



Acle St Edmund Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121024
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291957
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Deane-Hall

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fletcher Way
School category	Voluntary controlled		Acle, Acle
Age range of pupils	4–11		Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3RQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01493 750322
Number on roll (school)	270	Fax number	01493 750600
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Harris
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Banks
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 1999		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly larger than average Church of England voluntary controlled primary school serving an area of mainly owner occupied properties. The number of children eligible for free school meals is low. Most children are White British with a few of mixed heritage. A small number of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. When children start school in Reception their skills and knowledge are broadly as expected for children of their age. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher. In recent years several new staff have joined the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money. Children, parents and carers have positive views of the school. One parent said, 'the school has a positive atmosphere and buzz.'

Children make broadly satisfactory progress from entry to Year 6 and achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. Progress is better in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and the 2006 national assessments show a sharp rise in standards in Year 2.

Attendance is satisfactory. However, the school is not sufficiently successful in encouraging all parents and carers to make sure their children attend as often as they should.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good teaching is evident when lessons are based upon the assessment system which helps to identify how well children are learning and what they need to do to improve. However, these systems have not yet been in place long enough to have raised standards in Year 6. There are some good examples of teachers helping children to improve their work by providing clear step by step guidance in their marking. However, this is not consistent across the school. The school's systems for checking the quality of teaching show that lessons are consistently better in Foundation Stage and Year 6 where children make better progress than in lower Key Stage 2. This is because lessons in those areas are more challenging, the work is more closely matched to children's individual needs and lessons move along at a brisk pace.

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities to help children to learn. These include good opportunities for creative activity, for example, in music. Drama is increasingly used to aid learning and progress. The school has good procedures to support children who have had difficulties in other schools and who have settled well. Staff also support children well who have learning difficulties. Overall care guidance and support are satisfactory so that children feel safe and secure in school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has satisfactorily managed a period of staff turn over and the absence of the headteacher. The governing body has an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and what it needs to improve. However, the school has a slightly more positive view of how it is doing than the inspection evidence will support. This is because senior leaders and managers have not yet focused clearly enough on the impact of management systems and decisions on children's learning. The school has successfully tackled most of the issues raised at the last inspection, inducted several new staff, developed links with schools in other countries, extended the building and begun to develop a secure system for checking how well children are doing. The school recognises that children still make less progress in the lower Key Stage 2 than in other parts and is working hard to remedy this. Given improvement since last inspection and the commitment of staff and governors, the school is satisfactorily placed to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Devise and implement systems to encourage better attendance.
- Improve the consistency of pace and challenge in teaching and ensure that all marking helps children to know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that subject leaders and those with leadership roles focus on outcomes for children's learning in terms of management decisions and systems.
- Raise achievement by building on the developing systems for tracking how well children are doing and providing them with appropriate support and challenge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. The 2005 national test results show that children in Year 6 reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Although there was a slight dip in 2006, standards were still broadly average. The school recognised that girls did better than boys in Key Stage 1 and addressed this so that the gap narrowed in the 2006 assessments.

The 2006 results show a sharp improvement in overall standards in Year 2. This is the result of the improved focus on tracking children's progress and ensuring that teaching matches their learning needs. Achievement and standards in the Foundation Stage are good now and many children make particularly good progress in personal development and well-being. Achievement and progress dips in Years 3 and 4 because the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow, but improves again in Years 5 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory for all groups, including those who find learning difficult.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children's personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Personal and social development in the Foundation Stage is good. Children behave well in and around school and feel safe. There is little incidence of bullying and pupils are confident that should it occur the school will deal with it. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved during the first two terms of this year. It was below average last year, mainly because of parents and carers taking their children on holiday during term time.

Although many children have a good understanding of what constitutes healthy lifestyles, a few still have crisps at lunchtimes and breaks. Children work and play safely taking care not to hurt themselves or others. Many older children contribute effectively to the school community. Others try to encourage responsible attitudes through the Eco-club and recycling initiatives. The school council provides an opportunity for children to have a say in how events are organised and which charities should be supported. However, the council is not yet influential about school improvement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Standards in literacy and numeracy make a satisfactory contribution to children's future economic development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have established good relations with pupils so that lessons are well ordered and children are well behaved and attentive. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards effectively to motivate children and keep their attention. In some lessons, children enjoy challenging activities, work at a brisk pace and make good progress. In some other lessons, however, children sit too long on the carpet and the pace slows. Some marking in children's books tells them clearly what is good about their work and how to make it better; however, not all marking is of this high quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Children enjoy a satisfactory range of activities in lessons and in after school clubs. The school has developed good links with schools in other countries which help children to understand how life is different there. Teachers are increasingly using drama to add interest to learning and increase pupils' motivation. The school provides a good range of residential trips for pupils and a large number are learning to play a musical instrument. Although teachers make some use of computers to aid learning across subjects opportunities are missed to develop this further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. All the required checks for ensuring the safety of children are in place. Staff are particularly good at supporting children who have had difficulty settling in their previous schools. The school has secure systems for checking how well children are doing in their learning and tracking their progress. These enable teachers to identify where children need extra help to reach their targets and appear to have had an impact on the 2006 Year 2 national test results. However, they are too new to have had an impact on Year 6 results. The systems used to check how well children are doing in Foundation Stage are particularly good and the outcomes are shared very effectively with parents on a regular basis.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and they have some good aspects. The acting headteacher is effectively supported by a committed school improvement team which, together with the governing body, has a reasonably accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. The school has set about putting in

place systems and support to improve achievement and standards and this is beginning to bear fruit at the end of Year 2. Tracking of children's progress is far more informed than previously and provides a clear insight into achievement across the school. However, because they are relatively new, the effect of these improvement strategies has not yet had time to have an impact on test results in Year 6.

The governing body supports the school well. It provides a knowledgeable level of support and challenge. The school has managed the large turn over in staffing effectively and responded positively to staff illness to minimise any disruption to children's learning. Subject leaders and those with leadership posts are beginning to develop their role but this does not yet sufficiently include checking how well children are doing and the impact of new strategies and systems.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	Yes

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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.

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

7 December 2006

Dear Children

Acle St Edmund Voluntary Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Fletcher Way, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3RQ

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for helping us during the inspection. We enjoyed watching your lessons and talking with so many of you. This letter is to tell you what we think about your school.

We think that your teachers want you to do well. You behave well and take care of one another. However, a few of you do not always come to school as often as you should. Younger children in the reception class are doing well and many of you older children are learning a lot too. This is because your lessons are interesting and you have work which helps you to improve. We also think that with help from your teachers, some of you can do even better, particularly in Years 3 and 4. You told us that sometimes teachers tell you exactly what you need to do to improve your work but that this is not always the case. The teachers have good plans to make the school even better but sometimes the plans are not clear enough on how their actions will improve your learning.

To make your school even better we have asked Mr Henery and the teachers to work with you and your parents and carers to find ways to make sure that some of you come to school more often. We have also asked them to make sure that you always know precisely what to do to improve your work and reach your targets. We have asked them to be clearer about how their plans and actions will help you to learn better. Lastly we have asked them to carry on making sure that the new systems to check how well you are doing are put in place across the whole school.

You can do your bit to help by making sure that you carry on working hard and thinking about what sort of things help you to learn in lessons, and telling your teachers about these.

Christopher Deane-Hall

Lead inspector