

Little Snoring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120828
Local Authority	NORFOLK
Inspection number	291871
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Baynes
Headteacher	Mr R Lord
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001
School address	Thursford Road Little Snoring Fakenham NR21 0JN
Telephone number	01328 878362
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Little Snoring and the surrounding area. Local housing is very mixed and includes some rural deprivation. A large extension to the building, opened in 2005, includes a sports and arts hall which is shared with the local community. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion who have learning difficulties or disabilities is above average and, for the size of the school, quite a large number of pupils have statements of special educational need. When pupils start in Reception, they have a wide range of attainment but are often below the levels expected nationally in their language and social skills.

The headteacher joined the school in September 2006. At the same time, the school became part of an Intensifying Support Programme with the local authority to boost its efforts to raise standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Little Snoring Primary is a satisfactory school. It has the whole-hearted support of parents who are overwhelmingly positive about what it offers their children.

The school is realistic about its current effectiveness and this is based on rigorous self-evaluation. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good but their academic progress is no better than satisfactory. In most recent years, pupils have made sound progress and reached broadly average standards by Year 6. Last year, standards in the national tests for the oldest pupils were much lower than usual. This was partly because quite a high proportion of pupils had learning difficulties, but the school also identified some underachievement. It has tackled the causes of this urgently and effectively. This has been mostly due to the very effective teamwork of the headteacher and the chair of governors who have high expectations of how the school can improve and have the knowledge and skills to realise their ambitions. Improved methods of checking and tracking pupils' progress have been introduced in all age groups. Teachers are using these to make sure that pupils build systematically on their achievements term by term and year by year. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Standards are currently average by Year 6 and pupils are on track to reach the school's realistic targets for them by the time they leave.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but inspection evidence and the school's own monitoring show that the quality of individual lessons varies considerably. The school is making good use of support from the local authority to improve the consistency of teaching and pupils' progress. Pupils get a sound start in the Foundation Stage so that they reach the levels expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year. A real strength of the school is how it develops pupils' personal qualities. They are well behaved, and work and play together well. Parents testify to the 'family feeling' that is successful in contributing to harmony in the community. The oldest pupils are mature and considerate young people. The curriculum is satisfactory and is improving as links are made between subjects and extra activities provided to make learning more purposeful and enjoyable for pupils. Pupils get good pastoral care. The guidance and support they are given to improve their work is now based more securely on teachers' analyses of their assessments of individuals. This has not yet resulted in consistently good marking or feedback to pupils about how well they have done and what they should concentrate on next.

Leadership and management are satisfactory at present in terms of their recent impact on pupils' achievements. The plans for further development are clear, focus sharply on the most important priorities and are being monitored well by the head and the governors. The governors are active, well informed and are holding the school to account. The class teachers are being involved well in planning initiatives but have not had enough opportunities to check the impact of teaching and the curriculum at first hand, for example to inform their role as subject leaders. This is also difficult for the headteacher as he has a heavy teaching commitment.

Compared with the good standards identified by the school's previous inspection, there has not been enough improvement in the intervening years. There is now renewed energy and a good team spirit which indicate a sound capacity to improve within the staff team as a whole. The clear steer ably provided by the headteacher and the chair of governors gives a firm foundation for the school's continuing development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' individual progress to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that all lessons are at least good.
- Ensure that the arrangements for marking work and setting targets with pupils tell them how well they have done and what to do next to improve.
- Enable all teachers to be informed enough about standards and the curriculum to contribute effectively to the school's continuing development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make a satisfactory start in the Reception class. High levels of adult support ensure their personal, social and emotional needs are catered for well and this helps to promote the rest of their learning soundly. By Year 2, in most recent years, pupils have reached broadly average standards. This was true for the 2006 assessments, although reading standards were lower than either writing or mathematics. By the end of Year 6 in 2006, standards were lower than usual in English and very low in mathematics and science. Even when pupils' learning difficulties were taken into account, there was some underachievement compared with how the same pupils had done when they were in Key Stage 1. As a result the school did not meet its targets for either English or mathematics. The school has acted urgently and effectively to establish and eliminate the reasons for last year's disappointing results. This has led to improved teaching and better ways of checking how well individuals are doing. School records show that current pupils in all three classes, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are making at least satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This aspect is a significant strength of the school. Pupils comment on how much they enjoy school and like their teachers. The oldest say they feel well prepared for high school but will miss this school too. Attendance is average. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Conversations with the oldest pupils showed an awareness of, and respect for, people from other backgrounds. Pupils are developing a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles by activities such as cycle training and internet safety education. There are much improved facilities for sports and many pupils take advantage of them. Pupils contribute well to their own school, the village and the wider community. For example, they recently organised a table top sale to help fund gardening equipment and, during the inspection, made great efforts to raise money for Red Nose Day. Their satisfactory academic achievements and good social skills give them sound foundations for the next stage of education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is working successfully to improve the quality and the consistency of teaching. Pupils say that lessons are more enjoyable now because

