



Dereham Church of England Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121195
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280953
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jill Bavin LI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	St Withburga Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		NR19 1ED
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01362692727
Number on roll	217	Fax number	01362691083
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. John Gretton
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Karen Gay

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 280953
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school in the centre of the market town of Dereham, serving families from a variety of backgrounds. There is a growing proportion of children learning English as an additional language, but the percentage is similar to most primary schools in the country. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is similar to most primary schools. The headteacher has been in the school less than two years and four of seven teachers have joined the school during the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a welcoming and friendly school where children enjoy a stimulating curriculum. Inspectors agree with the school that the overall effectiveness is satisfactory with several good features. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Most children join the nursery with skills similar to those expected for their age, but with lower than average language skills. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes, and begin Year 1 with broadly average skills. They maintain satisfactory progress and so reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. The school provides good opportunities for children to mature socially. They are willing to learn and readily embark on judging their own progress in lessons. Those who have learning difficulties make good progress because they are well supported. The school has strong links with other professionals, contributing to the good provision for children with learning difficulties and helping the school to drive forward improvements for all children. Those children for whom English is an additional language do well. However, the most capable children are not always sufficiently challenged. The school has accurately identified the need to improve standards in writing and is using drama to extend learning effectively. The headteacher gives strong leadership and is firmly committed to raising standards and achievement. The deputy and governors share her good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and inspectors agree with her priorities for improvement. She has correctly identified the need to use assessment information more rigorously to set children challenging targets. The school is right to be improving subject leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluating their subjects more thoroughly. The school provides satisfactory value for money and as a result of recent developments has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations and increase the level of challenge for the most able children to raise standards, especially in writing. - Increase the use of assessment information and understanding of National Curriculum levels to set challenging targets for all children and so raise standards further. - Extend the subject leaders' role to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are similar to those expected for their age, although many have lower than average literacy skills. In the nursery and reception classes, where the provision is satisfactory, children make reasonable progress throughout, although their literacy skills remain lower than other areas of learning by the end of reception. Standards for children when they join Year 1 have improved steadily over the last two years. Pupils maintain satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 and 2 and so reach standards that are broadly average. Nevertheless, too few children reach the higher levels, especially in writing. Results

in the 2005 national tests were lower than in 2004. These results reflect a high proportion of younger children in these classes and a high percentage of children with significant learning difficulties. As a result of the headteacher's positive influence on raising teachers' expectations and improving teaching, there are signs of improvement in standards this year. In recent years children who are new to learning English have achieved well. Children with learning difficulties also do well as a result of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children behave well because they are interested in the activities provided and most have good attitudes to learning. The school does its best to encourage good attendance and this has had a beneficial effect over the last year. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong. They think sensitively about the way they treat others and are respectful towards adults. Children in the nursery and reception classes are beginning to develop useful social skills and understand school routines. In reception and Years, 1 and 2 they enjoy being members of the school council, which helps them to see that their views are taken into account. They look after each other willingly by acting as playground friends, known as 'stars', and help new children to settle in quickly. These are good aspects that benefit children's sense of belonging. They know about staying safe and understand that eating healthy food is good for them. Children enjoy being involved with the local community by exhibiting their artwork and taking part in church activities. This helps them to develop a sense of well-being and confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the headteacher that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support in extra sessions for individual children or small groups, and work effectively with teachers in lessons. Consequently children with learning difficulties and disabilities do well. Adults and children enjoy good relationships so that children behave well and usually pay close attention in lessons. Teachers are using new systems for assessing what children know in order to take account of what children can already do when they plan lessons. While these systems are satisfactory, they are not yet making a full impact on the most capable children who are not always challenged as much as they could be. The school is aware of this and is beginning to address it. During the inspection there were several good lessons. The best teaching was characterised by high expectations and very good rapport with children. When teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace slowed a little for some pupils within the class, or the lesson content was not consistently stimulating throughout the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. It covers the National Curriculum in Years 1 and 2, and the youngest children have a suitable range of activities in the nursery and reception classes. Children at the early stages of speaking English receive good support and their progress is monitored effectively. The provision for children with learning difficulties is good because individual education plans are detailed and staff use them carefully to guide their work. A wide range of sporting, drama and dance activities helps the children to become fit and healthy and the school has good links with the local community and church that help extend learning. The good focus on developing children's creative skills through themes, such as outer space, has a positive effect on their learning. The school's programme for promoting personal, social, health and citizenship is good. It is supplemented well by innovative events such as African Arts week. The school is welcoming, with plenty of good displays of children's colourful work. The attractive outdoor area for children in the nursery provides a safe and stimulating environment. However, the temporary classroom, toilets and medical room are in need of updating and refurbishment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of children are satisfactory overall. All members of staff are aware of child protection procedures and make sure that children are kept safe and healthy. Parents value the high level of care, and appreciate the support their children receive. Children are supported soundly in their academic work through helpful comments from teachers. In Year 2, the children are encouraged to be aware of what they should do to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across the rest of the school. The systems for checking how well children are doing are not sufficiently familiar to all staff to have had a full effect on raising standards and the most capable children do not have enough challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The inspectors do not fully agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are good but find that this aspect is satisfactory overall, with some good features. The school has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection, especially since the new headteacher joined. Her commitment to raising standards is a strength that underpins the school's capacity to improve further. She has quickly and accurately pinpointed the need to introduce better ways of tracking children's progress and make more effective use of assessment information to help drive up standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The deputy headteacher supports her well and manages the provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Parents are consulted regularly and they express strong support and confidence in the school. The governors

know the school well and visit regularly. Several are new to their roles and keen to increase their knowledge through training. Satisfactory systems are used to check the quality of teaching, and these have helped improve teaching since the last inspection. However, there are too few opportunities for staff to observe and learn from the best teaching in the school because the roles of the subject leaders are not fully established. This has been correctly identified by the school as an area to develop.

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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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	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

You may remember that we visited your school a few weeks ago. We enjoyed meeting you very much. Thank you for sharing your work with us and talking to us about what you enjoy doing. These are some of the things that we found out about your school. - We think your school is a happy and safe place where you enjoy working, learning and playing. - You are learning how to stay fit and healthy by eating sensibly and being active. - You behave well and are kind to one another. - You have 'stars' who are children in the playground and this is a special job. It means everyone has a friendly person to talk to if they are beginning to feel sad. - Teachers and teaching assistants look after you well. - You have exciting art, drama and dance activities that you enjoy and help you to learn new things. To make your school even better the headteacher and teachers need to: - help the children who find work easy to understand how to make their writing even better - make sure that they always know how to help you make your work even better - think of ways to share their best ideas with each other even more. We wish you every success for the future