

Little Plumstead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121119
Local Authority	NORFOLK
Inspection number	292018
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	165
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Quarterman
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Witton Lane Little Plumstead Norfolk NR13 5DL
Telephone number	01603 712165
Fax number	01603 717167

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Little Plumstead School is smaller than most primary schools. It is in a village on the outskirts of Norwich. Nearly all its pupils are White British. A few are from other White backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is above average. Children's attainment on entry to school is similar to children nationally, although it varies considerably within each year group. The number of pupils known to qualify for free school meals is below average.

The school is accredited for its staff well-being programme and is the holder of an Investor in People award, the Norfolk Quality Mark and an ActiveMark. It is working towards a Healthy School accreditation. Planning is underway for a building on a new site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Little Plumstead is a good school, a judgement that matches its own evaluation. The headteacher's strong leadership and management ensure that the school's performance is monitored to good effect. Any shortcoming in performance is uncovered quickly and addressed. A particularly perceptive governing body supports the headteacher effectively and improvement has been good since the last inspection.

Consistently effective teaching, based on a good curriculum, ensures that pupils learn well and make good progress. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science are nearly always above average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This represents good achievement. Nevertheless, variation in results in different subjects is apparent, with performance in mathematics outshining those in writing and science. Good leadership, at senior and subject levels, has introduced initiatives to address this matter. A focus on creative skills across the curriculum, including the enrichment of pupils' spoken vocabulary, is beginning to improve the content of their writing. In science, a stronger emphasis on practical experiments is also beginning to raise standards. However, the school's self-evaluation correctly indicates that these improvements are not yet fully effective. This is reflected in the 2006 national tests, in which the Year 6 results are above average overall, although those in English and science remain behind those in mathematics.

Pupils' progress through Years 1 and 2 and in Reception is also good. By the end of Reception most children reach the expected goals and some exceed them. Towards the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments indicate that standards are usually above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported particularly effectively. Their individual education plans are meticulously constructed and contain very clear targets. Classroom assistants support these pupils' learning exceptionally effectively. Pupils do extremely well indeed, some reaching average standards by the time they leave in Year 6.