activities are more interesting, they are told more about what their teachers intend them to learn, and their work is neither too hard nor too easy. These views were confirmed by most inspection observations. The adults in each class work well in their small teams. Additional classroom staff are deployed efficiently, for example, to support a particular year group or individuals with special learning needs. Weaker features of teaching are evident when teachers do not tailor activities closely enough to the needs of the wide range in each class and when the agreed assessment and target-setting arrangements are not used rigorously. In all classes, teachers are not yet using marking and written feedback on pupils' work well enough to support the target-setting arrangements. Pupils are not informed systematically enough about their progress and next steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The basic curriculum is satisfactory and pupils are very enthusiastic about the growing range of interesting extra activities. For instance, they are taking good advantage of the new opportunities to take physical exercise. Trips are very popular, such as the recent train journey they took, recreating the experiences of Second World War evacuees. The school is in the process of upgrading its resources for information and communication technology (ICT). The provision of new computers and interactive whiteboards will give pupils access to a wider range of activities. Outdated ICT resources have not promoted efficient learning in the past. There are also good plans to extend the satisfactory outdoor activities currently available for the Reception age group, and to give them their own secure play area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The day to day care of pupils is good. Arrangements for safeguarding their health and safety are in place. One pupil commenting on how adults care for them said, 'If you're upset, someone talks to you and they're very reliable.' Pupils with particular learning needs are given satisfactory support through individual education plans and there are good links with relevant outside agencies for specialist help as required. The revised systems for tracking pupils' key academic skills, especially in English and mathematics, are enabling staff to start to provide improved guidance to pupils about their progress. An impressive system for assessing all other subjects is currently being introduced.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The positive impact of the work of the headteacher and chair of governors is valued by staff, pupils and parents alike. The head was described by one parent as having a 'can do' attitude'. This is equally true of the chair of governors. Both have rapidly evaluated the school and rigorously prioritised what needs to be done for pupils to benefit most. Good governors have been recruited who are well informed, questioning and give active support. A good range of local partnerships has been established, primarily with parents, but with other schools, sports agencies and the specialist services of the local authority. All of these are having a positive impact on the provision for pupils. The school has introduced a new system to enhance the role of subject leadership. The teaching staff have adopted a sensible approach to subject leadership. To date, staff have had few opportunities to check how well the initiatives they

plan are working in practice, for example, by direct observation of lessons. For the staff to get the best from their labours, they need to be better informed about what is working well and what remains to be done. The current team of staff and governors are providing the local area with an improving school that gives satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Little Snoring Primary School, Thursford Road, Little Snoring, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 0JN

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited you recently. Special thanks go to the pupils in Year 6 and to the school council for spending time telling me about your school. I enjoyed seeing how much you enjoy school and how you get on well together.

You and your parents told me that your school is giving you lots of interesting things to do. I agree. You are learning about how to lead healthy lives and many of you enjoy all the clubs and sports you can now practise in your new hall. Your class and school councils do a lot to help everyone in the school and also think of how to help other people. What a great effort you made to raise money for Red Nose Day - I hope all the hair dye has washed out by now!

I saw that you are making sound progress in your school work. I have asked your teachers to make sure that all their lessons are as good as possible. Your teachers are now carrying out regular checks on how well you are doing. This needs to continue so that the teachers make sure you build up your learning all the time. Those of you who spoke to me told me about the targets you are given to improve your work. I have also asked the teachers to make sure the comments they write on your work help you to understand how well you are getting on and whether you are reaching your targets.

You have a good headteacher who works closely with the governors to make sure your school keeps on improving. For things to get even better, I want your class teachers to know as much as possible about what is going on in the whole school and not just their own class. That way all the staff can help to provide more good things for you all.

I hope you continue to enjoy all that your school offers you.

Best wishes

Helen Ranger

Lead inspector