



Whitefriars CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121141
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 292029
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Sarah McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Whitefriars Road
School category	Voluntary aided		King's Lynn
Age range of pupils	4–11		Norfolk PE30 5AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01553 761001
Number on roll (school)	318	Fax number	01553 769377
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Nicola Dodes
		Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006	Inspection number 292029
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school with a falling roll. It serves an area with higher than average levels of deprivation. More pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. Due to a recent influx of children from Eastern Europe the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families has increased significantly over a very short time and is now at the UK average. Many of these come into school with little or no English. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is very high. The standards on entry are well below average. The head teacher was absent through illness during the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards, teaching, aspects of leadership and management and aspects of care.

In spite of recent improvements in raising standards, the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is inadequate is confirmed by the inspection. Issues from the last inspection remain and have not been tackled successfully. Governance has been weak and has not been able to hold the school to account. Rapid changes in staffing, and in particular amongst the senior management, over the past five years has meant that the school has not had sufficient leadership or direction. Achievement is unsatisfactory. In 2005, results of national tests led to the school being placed in the bottom 1% of all schools in the country for the progress pupils made between Year 2 and Year 6. It has fared a little better in 2006 but still languishes too low down. Children have an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and attain satisfactory standards by the time they move into Year 1. Although satisfactory standards are maintained up to the end of Year 2, standards and achievement fall sharply between then and Year 6 and results are significantly below national averages in English and mathematics. Standards are starting to rise and there is firm evidence that the school is on track to reach its Year 6 targets for the 2007 tests. In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy head and Key Stage One leader are coping well and ensuring day to day management of the school is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are inadequate because teachers do not all have high enough expectations. Subject leaders for English and mathematics are working satisfactorily to ensure teachers are focussed on raising standards. The collection of assessment data has improved. However, teachers are not using it flexibly enough to match work and improvement targets to the particular needs of individual pupils. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are positive members of the local community. The curriculum is satisfactory, with a particular strength in the range of enrichment activities. Attendance is also satisfactory. However, although staff know their pupils well and the school meets statutory requirements for child protection, the systems for checking up on absence and lateness are not robust enough.

The school is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity for improvement. Pupils' behaviour is improving and the leadership team has built up good relationships with staff and parents. There are clear improvements to be found in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in English. Leaders of these subjects have become more systematic and confident in helping teachers to raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for pupils in English, mathematics and science.

- Improve teaching so that assessment data is used to match work to individual pupils' needs.
- Ensure that school leaders at all levels are effective in showing the way to improve standards and achievement.
- Ensure systems for improving attendance and for checking up on absence and lateness are robust and effective.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The achievement and standards of the pupils are inadequate. When children start at school their speaking and listening skills and their personal development are well below those normally found for children of this age. They make excellent progress in the Reception classes because teachers make the children feel secure. They have high expectations and children thoroughly enjoy the activities. Standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave the reception classes. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and 2 and so reach standards broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 2.

However, progress slows down dramatically as the pupils continue through the school. Pupils make inadequate progress between Year 2 and Year 6 in all core subjects. Standards in Year 6 are well below national expectations. Too few pupils attain the higher levels and pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties make inadequate progress. The school has not met its expected targets for several years. External support from the local authority is concentrating the school on raising standards in English and mathematics and is starting to have the desired effect, particularly in Year 6. The school is coping well with the increasing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and these pupils generally make satisfactory and often good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have satisfactory personal development. Children in the Reception classes behave extremely well and enjoy every minute of their time in school due to the high standard of teaching and quality of care they receive. As one parent commented 'Since starting school my daughter's confidence levels socially, emotionally and academically have developed immensely'. Behaviour in other classes is generally satisfactory but reflects the inconsistent quality of teaching. A significant number of pupils and parents report that bullying occurs but school records do not support their view. Attendance is broadly average, but there is a small number of pupils who arrive late or do not attend regularly enough.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. A strong sense of community is developed through assemblies, Christmas concerts and the school's support for parents. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand that healthy eating and exercise contribute to their good health. Significant numbers of

pupils walk or cycle to school or participate in sports clubs. Pupils' evident enjoyment of these activities and physical education lessons reflect the emphasis the school places on helping them to develop a healthy attitude to life. They welcome responsibilities such as being house captains or school councillors. However, an opportunity is lost for developing pupils' limited numeracy and literacy skills and preparing for their future economic well being because adults rather than pupils sell drinks and snacks at break-times.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall. There is not yet enough consistently good teaching to ensure pupils' standards improve at the rate that is needed or to bring about a uniform rise in achievement in all classes across the school.

