



Blundeston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 124751
Local Authority SUFFOLK
Inspection number 293100
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Blundeston, Lowestoft
Age range of pupils	4–9		Suffolk NR32 5AX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01502 730488
Number on roll (school)	124	Fax number	01502 732763
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Neil Glendinning
		Headteacher	Mrs Katrin Schonhut
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Blundeston is a village school drawing from the local area, although 37 per cent of children are from outside its catchment. Nearly all are White British and none speak English as an additional language. Children start on a part-time basis till the term in which they are five when they attend full-time. Attainment on entry varies and in some year groups it is below national expectations whilst in others it is similar to nationally expected levels. Though pupils are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, the proportion eligible for a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is also below average. Two pupils currently have statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides pupils with a rounded education that is underpinned by a good quality curriculum and which promotes their personal and academic development well. The school has improved well since its last inspection when it was judged as satisfactory. This is due in no small measure to good leadership and management and the sustained focus on high standards provided by the headteacher. Particularly significant improvement has been made in the Foundation Stage which now provides an outstanding quality of education. Pupils in the Reception class make exceptionally good progress and reach high standards by the end of their first year in school. Pupils in the rest of the school achieve well and standards are above those expected for their age by the end of Year 4. This is because of consistently good teaching across the school. Results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 vary from average to above average. These variations are due mostly to differences in the attainment on entry of different year groups and, in some year groups, the impact of pupils joining from other schools. Lower attainers, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make particularly good progress because of the effective support they receive from teaching assistants, and the school's use of outside agencies. Higher attainers do not always make as good progress as others and the school is aware that more pupils could be attaining the higher levels in national assessments. The school has begun to establish specific provision for more able pupils but they do not always have work that stretches them enough. The school sets challenging targets, which it achieves, but could be more ambitious for pupils near the top end of the ability range. Nonetheless pupils' overall achievement is good in English, mathematics and science, although many have trouble with spelling.

The school provides a very positive ethos so that pupils new to the school settle down quickly and begin to achieve well. This ethos, underpinned by strong Christian values, promotes good personal development which contributes particularly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils enjoy school and lessons immensely and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and make enthusiastic efforts to adopt these. The good care, support and guidance ensure that pupils are very well cared for and looked after. Hence they feel safe and secure. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties receive excellent support and guidance. Good behaviour contributes to pupils' sense of well-being. However, attendance, though satisfactory, is declining, mostly because of a minority of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. This has a detrimental impact on learning. The school is strengthening its attendance policy to stem the decline but knows it needs to do more. The leadership and management are well aware of the issues that need to be tackled. Checking of the school's work is regular and rigorous and governors are also involved in asking searching questions about the school's performance. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, the improvements made since the last inspection and the willingness of staff to work together towards common goals place it in a good position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable more pupils to reach higher levels by ensuring that the more able are suitably challenged.
- Develop pupils' skills in spelling so that they make fewer errors when writing.
- Reverse the decline in attendance by discouraging parents from taking their children on holiday during term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 were above average in 2005 but average in 2006, when a relatively high proportion of the year group had learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment by the end of Year 4 is above average and progress is good. School data shows that lower attainers, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, make consistently good progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2, but this is not always the case for able pupils. In the Foundation Stage achievement is excellent across all areas of learning. As a result, the standards pupils reach are comfortably above national and local averages. They develop a good knowledge of letter sounds, which prepares them well for work in Key Stage 1. Those in the current Year 1 are building well on the high standards achieved at the end of their Reception Year. Pupils across the school have well developed speaking and listening skills but their spelling is weaker. They have lots of ideas about what they should write.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love school and greatly enjoy lessons. However, their attendance is affected by holidays during term time. For some pupils this has a marked effect on progress. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils play and work safely taking care not to hurt themselves and others. They show very high levels of respect for the values, beliefs and traditions of others. Their social and moral development is excellent. Pupils work very well together and develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. These, together with their good progress in English, mathematics and science, contribute well to preparing them for their next step in education and their future lives. Pupils know that being active and eating healthily are good for them and they try to lead a healthy life. However, they find it hard to resist chocolates and crisps when these are included in their packed lunches. Pupils make a particularly good contribution to their school community as class monitors, play leaders or school council representatives. They willingly raise funds for charity to help the local and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good across the school. It is outstanding in the Foundation Stage, where activities are exceptionally well developed to encourage pupils to learn through personal experience and by using their imaginations. In Years 1 to 4 teachers plan lessons well and provide work that is challenging for most pupils. There are, however, occasions when able pupils are not stretched enough. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide good support to lower attainers and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Introductions to lessons are well structured so that pupils understand what they have to do. Questioning is precise and probing so that pupils are made to think about their work. Interesting activities promote good engagement and enjoyment. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards at the starts of lessons but less so at the end when summarising what has been learned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In the Foundation Stage it is stimulating and exciting. The use of the outdoor area is exceptionally well planned to support pupils' progress across all six areas of learning. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and is mostly well developed to meet the range of needs in the school. Good arrangements are in place to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school is increasingly extending the curriculum to meet the needs of able pupils but there is scope for further development here. There are excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies, extra-curricular activities and mainstream subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good care is provided for pupils on a day-to-day basis. Where they have personal, social or emotional difficulties, they are exceptionally well supported. The school has good links with outside agencies which it uses very effectively to support the well-being of those most at risk of being left behind in academic and social terms. Good attention is paid to health and safety. Whilst the school monitors its attendance well, and knows the reasons for absence, the strategies to deter parents from taking their children on holiday during term time have not been effective enough.

Pupils receive good support for academic development. Their books are thoroughly marked and good feedback is provided in written comments. However, these tend to be fuller and more constructive for lower and average attaining pupils than for higher attainers. Targets in English and mathematics are now well in place and being used effectively to support progress. Pupils know their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school owes much of its success to the good leadership of the headteacher. She has established good teamwork amongst her staff and effective working relationships with the governing body. Hence, there is not only a willingness to work towards continuous improvement of the school but also a clear and common understanding of the school's key goals and objectives. The deputy headteacher provides good leadership in her own right. Other coordinators also lead and manage their areas of responsibility well. The headteacher and her deputy monitor the work of the school well and provide useful feedback to staff on where improvements are needed. A good system for tracking pupils' progress is in place. Good analysis of data helps staff to plan future actions. For example, data and information from monitoring activities was used to identify that pupils' problem solving skills were weaker than other areas of mathematics. Effective strategies were then put in place to address this. Pupils are attaining better as a result. Governors oversee the school's work well and take an active interest in it. They also make sure the school is well resourced and money spent where it will have most impact. This coupled with the good achievement of pupils means the school provides good value for money. Parents are very supportive of the school and pleased with their children's progress.

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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	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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.

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	2
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

9th March 2007

Dear Pupils

Church Road, Blundeston, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 5AX

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and most of all I enjoyed talking to you. I would like to thank you very much for making me feel welcome. In particular, I was very impressed with how mature and responsible you were. I am pleased to say the school provides you with a good quality education.

I saw a number of things that were good, including ways in which you help to make the school a better place.

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- Children in the Reception class make outstanding progress because they have a stimulating and exciting environment.
- You have excellent social skills, know right from wrong and show great respect for the beliefs and ways of life of people different from yourselves.
- You love school.
- Teaching is good and you enjoy excellent relationships with staff.
- You are very well cared for and if anyone of you is having particular problems or going through a bad time you receive excellent support.
- The school is well led and managed and the headteacher works hard to get the best results for you.

There are some things that could be better. These include.

- Making sure that you attend regularly including not having holidays during term time.
- Ensuring that work is challenging for those of you who are more able.
- Improving your spelling.

You can certainly help the school to improve by working on your spelling.

I wish you all well in the future.

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector