses. The school has accurately identified in its self-evaluation the need to strengthen teaching still further, especially in the Foundation Stage and in some aspects of mathematics. One of the real strengths of the school is the excellent range of enrichment activities that it provides.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum for the Reception children
- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school
- Raise standards in mathematics by continuing with the planned developments.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of the current group of Reception children was average when they started school. However, these children are not making enough gains in their learning and are not achieving the standards of which they are capable. This is because work is not matched closely enough to their needs, and they are not sufficiently challenged. The attainment of children, as reflected by the national test results at the end of Year 6, varies from year to year. Last year, standards were broadly average. Class groups are often small and the performance of even an individual child can skew the results significantly. Nevertheless, the results show that children do better in English and science than they do in mathematics. The school sets appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics, which are met. The targets are shared with the children

so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Children in Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress overall. In English, their progress is often good, but in mathematics, although satisfactory, their progress is more variable, mainly because of inconsistencies in teaching. Children with learning difficulties make good progress towards their individual targets because of good levels of additional support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children's personal development and well-being are good. The children are friendly, kind and helpful. They are keen to take part in lessons, especially in practical activities where they work with high levels of enthusiasm and purpose. Children love coming to school, and say that their teachers are nice and that learning is fun. Attendance is satisfactory. There are many excellent opportunities for the children to take part in physical education activities, and children in Key Stage 2 particularly enjoy the before school aerobics, skipping and team game sessions which are enthusiastically led by the staff. The children have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They take an active part in the local community, visit the elderly at Christmas and perform in the local church. Children are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education. However, although teamwork skills are strong, they are sometimes not sufficiently confident about making choices or decisions about their work independently. The school makes good provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whole school assemblies are excellent, and provide a regular forum where children can put forward their ideas, and celebrate the achievements and triumphs of others. Children are encouraged to reflect on their lives, and they willingly consider the feelings and beliefs of others. Their social and moral skills are very well developed and they have a keen sense of fairness and justice.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6, but it is inadequate in the Reception year. The teaching of English is often good, as is the teaching in one of the junior classes. The teaching of mathematics has some weaknesses. Where teaching is good, lessons are lively and stimulating, and as a result, the children are highly motivated and keen to learn. Open-ended and searching questions are used well to probe the children's learning, and to extend their thinking. Resources are used well to bring learning to life, and children are encouraged to be creative and to solve problems. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow, and more able children are not always fully stretched. In mathematics, mental starter sessions are not always sufficiently demanding, whilst in the reception class work is not matched closely enough to the children's level of ability. Throughout the school, support staff are used effectively to work with individual children and small groups,

to give them help with their learning, and to boost their confidence. Children with learning difficulties benefit especially from this additional support. The school has made good progress in developing assessment systems for literacy and numeracy. Staff are now making good use of information from tests to highlight areas for whole school improvement, but in some cases do not make enough use of assessment information on a daily basis when planning the next stage of the children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for the Reception children is inadequate. Although they receive a satisfactory grounding in basic number and language skills, there are not enough structured play and free-choice activities. As a result, the children do not have enough practical experience before going onto formal recording tasks. There are not enough creative opportunities for the Reception children and not enough opportunities for them to make choices and decisions for themselves about their learning. The curriculum for children in Years 1 to 6 is good. The children take part in an excellent range of additional activities that effectively enhance and extend their learning. They are very appreciative of the many extra-curricular clubs the school provides, and older children talk with high levels of enthusiasm about the residential visit that takes place every two years. Very effective use is made of educational visits to places of local interest. Visiting speakers, such as poets and artists, make a good and regular contribution to the children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good levels of care, support and guidance. This is a happy school where children are confident about their learning, and not afraid to make mistakes. Staff know the children and their families very well, and the children agree that they can go to any member of staff if they have a problem or concern. The school regularly seeks the views of children, by means of general discussions, questionnaires and through the school council. Children genuinely feel that their views are taken seriously. Good arrangements for child protection are in place and the school has good systems for ensuring that the learning environment is safe and healthy. Good relationships exist with local agencies and the school draws well on their expertise, especially to support children with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the new headteacher is inspirational, and she has quickly grasped what needs to be done to improve the school. One of the headteacher's real strengths is the innovative and creative way in which she solves problems, taking staff with her as she brings about the necessary changes to effect improvement. The school's self-evaluation is

effective and fully matches the inspection findings. It actively seeks, and takes on board, the views of parents and children, and they take a positive role in the process. There are very high levels of parental satisfaction. Governors visit regularly to monitor aspects of the school's work so that they can make informed contributions to school improvement planning and to the self-evaluation process. Identified weaknesses are already being successfully addressed, and strengths have been celebrated and built upon. Staff are highly motivated and the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully dealt with, thus, there is a good capacity for improvement. The leadership and management of subject leaders are satisfactory. The subject leaders for English and mathematics have made a good start in raising standards in their areas, and in developing and implementing workable assessment systems for tracking the children's progress as they move through the school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	4	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school a short time ago. I really enjoyed my visit and particularly enjoyed watching the junior children doing aerobics and team games before school. I agree with you that the school is a happy and friendly place where you are looked after well. I was pleased to see how hard you worked in lessons, but you could do even better in mathematics, especially when you are subtracting, which some of you find difficult. Your teachers have already realised this and started to use new ideas to help you, such as the take-away number lines. Your teachers work hard, and you get on really well with them. However, although some lessons are especially interesting, and really challenge you in your thinking, other lessons are sometimes a little slow, and this means you do not do as much work as you could do. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they move some lessons on at a faster speed and to make sure that you are being fully stretched in your learning. I know you are finding the new target setting system in English and mathematics exciting and useful in helping you see the next steps you need to take so that you can improve your work further. The school provides a good range of lessons for infant and junior children, and I was delighted when you told me how many activities you can join in with after school. For such a small school you certainly have a lot of choice. However, in the reception class, there are not always enough opportunities for you to play. This is very important because you need time to practise new skills and to find things out for yourselves. I think that the school has some real strengths which your new headteacher and the teachers are going to continue to build upon, and I know they have already started to put right the things that are not going so well.