The exceptional progress made by children in the Foundation Stage is the result of outstanding teaching. For them, learning is lively, exciting and planned extremely well to meet their very diverse needs. Teaching, and therefore achievement, is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Further up the school, teaching is inadequate overall with some unsatisfactory teaching and not enough good teaching. Activities are not sufficiently exciting to engage the pupils' interest or to motivate them to succeed. Although the setting of pupils into ability groups has brought about important improvements in planning, provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is still inadequate to meet their needs. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and often make better progress than other pupils.

Most pupils' work is regularly marked. Nevertheless, much of the marking fails to identify pupils' regular low level errors that prevent them making more rapid progress. Although pupils can recite their targets, many are unsure about what they are good at or what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The range of work and activities provided for pupils is satisfactory and enhanced by a good range of enrichment opportunities, such as clubs, educational visits and visitors to school. School performances are well received and provide good opportunities for boosting pupils' personal development. The excellent curriculum in the Foundation Stage links the areas of learning together well in a way that stimulates the children and helps them learn. A suitable programme for personal, social and, health education helps pupils to find out how to stay safe and prepare for life in an adult society. Good provision is made to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Overall care, guidance and support arrangements are unsatisfactory. Pupils feel well cared for, especially in the Reception class, and arrangements to help new pupils settle in are effective. There are good links with support agencies to help pupils with English as an additional language and good support from the specialist teacher in school. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are not as well supported. Individual education plans are insufficiently detailed and the targets in many of them are not effective in supporting or guiding pupils' learning. Child protection procedures are in place and managed by a trained person. However, the school is not consistently following up absence on the first day or ensuring that there is an accurate record of lateness.

Procedures for recording pupils' achievement and tracking their progress are secure but only recently put into place. These are now providing helpful information to the school about pupils' performance and the progress they are making. However, where pupils achieve their targets quickly, there is nothing more to challenge these pupils until the next target setting date. There is too much variation in the format and effective use of targets in different classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Until recently the school leadership gave insufficient emphasis to raising standards. Senior leaders did not clearly establish the main reasons for low standards or devise plans to address these successfully. More recently the senior management team has recognised these weaknesses and, with effective support from the local authority, has arrested the decline and begun to bring about improvements.

Leadership in the Foundation Stage is outstanding; children are given an excellent start. This good practice is setting high standards for leadership elsewhere in the school, although not yet matched for all subjects. The leaders of English and mathematics now give a satisfactory direction for improving standards, and other subject leaders are beginning to understand how they can do the same in their areas. However they have insufficient time for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Senior managers have improved the way they evaluate performance and this is having a positive effect as they begin to move the school more quickly towards improvement.

Governors are not sufficiently knowledgeable about essential information on standards, attendance and financial spending. Consequently they have not challenged the senior managers persistently enough or held them to account for the standards achieved. Financial management is satisfactory. However, as standards remain low and pupils' achievement is inadequate, the school does not offer satisfactory value for money.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
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?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4

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	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7th December 2006

Whitefriars CE Primary School, Whitefriars Road, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5AH

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We enjoyed meeting you and were pleased that you were happy to share your ideas and views about the school with us. This letter is to tell you what we think of your school and how it can be even better.

You told us that you enjoy school and particularly like PE and literacy lessons. You readily take part in school and Kings Lynn activities but you do not all arrive at school on time and some of you have too many days off. Some of you are proud of your jobs as councillors and house captains. Many of you behave well and make the most of your time to learn in lessons. We know that a small number of children spoil learning for others, but your teachers are dealing with these children properly. You eat sensibly and it is good to see so many of you walking or cycling to school. We are pleased that you enjoy all the visitors and trips arranged by the school, as well as the interesting after school clubs. I particularly enjoyed seeing the infant Christmas play. These activities give you good opportunities to have a go at things out of the classroom.

To make the school even better we have asked the teachers to do four things. Firstly to make sure that you are doing your best at all times so that standards and test results improve. Secondly that teachers plan your work carefully, so that it is not too hard, not too easy but just right for you. Thirdly that the teachers who lead subjects find out the best ways to help you do well. Fourthly that the office staff ring home as soon as possible if you do not come to school and if your parents have not let them know.

While your Headteacher is away Mr Tuckwood has been working hard to run the school efficiently and to improve it. I am sure all the teachers will continue to work to make your school an enjoyable place to be. You can do your bit by keeping up your positive attitudes and working even harder.

Mrs McDermott