The school's outstanding arrangements for the care, guidance, and support of pupils contribute considerably to the excellence of their personal development and well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy school a great deal, which is reflected in above average attendance. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent, contributing to safe practices. Pupils' contributions to the school community are various and extremely effective. The school council is particularly instrumental in producing this excellence. Its members willingly take on responsibility for decisions about what affects them, discussing their ideas in a very mature and sensible manner. Pupils chair the meetings with remarkable confidence and aplomb. Pupils know an exceptional amount about the benefits of healthy foods and regular exercise. Their good literacy and numeracy skills make an effective contribution to their preparedness for the future. The school's openness towards parents and willingness to involve them in its work is returned by parents' expressions of overwhelming support. Partnerships with outside agencies are also highly constructive, especially in providing specific advice and support related to staff training and helping pupils with learning or emotional difficulties. The school's track record of improvement and its accurate self-evaluation suggest that the capacity for further improvement is good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully establish strategies for developing pupils' writing and science skills, so performances in these subjects rise to match that achieved in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good, which includes all groups and abilities. They make good progress and achieve standards that are above average in Year 6. Standards in mathematics are higher than those in writing and science. This follows a successful initiative to improve pupils' strategies for solving problems and carrying out mathematical investigations. Indications are that initiatives to improve standards in English and science are working, as increasing numbers of pupils throughout the school are reaching challenging targets. Teachers' assessments towards the end of Year 2 indicate above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, representing good achievement. This builds on similar good achievement in Reception, where a large proportion of children are on course to reach expected goals and some to exceed them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities often make exceptionally rapid progress, owing to support that meets their needs very effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, and social development are outstanding. Their behaviour is exceptionally good, which is based on reflective, highly thoughtful attitudes and strong ideas about right and wrong. This contributes well to pupils keeping safe. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strong feature in Reception, where children cooperate with each other very well. Attendance is good, which is in accord with pupils' tremendous expressions of enjoyment and support for school. Pupils in Year 6 summed it up, 'This school gives you a lot of confidence'...'Yes, it brings out your talents'. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about the value of healthy eating and keeping fit. Through fund raising, helping around the grounds and acting very effectively as monitors, they contribute considerably to the community, supporting each other exceptionally well as 'buddies' in the playground and quiet garden. Pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good in all age groups. Planning, that ensures good adaptations of work to meet the targets of pupils of different abilities, is a strong feature. Such planning is based on good use of assessment and careful tracking of pupils' progress. The use of many techniques that help pupils to acquire, share, and cement knowledge for themselves is typical. Opportunities are frequently provided when they talk to a partner about what they have found out. Classroom assistants are clear about their roles and well trained, so their contributions to pupils' learning are effective. This is particularly so in the case of pupils with learning difficulties. Provision of much creative activity, from Reception through to Year 6, is beginning to have an impact on pupils' understanding of how to write more imaginatively and precisely. Nevertheless, the school's own monitoring acknowledges that '...different stages on this journey...' are evident.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good. What is taught is interesting and relevant. Pupils are consulted through class and school councils about what helps them to learn. This has been a particularly strong feature in enriching what is taught, and meeting preferences through themes, for example, Ancient Egyptian and French days. Educational trips are planned effectively to match what pupils are studying at the time and a residential visit is provided in Year 6. While provision for personal and social development is good, with a strong emphasis on teamwork, opportunities for using Britain itself to exemplify a mixed, modern society are sometimes missed. Since the last inspection, opportunities in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved considerably with the provision of better equipment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance, and support are outstanding. The school's approach is exemplified in its arrangements for playground supervision. Through the school council, pupils explained what would benefit their well-being. The headteacher and staff then facilitated these requests in terms of playground equipment and supervision. Such consultation and involvement of pupils is typical. When the school sought guidance on avoidance of bullying, representatives of pupils and staff attended meetings together. As a result of this shared approach, pupils fully understand and accept arrangements for their care and guidance, so procedures are highly effective. Statutory elements, including those for safeguarding pupils, are fully in place. Arrangements for academic care are also strongly effective, so any shortfalls in pupils' performance are identified quickly and prompt action is taken to improve the situation.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels, including the coordination of provision in Reception and for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Nevertheless, the introduction of measures to improve performance in science and writing are not yet fully complete. Governors are exceptionally adept in guiding and supporting the performance of staff. Their concern for the staff's well-being is exemplified in their supportive attendance of training with staff, in order to share any burdens of workload. They are also attempting to support the headteacher in similar ways by their involvement in planning for a future new school, so the headteacher can, as far as possible, concentrate on present requirements and improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are effective, resulting in a good capacity to improve further. The school's relationship with parents is particularly strong. This is reflected by their overwhelming support in questionnaires, for what it offers their children.

Annex A

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?	1
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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

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?	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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Plumstead CofE Primary School, Little Plumstead, Norfolk, NR13 5DL

Thank you for being so helpful and polite when I visited your school. Your willingness to tell me your thoughts and ideas contributed a great deal towards making the day run smoothly. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing your work and being in some of your lessons, all of which were of good quality. I also enjoyed my 'working lunch' with some of the School Councillors. They seemed very involved in helping to improve your school. I agree with them that your teachers teach you well, so you make good progress with your work.

Here are some things that I thought were particularly good about your school.

- Your work in mathematics is particularly good.
- You behave exceptionally well, working and playing together in a great spirit of cooperation.
- You respect the staff of the school and are correct when you say that they look after you very well indeed and do a tremendous amount to help you succeed in your studies.
- You are very well involved in helping to make decisions about what the school should do and provide.
- Your headteacher and all the staff lead and manage the school effectively.

Here is something that I have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to do.

- Make sure that their ideas for helping you to improve your writing and science work are fully and consistently applied, so you do as well in these subjects as you already do in mathematics.

I hope that you will always be proud of your school and continue to work hard and offer your ideas to help it become even better than it already is.

John W Paull

(Lead Inspector)