



Wetheringsett Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 124746
Local Authority SUFFOLK
Inspection number 293098
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Milton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wetheringsett
Age range of pupils	4–11		Suffolk IP14 5PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01449 766215
Number on roll (school)	64	Fax number	01449 766215
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms S Goodrich
		Headteacher	Mrs L Jestico
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wetheringsett Church of England Primary is a small school with three mixed age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is well above average. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wetheringsett is a good school with some outstanding features and is committed to becoming even better. Parents are very supportive of the school. One wrote, 'Although small, Wetheringsett's ambitions are not constrained by this'. The headteacher, supported by an excellent governing body and willing staff, manages the school's resources effectively to provide high quality care for pupils and a good range of learning opportunities. The school's self-evaluation is good. The school development plan has an ambitious range of improvements that the school is working on. Some parts of the plan are not sufficiently precise and do not show how teachers will know when the improvements have been completed.

Children's standards on entry fluctuate from year to year from well below to well above average, an effect of the small number of pupils in each year group. During the Foundation Stage, children's achievement is good because of the well planned curriculum, good assessment of pupils' progress and effective use of teaching assistants. Pupils continue to achieve well during Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 6, standards are above national averages in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, because teaching is good in most lessons. Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education by their good achievement in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) together with their outstanding personal development. Although pupils' progress from Years 1 to 6 is good, their progress in different subjects and classes ranges from satisfactory to very good because pupils' progress is not checked consistently. Some pupils are clear about the specific actions they need to take to improve their learning although others are not as sure, which slows their progress.

The curriculum is good. A very high proportion of pupils attend an outstanding range of lunchtime and after school clubs. The very wide range of sporting activities makes a major contribution to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Exceptional links with other schools and organisations, including the local football club, extend the range of experiences pupils have. Pupils have many opportunities for involvement in the community through the exemplary school council and the very strong links with the village. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their academic progress reflects this. The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance for pupils. The school has an all encompassing positive Christian ethos. Pupils feel extremely safe at school and know how to keep safe in a range of different circumstances.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. There has been very good improvement in science and ICT standards. It has a good capacity for further improvement because of the shared vision and commitment of staff and a governing body that brings a wide range of expertise to help the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils make good progress in each subject in every class by consistently and accurately monitoring all subjects.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to improve their standards of work in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the school development plan so that it shows clearly what the school wishes to improve and how it will know when the improvements have been achieved

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2006, children in the Foundation Stage made good progress. They entered school with knowledge and skills below those expected nationally. By the start of Year 1, they reached the standards expected in most areas, except in writing and creative development.

The school sets itself challenging targets for pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6, which pupils mostly reach. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are typically average. From Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils achieve very well in science and their standards are consistently above average because of very good subject leadership. Pupils work on practical activities most successfully in the classroom, in the school's grounds and elsewhere. Standards are above average in singing and local history because of good levels of staff expertise.

Boys, girls, and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities all achieve well. Although pupils' progress is good overall, their progress in different subjects and classes ranges from satisfactory to very good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. In Reception children make good progress with their personal and social development. One parent wrote, 'We are particularly pleased with the way that self confidence and self esteem are nurtured'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils, for example, reflect thoughtfully about the theme of Remembrance. The school has taken exciting steps to develop pupils' understanding of cultures in Britain, including the introduction of Bangra dancing in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life and their attendance is above average. Pupils' behaviour is also excellent and reflects their outstanding moral and social development. Pupils' excellent community involvement includes playing sports with other schools, and strong links with the parish church and the village show and fete.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good in most lessons because, for example, teaching assistants work effectively with particular groups of pupils and planning ensures that lessons meet their learning needs. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and computers. Lessons have a brisk pace and include a variety of tasks and activities that pupils enjoy and consequently they make good progress. Pupils respond with interest to teachers' challenges. In an outstanding lesson, the sequence of activities helped pupils to make very good progress as they wrote their own poems. They also thought about how they could reach their own targets for improvement through their writing. A weakness in some lessons is that some pupils are not clear about how to improve their work. There are occasional moments when teaching assistants are not deployed effectively when teachers are teaching whole classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum helps pupils make good progress and maintain their great interest in learning. In the past year, good improvements have been made to the curriculum because of the mixed age composition of classes. There are good links between some subjects but the school is aware that more links are needed to make the curriculum even more interesting and relevant for pupils.

A variety of subjects help pupils gain a deep understanding about healthy lifestyles, including science and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The school changes the outstanding range of lunchtime and after school clubs every half term to ensure that the clubs appeal to the school's full age range in the course of a year. All classes have French lessons and Year 6 pupils attend a residential course organised with three other small schools. There are strengths in the provision for physical education, music, ICT and science because of the expertise of teachers, teaching assistants, a parent and staff from outside the school. The provision for sports includes pupils' involvement in more than ten tournaments each year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. There is excellent care for pupils. Because pupils feel secure and valued, they develop exceptional self confidence and want to achieve as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have targets for improvement that are reviewed each term and much adult support, which results in their consistently good progress. There are strong links with the pre school that is located next to the school. There are excellent links with the nearby secondary school that pupils join. These ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils.

In 2006, advice from the secondary school helped a Year 6 pupil to reach a very high standard in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads by example and like all staff, rises to the challenge of taking on new responsibilities. The school monitors many aspects of its provision well and as a result, good improvements have been made to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and to the curriculum. The leadership of other staff is developing well although there is some inconsistency because of recent changes of responsibility. Consequently, staff monitor pupils' standards more effectively in some subjects than others.

Governance is outstanding. The governing body is very actively involved in policymaking and strategic planning and has had a major impact on several aspects of the school's work, including the ICT provision and accommodation for the Foundation Stage. There is a wide range of self-evaluation activities that include all of the key people with an involvement in the school. As a result, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. This self-evaluation does not pinpoint with sufficient precision some of the targets for improvement in the school development plan.

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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?	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	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	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	1
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.

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

10 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Wetheringsett Church of England Primary School, Church Street, Wetheringsett, IP14 5PJ

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently and meeting you, your headteacher, the staff and some of the governors. Thank you for making me so welcome. It was wonderful to hear you sing during your assemblies about remembrance. It was interesting to hear that you like school so much, you feel very safe, you think that the school council does a good job, and that you can use the blog on the school's website.

Your school is a friendly place that you enjoy. You do well with your reading, writing and mathematics. You do even better in science because you carry out a wide range of practical work. The school makes good use of computers to help you learn. Many of you take part in lunchtime and after school clubs and are involved in teams at sports tournaments and matches. The school's links with other organisations increase your opportunities to learn through, for example, the Year 6 residential trip with three other small schools. The teachers and teaching assistants take very good care of you.

The main things to do to make the school even better are to:

- make sure that you make good progress in each subject in every class;
- ensure that you all know how to improve your work in reading, writing and mathematics.

I have also asked your headteacher to improve aspects of the school's planning so, for example, that the school knows more clearly when improvements have been completed.

You can help the school get even better by continuing to behave so well, by working hard and by thinking a little more about the things you can do to improve your work.

With best wishes for the rest of the school year.

Mike Milton (Lead inspector)