

Gunton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124677
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293072
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Riley
Headteacher	Mrs S Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002
School address	Gainsborough Drive Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 4LX
Telephone number	01502 584661
Fax number	01502 567973

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Pupils currently leave to go to middle schools at the end of Year 4. The community served by the school faces some elements of economic and social challenge. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Attainment on entry is below that expected for children at that age. The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is below average and very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The school holds the Association Football Charter Standard and has been awarded Activemark, for the provision of physical activities, the Suffolk Healthy Schools Accreditation and the government Charter Mark for excellence in public service.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which all pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Their achievement is outstanding. One pupil described the school as, 'Like a big, caring family. We feel proud of ourselves and of each other', an opinion frequently supported in various comments made by staff, governors, parents and carers, and members of the community. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average: by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4 standards are above average. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and enables children to attain standards that are close to those expected for their age. This is all underpinned by the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body, supported by a hardworking and dedicated staff. Together, they ensure that every pupil is able to do their best. This is also the central reason why the school's capacity for its continued improvement is outstanding.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are exemplary. They are very caring, sensitive and supportive towards each other. They regard helping with jobs around the school as a great privilege. Pupils' behaviour is also exemplary and their attendance is excellent. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are exceptionally good, enabling pupils to thoroughly enjoy their lessons and become increasingly confident and competent learners. Teachers plan their lessons with great care to ensure they meet the needs of all their pupils. They also assess pupils' attainment and progress accurately. The curriculum is good and meets the learning needs of pupils of all abilities well. Care, guidance and support are good. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and know well how to lead healthy lives. Their contribution to the community is outstanding and they develop skills which contribute to their future economic well-being exceptionally well. The progress of pupils is tracked closely from year to year, and the response to rectify any shortfall in their progress is prompt. Even so, some pupils are not sufficiently aware of the targets for their learning or sufficiently knowledgeable about what they need to do to improve.

Parents are very pleased with the education their children receive. The school is exceptional in the ways in which it helps parents and carers to support their children's learning, especially in the Foundation Stage. The comment of two parents was typical of many others in saying, 'We both feel there could be no better school for our child to start her education.' Improvement since the last inspection is good and all the issues identified at that time have been addressed successfully. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of the targets for their learning and know how they can make their work even better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Attainment on entry is lower than expected for children's ages and is often well below the expected level in social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Children's achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes is outstanding; they make significant progress, especially in the areas of greatest weakness. Excellent progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are broadly average, whilst standards in writing are above average.

The momentum does not slacken and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities also achieve very well, as do the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school is successful in meeting the suitably ambitious targets it sets for pupils' attainment. Pupils also do very well in art and design and in physical education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show exemplary concern for each other and value their teachers and their classmates. They enjoy school thoroughly and take great pride in their work. Attendance is well above the national average. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school. At playtime, pupils engage happily in large and small games and also enjoy quiet time if they wish. Pupils feel safe and well supported. They are clearly aware of the need to eat healthily. They greatly enjoy their food at lunchtime, which is of high quality. The school council enables pupils to share their views and opinions. Pupils' contribution to the school and local community is extremely positive. The good standards in literacy numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), and outstanding personal development are preparing pupils extremely well for future life. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities, both locally and further afield.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are usually very interesting and challenge pupils of all abilities very well. They, in turn, respond by working very hard and clearly enjoy their learning. Classrooms are very attractive, with displays that reflect the very high quality of learning that takes place. Teachers' very good use of questions challenges pupils to think hard. Pupils are also encouraged to share their ideas in lessons, although just occasionally a small minority of pupils do not participate as actively as they might. Teachers have exceptional subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully to ensure all children make outstanding progress. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to learning and work very effectively with groups of pupils in lessons. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities receive very good support, enabling them to make excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets the learning needs of all pupils well. The emphasis placed on literacy, numeracy and ICT enables pupils to achieve exceptionally well. In particular, the current organisation of the curriculum in Years 3 and 4, when pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, helps them to make rapid progress. This organisation helps all pupils, including the highest attainers and those who find learning difficult, to achieve their potential. Pupils' learning in different subjects is also linked together effectively in ways that make it meaningful. Lessons which focus on pupils' personal and social development are very effective.

Curriculum enhancement is good; valuable contributions to pupils' learning are made through educational visits and by visitors. For example, members of the community, including governors,

frequently contribute to the school's 'living history' programme. A visit by African drummers also provided pupils with a learning experience they remember well. The range of extra-curricular activities and clubs is satisfactory. It is made up mainly of physical activities that contribute effectively to pupils' understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. However, some parents would like to see more creative and musical activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very high levels of staff commitment ensure that pupils feel well supported and cared for. Pupils report that bullying is almost non-existent but are completely confident that should bullying occur it would be dealt with immediately. Current safeguarding requirements are met fully. There are good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of everybody. Marking of work is thorough and encourages pupils to become even better. Pupils are also involved well in making assessments of their own work. Even so, some pupils are not always aware of their targets and what it is they need to learn next to improve. Pupils academic and personal development are tracked closely and arrangements quickly put in place to support any who are making slower progress than expected.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is dedicated to the continued improvement of the school. Her inspirational and sensitive leadership means she has the full support of all her staff. The deputy headteacher and those with additional responsibilities, such as subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator, do an excellent job of monitoring and evaluating, providing outstanding guidance and support for their colleagues. Their work is focused clearly on ensuring that pupils are safe, happy and able to do their best. Governance is excellent. One governor described the governing body as, 'Passionate about the school'. This is a wise and accurate observation. Governors are very supportive and very knowledgeable about the work of the school. They make a significant contribution to planning for continued improvement and hold the school to account through rigorous and thoughtful self-evaluation.

However, there is a tendency to be a little modest in these evaluations. The partnership of the governors and the headteacher in managing the available resources ensures that pupils have everything they need to help them learn successfully. The caretaking and cleaning team are central to keeping the buildings in pristine condition and the day to day organisation is underpinned by the very efficient administrative staff.

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Gunton Community Primary School, Lowestoft NR32 4LX

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we recently visited your school. We really enjoyed our time at Gunton and would like to explain to you what we thought about your school. It is undoubtedly amongst the best. It is an outstanding school. We know that you and many of your parents and carers agree with us on this.

The school cares for you very well, to the extent that your personal development is exemplary. You clearly enjoy school and are very proud of the work you do. Your behaviour and the ways in which you are kind and helpful towards each other are outstanding. Your teachers and teaching assistants are outstanding at giving you all the help that you need to do your best. They are particularly good at giving help to those of you who sometimes find learning difficult. Your headteacher and the school governors are exceptionally good at making sure that everything at your school works as well as possible and that you have everything you need in order to do your best.

Many of you are very knowledgeable about how well you are getting on and about what you need to do to make your work even better. However, we did note that not everyone knows as much about this as they should. With this in mind we have asked your teachers to make sure that everyone knows about the targets for their learning and is clear about how to make their work even better.

We hope that you will keep on working hard and doing your best. You are certainly very lucky to attend such a good school.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft Lead Inspector