



Hopton C of E VC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124703
Local Authority SUFFOLK
Inspection number 293081
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	First	School address	TheInetham Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Hopton, Diss
Age range of pupils	5–9		Norfolk IP22 2QY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01953681449
Number on roll (school)	75	Fax number	01953688938
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mary Pierson
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Harding
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–9	6–7 February 2007	293081

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The economic and social characteristics of the community are favourable. Children's attainment on entry is usually below that expected for their age. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is very low and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection supports the school's own evaluation that this is a good school that gives good value for money. It is a caring school, with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, in which pupils and adults feel valued and able to do their best. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. Central to these views are pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, which is based on the school's exemplary provision for their care, guidance and support. One parent said, 'Our son always enjoys school, the environment makes him feel happy and safe'. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good and they work hard. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. They make good progress and by the time they leave, standards in English and science are broadly average, whilst standards in mathematics are above average.

Pupils' good progress is attributable to good teaching and learning. Positive relationships with adults and the celebration of pupils' efforts and successes mean that pupils apply themselves well to their learning. At times the formal marking of pupils' work is excellent and provides them with very helpful information about how to improve. However, whilst never less than satisfactory not all marking reaches this high standard. The curriculum is satisfactory. Its structure means that pupils are taught in mixed age classes, enabling those of different ages but with similar levels of ability to learn together well, especially in the core subjects: English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). However, the good match of curriculum content to the needs of all pupils seen in these subjects has not yet extended fully to some other subjects, in which it is currently satisfactory.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads a dedicated team of staff who support each other well. Governors fulfil their duties outstandingly. Their working partnership with the headteacher provides the school with a clear educational direction that is focussed on ensuring that each pupil is able to do well. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Following a fall in standards, the headteacher and governors have worked very effectively to improve the provision for the youngest children and this is now good. The school is demonstrating a good capacity to bring about continued improvement. One pupil summed up the school by saying, 'It's fun and the work we do is really interesting'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make certain that work set is matched carefully to the full range of abilities in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of formal marking to match the high standard already evident in parts of the school to make sure that all pupils are fully informed about how to make their work even better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, making good progress and attaining average standards in English and science by the time they leave the school. At this point, standards in mathematics are above average. Children start in the Reception class with standards that are lower than those expected nationally although, with relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group, variations are often evident. Whilst in the Reception class, they make good progress, entering Year 1 with standards that are close to those expected. The best progress is evident in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is good. The school sets suitably challenging targets for attainment, which pupils are usually successful in meeting.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Strong links with the nearby church, daily assemblies and music lessons contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development. The school has worked very effectively to improve pupils' behaviour, which is now exemplary. Pupils care for each other and work together very well, often responding exceptionally well to their teachers' high expectations of how they will approach their learning. Levels of attendance are high and serve to illustrate how much pupils enjoy coming to school. The school is very successful at helping pupils to understand the value of eating healthily by providing a daily portion of fruit. However, not all pupils bring healthy packed lunches and snacks to school. Pupils make good progress in acquiring the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT that will serve them well in their future education and in later life. They fulfil their responsibilities very well, acting as playground buddies and serving each other at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will behave and work. Pupils respond by working hard and becoming well-motivated learners, although some do not take enough care to present their work neatly. Pupils' learning and the work of teachers is supported very well by a talented team of teaching assistants. Teachers are particularly skilled at enhancing pupils' speaking and listening. Even the youngest speak confidently because of the careful attention given to the correct pronunciation of letters and words. Pupils make rapid progress in their ability to pose and respond to questions. Teachers are also good at making sure that pupils understand the targets

set for their learning. At times the marking of pupils' work reaches the highest standard and is informative and helpful. However, there are occasions when marking does not give pupils enough information about how to make their work even better. In some lessons, opportunities for pupils to comment about their progress and what they need to do next are missed. There are good procedures to assess the progress of the youngest children and of pupils in Years 1 to 4. Teachers make good use of the information they gain from assessments to plan the next stages of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets pupils' learning needs in English, mathematics, science and ICT well. Since the last inspection, revisions to the curriculum in these subjects have ensured, that year-on-year, it builds well on pupils' previous learning. However, in some other subjects not enough attention is given to tailoring activities to meeting the needs of the full range of ages and abilities in each class. The school provides pupils with access to a good range of educational visits and additional activities that support their learning well. These activities are well attended and include dance, cricket, gardening, French, football, swimming and the Christian based 'SPLAT' (Special People Learning About Truth) club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school's arrangements to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for are excellent and are fully in line with all the most recent requirements. Outstanding provision is made to support pupils in their social and emotional development. There are very good arrangements to track and respond to pupils' academic progress and learning needs. Good support is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities and they achieve well. The school is swift to recognise shortfalls in pupils' learning, no matter what their ability, and responds by providing a range of programmes in English and mathematics that enables pupils to make good progress and to do their best. Links with parents and carers and with external agencies to support pupils' learning are very effective. The school has excellent arrangements to listen and respond to pupils' views. For example, they were able to plan the impressive developments recently made to the school grounds.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership for a team of teachers and other staff. They are clearly dedicated to ensuring that pupils make the progress of which they are capable in their academic and in their personal and social development. Staff with additional responsibilities, such as those who lead subjects, undertake their duties effectively and provide good support for their colleagues. Arrangements to promote the professional development of all staff are outstanding.

The school's procedures to evaluate its own performance and respond to any identified areas for improvement are good. Details of this are set out clearly in the school improvement plan. Governors are exceptionally good at supporting the headteacher in checking on the progress made towards achieving the identified improvements. Their visits to school are closely focussed on ensuring that this is taking place. Financial planning and the arrangements to use the available resources wisely are outstanding. In the past, the school was in the difficult position of having a substantial deficit budget. The good housekeeping of the headteacher and governing body has enabled this position to be fully resolved and they have brought about significant improvements in the quality of resources to support pupils' learning. There are very good mechanisms for communicating with parents and carers to keep them informed about the school's activities and about their children's progress. This is typified by an excellent weekly newsletter. For their part, parents and carers raise substantial sums to support the work of the school. The school has outstanding links with community organisations, such as the local playgroup.

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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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	1
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?	3
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.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 February 2007

Dear Children,

Hopton C of E VC Primary School, Thelnetham Road, Hopton, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2QY

I am writing to thank you for making my recent visit to inspect your school such an enjoyable experience. It was a great pleasure to talk with you about your education and to see how much you enjoy your lessons. I think your school is good and I know that many of you and your parents and carers think so too. This is because:

- Your school is exceptionally good at taking care of you. The staff make sure you feel safe and that you enjoy your lessons and other activities.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants are very good at giving you all the help you need and making sure you do as well as you can.
- Your behaviour is outstandingly good. You work hard and are very kind and helpful towards each other.
- Mrs Harding and your school governors are passionate about making your school even better and are good at making sure that you have everything you need to learn well.

To help to improve your learning I have asked Mrs Harding and the staff to:

- Make sure that when they mark your work they provide the information you need to make it even better.
- Ensure that the work they give you to do in each subject is exactly what you need to continue with the good progress you are making.

For your part, you can take greater care to ensure that your writing is neat and you present your work tidily.

I am sure you will continue to enjoy your learning and to do as well as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector