



# Sutton Church of England First School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121058  
**Local Authority** NORFOLK  
**Inspection number** 291983  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Nelson

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Denise Close
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		off Laxfield Road, Sutton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–8		Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9SA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 580608
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	76	<b>Fax number</b>	01692 580608
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Jackson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Carter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–8	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15–16 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291983
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small voluntary controlled first school serving a rural area of the Norfolk Broads. There are more girls than boys in the school. All the pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than in most schools. An average number is eligible for free school meals. The school will become an infant school in September 2007 in line with the reorganisation of schools by the local authority. The headteacher has been in post about a year and a half. A temporary headteacher was in post for the term before that following the retirement of the previous long serving headteacher. All the teachers are new to the school since the current headteacher took up her appointment. The school has several new governors following a period when half of the places on the governing body were unfilled.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good. The 2006 national assessments at Year 2 show that the school has reversed the recent underachievement and decline in standards, with children gaining average results overall, although reading was rather better than writing. Children's work in lessons and in their books shows standards at Year 3 to be average and achievement to be good. The information the school has on how well children are doing shows that those currently in Year 2 are making good progress, and are on track to achieve their challenging targets by the end of the year and attain slightly above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

This turn around in the children's achievement is the result of the current headteacher quickly gaining a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and taking decisive measures to improve matters. As a result of her vision and drive, the school has managed several staff changes effectively, filled the several vacancies on the governing body and established effective systems for tracking how well children are doing. It has also improved the school's resources, worked closely with other agencies to develop a very useful environmental area, established several very popular after school clubs, and gained the respect and approval of the parents who now hold the school in high esteem. These improvements illustrate the school's good capacity and strong commitment to get better still.

Although the headteacher has provided particularly good leadership since her appointment, there has been a lack of management support from governors, because of the number of vacancies on the governing body, and from teachers because they are all new to the school. Consequently, overall leadership and management are satisfactory but improving rapidly. Teaching, however, is now good so that children make good progress in their learning. This reflects the quality of recent teaching appointments and the commitment and enthusiasm of new staff. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy a good range of appropriate activities that cover all the required areas of learning and ensure good progress. All children enjoy a good range of interesting activities to help them to learn, including good use of local places of interest. As a result children enjoy their lessons, are well motivated and work hard.

The caring ethos of the school ensures that children feel safe and secure and free from bullying. This enables them to thrive so that their personal development, relationships and behaviour are good. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, and enjoy fruit for snacks and plenty of energetic activity at break times. Although children play with great energy and enthusiasm in the playground they have a sharp awareness of the needs of others.

There are adequate opportunities for them to take responsibilities around school and to make their views known through the recently established school council. Care, guidance and support of children are good. The school has now introduced effective systems for checking how well children are doing and identifying those who need extra help with their learning.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build upon the recent improvements to ensure that they are sustained by developing the leadership and management roles of staff and governors.
- Raise standards and achievement in writing to match those in reading.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and has improved over the last four or five terms due to better teaching. This means that children now make good progress in lessons and are on track to attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of children, and those who need extra help, including those with statements of special educational needs, also make good progress. While standards in reading in the 2006 assessments were above average those in writing were close to average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their above average attendance and positive attitudes in lessons indicate their obvious enjoyment of school. Older children enjoy increasing responsibilities around the school as 'friendship buddies' for example. These opportunities are fairly recent and are still developing. Children have good opportunities for quiet reflection as in an assembly on Pandora's Box. They learn about a range of cultures, and festivals associated with them like Diwali. The achievement of a Healthy Schools Award is testament to the school's work on helping children to understand how to stay healthy. Preparation for the next stage of schooling and adult life is satisfactory. Children have good social skills and levels of literacy and numeracy but have not had enough opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all subjects because of a lack of resources.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. The school is successfully addressing the past underachievement of children through improved teaching. This has resulted in the Year 2 children gaining average standards overall in the national assessments in 2006 despite them underachieving in Foundation Stage and Year 1. Teachers who share a class work closely together to plan activities that build effectively upon what each individual teacher is covering. The school uses fewer worksheets and routine exercises and children enjoy more practical activities that motivate them and keep their attention.

The teachers' effective use of the recently installed interactive whiteboards helps to gain and hold children's attention. Teachers systematically record how well children are doing in reading, writing and mathematics so that they can set targets that will challenge children and move them on in their learning. The marking policy is relatively new and still being developed to include more opportunities for children to evaluate how well they think they have learned in lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good range of activities in lessons and after school to help children to learn. These include good use of local places of interest like Hickling Broad and Sutton Pottery, as well as the expertise of visitors from organisations like the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Dragonfly Society to add an extra dimension to learning. The recently established environmental area is a useful and well used resource that supports a range of subjects including science and art. The lack of appropriate resources has limited the use of ICT across all subjects and the school has recently taken delivery of some new computers to resolve this issue. Forming four groups from the three classes for mathematics has helped to raise standards and improve achievement by having children of similar ability working together in smaller groups.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides particularly good pastoral care of children and has all the required checks in place to ensure their safety and well-being. As a result children feel comfortable and secure in school and always have someone to turn to if they are worried or upset. Until around a year ago there were limited systems to check how well children were achieving in their learning but these are now in place and the school is looking to improve them further through more effective use of ICT.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Until recently the headteacher bore too heavy a management burden as the school had several vacancies on the governing body and no equivalent to a senior management team of staff to which she could devolve responsibilities because all the teachers are new to the school. She has shown outstanding resilience and worked tirelessly to tackle difficult staffing issues and bring stability to the school. She has established effective systems for checking the school's performance so that she knows how well it is doing and how to make it better. Now that she has a full governing body, and staff with clearly defined responsibilities for different subjects, the school is well placed to improve as those new to their management roles gain experience, expertise and confidence. There is a

highly positive team spirit and strong commitment from governors and staff to redress the past difficulties and build upon the recent improvements. The headteacher has done a remarkable job to steer the school through its recent turbulent spell and to lay the foundations for its future development so effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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	3
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**

17 November 2006

Dear Children

Sutton Church of England First School, Denise Close, off Laxfield Road, Sutton, Norwich,  
Norfolk, NR12 9QP

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you at lunch times and meeting your school council. This letter is to tell you what I think is good about your school and what could be better.

You go to a good school. You work hard in class and do well in lessons. You behave well and you told me there is no bullying. When someone does upset you the adults help you to sort things out. All the adults in school work hard to look after you. Your teachers give you interesting things to do in lessons. Many of you enjoy the after-school clubs that the staff run for you. You know how to stay fit and healthy by eating plenty of fruit and vegetables and getting lots of exercise. Your school council works hard to tell the teachers your ideas for improving the school.

I have asked the governors and teachers to help your headteacher more with all the jobs she has to do. I have also asked your teachers to help you to get as good at writing as you are at reading. I am sure that if you continue to work hard and behave well your school will go from strength to strength.

Best wishes for the future

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector