



Pulham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121051
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291980
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Madden

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harleston Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Pulham Market, Pulham Market
Age range of pupils	4–11		Diss, Norfolk IP21 4SZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01379 676313
Number on roll (school)	135	Fax number	01379 676313
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Ann Ford
		Headteacher	Miss Lesley Farrer
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 1999		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school's pupils are almost all from families of White British backgrounds in the village of Pulham Market and the surrounding rural area. Few of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, though the number with a statement of special educational need is relatively high. The overall attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is a little below average. The headteacher joined the school last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. The school is well led and securely governed. The staff team is sharply focused on making improvements so that the pupils can achieve as well as possible. There are secure systems to manage staff and the quality of education. Self-evaluation has accurately identified much of what needs attention. The school provides good value for money and the staff are well placed to help pupils to even greater achievement. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average. From the time they enter the school the pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, progress well. Their overall attainment is above average at the end of each key stage. Good teaching supports the pupils' good learning and progress and teachers work hard to help pupils whose learning has fallen behind. Teaching and learning are securely directed by knowledgeable teachers. Lessons are usually well planned and activities generally capture pupils' interest quickly. Skilful classroom organisation maintains pupils' engagement well, particularly with the younger pupils. The teachers frequently advise and challenge pupils about their work. Improvements are being made, particularly in Key Stage 2, where there have been recent changes of staff. Steps have already been taken to build the staff team, consolidate fresh practices and strengthen the skills and understanding of older pupils before their national tests. Older pupils are benefiting from recent changes. However, at times, their learning is restricted, particularly in lessons that are long and do not use time well or lack opportunity for independent work. Projects have also started to improve the whole working environment, though limitations in the premises restrict access to library facilities. Pupils' personal development, attendance and behaviour are good. Almost all pupils settle quickly and make productive use of their time in school. Where lessons are suitably varied and resources organised well, pupils involve themselves deeply in work. They develop good awareness and understanding about health and safety, enjoy much of what they do and acquire a good foundation for the next stage of their education. Many also understand the idea of community and contribute actively to the school and to projects outside the school, including some overseas. Pupils' learning about other cultures is limited but their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. There are good links to help new pupils join from playgroups and to ensure a smooth transfer for older pupils to their secondary school. All subjects are taught, with a strong emphasis on pupils' basic skills. The school complements the curriculum well with clubs and events linked to the local community. Care, guidance and support are good, including arrangements for safety and attention to personal, health and social education. New assessment arrangements are raising expectations and helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Foundation Stage provision is now good. Recent changes are improving the premises and helping pupils to learn more quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' access to resources in the library and their learning about other cultures.
- In Key Stage 2, make full use of the time for learning and extend the pupils' opportunities for independent work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Foundation Stage pupils enter with secure language skills but relatively weak learning and number skills. They make good progress and the majority reach the goals set for them by the time they are five years old; some acquire skills and understanding usually associated with pupils a year older. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make further good progress, broadening their knowledge and understanding, gaining confidence and acquiring good skills in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress over the years has been uneven. Their overall progress through the key stage has nevertheless been satisfactory and their attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above average. Improved practices are making a greater impact on pupils' learning and attainment. The teachers have high expectations for pupils' progress from term to term. They have begun to set practical targets to guide the pupils' learning. The older pupils have achieved high standards in reading. Close attention is being paid to building their understanding of mathematical concepts and to improving their writing. As a result, the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is now good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Almost all pupils feel safe and enjoy their time in school. The pupils usually arrive punctually. Almost all work with interest and behave well. The youngest pupils usually gain confidence quickly and make good progress in understanding how to work with others. Across the school, many pupils involve themselves deeply in their work. All acquire a sound foundation for their future well-being, including an appreciation of the benefits of collaborating with peers and others, and confidence that they can achieve well. The pupils recognise how their health depends on choices made in their diet and their actions. Most eat sensibly and many take part readily in physical education and sport. All appreciate the difference between right and wrong. Most act responsibly, with tolerance when needed, and with good regard to the safety and well-being of others. Older pupils willingly act as 'buddies' for pupils who are new to the school. They also form a well-organised school council that contributes to matters such as safe playground arrangements and establishing a healthy tuck shop. The pupils' interest, positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute much to the school's calm and productive climate for learning. Their interest extends also beyond the school to making a contribution to seasonal festivals at church, charitable initiatives and local projects. Pupils' experience of cultural diversity in the world beyond their village is limited, but their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers provide strong leadership in the classrooms, with good control of the direction and pace of lessons. They plan in much detail and usually choose resources and activities that quickly capture the pupils' interest. Class assistants and other adults are used effectively to support individuals with additional learning needs or to lead work with groups. Lessons usually have a sound pace and sufficient variety to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers respond to pupils' work frequently and constructively, through marking or classroom discussion. Teaching meets most needs well. It is particularly effective for the younger pupils. In these classes, well-established resources and routines enable flexible use of time and rapid interventions where needed to re-stimulate the interest of individuals. In Key Stage 2, lessons include good opportunities for the pupils to exercise initiative and take responsibility, but activities are not always sufficiently varied and stimulating. They sometimes go on for too long, allowing learning to become less effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils' needs. For the Foundation Stage it touches on each of the required areas of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, substantial time is given to effective provision for literacy and numeracy. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught each week and plays an increasing role in other learning. The school makes good use of local events, visits to local towns and visitors to enrich the curriculum. In addition, there is an expanding range of extra-curricular activities to broaden pupils' experience, notably of a modern foreign language, music, outdoor adventure and sport. The pattern of the school day provides sufficient time and allows for lessons of different length. Time is not always used well enough, particularly at the start of the day and in afternoon lessons in Key Stage 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide good support for the pupils through close day-to-day attention, a commitment to inclusiveness and well-informed guidance. A programme of personal, social and health education promotes pupils' awareness and understanding about important topics, including health, safety and relationships. The school's arrangements for recreation and refreshment make good contributions to pupils' understanding of factors affecting their health. Its new assessment arrangements are beginning to promote more consistent progress in learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and receive good support from the staff. The school's safeguarding arrangements have developed rapidly to meet fresh requirements. There are good arrangements for risk assessment. Staff who have joined the school recently

have received instruction on relevant policies, including that for child protection. The large majority of parents believe, quite rightly, that the school provides a secure and supportive place for their children to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and five other teachers share clear purposes in fostering the pupils' achievement. They are well supported by a strong team of experienced class assistants and other adults. Good use is made of other agencies where these can help, for example with pupils' learning difficulties. The governing body is well organised and has high expectations of the school. Work in classrooms is systematically monitored by subject leaders as well as by the senior staff. There has been significant progress since the previous inspection in raising the quality of provision for the Foundation Stage, safeguarding of pupils and ICT. The new headteacher has started further improvements with careful planning. Performance management has been strengthened. Recent self-evaluation has drawn on the views of teachers as well as senior staff, though not on the views of parents, some of whom would welcome such consultation. It has accurately identified strengths and relative weaknesses. Staff training is focused on supporting improvement in the quality of education. Prudent financial management has accumulated funds to continue relevant development of the premises. The school provides good value for money. Its staff are well placed to make further improvements.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

4 October 2006 Dear Children Pulham School, Harleston Road, Pulham Market, Diss, Norfolk, IP21 4SZ I visited your school a little while ago to find out how well you are taught and looked after. Thank you for making me welcome and for answering my questions. You and your parents like the school and I agree that it is good at a lot of the things it does. I particularly liked the way: - you behave well, understand what is right and what is wrong and help each other - your teachers get you interested each day and help you to learn - you are kept safe and taught about healthy eating and exercise - the children in Classes 1 and 2 used all the interesting things in their classrooms - the oldest children act as 'buddies' and run the school council to help everyone - the school teaches you the right things and lets you join in clubs and sports; and - you all know so much! Your headteacher Miss Farrer and the governors are doing a good job. Your teachers know what the school does well and what it needs to make better. I have asked the school to make a few improvements: - make good use of all of your lesson time each day - make it easier for you to use the library - encourage and help older children to work a bit more on their own; and - help you learn more about people and life in cities and in other parts of the world. You have a good school. You can help your teachers to make it even better by going on working hard and behaving as well as you did during my visit. I enjoyed my visit very much. Thank you again. With good wishes Michael Madden Lead inspector