



# St Botolph's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124758  
**Local Authority** SUFFOLK  
**Inspection number** 293104  
**Inspection dates** 5–6 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Lemon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Back Hills
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Botesdale, Diss
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Norfolk IP22 1DW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01379 890181
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	230	<b>Fax number</b>	01379 890213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs S Goodwin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr N Rhodes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Botolph's is a rural primary school serving four villages whose populations have a wide range of incomes and housing. However, most pupils come from more affluent home backgrounds. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and, overall their attainment on entry is average. There are 27 children in the Nursery and 11 in the Reception year. The numbers admitted each year have varied considerably, leading to mixed year classes within key stages as well as two mixed key stage classes containing pupils from Years 2 and 3. While some pupils are admitted and leave school other than at the usual time, the numbers involved are low. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is also low.

The school has links with the local playgroup and after-school club. There are links also with sports clubs and the school is in a sports partnership with the local high school. The school has been awarded an Active Mark for its physical education and sports provision.

## 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 this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than 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 the leadership and management of the school.

The school provides an acceptable standard of education through the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning, a good curriculum and satisfactory care, guidance and support for the pupils. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. An above average proportion reaches the levels expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. In doing so, they have made satisfactory progress. The vast majority start out with at least average attainment as a result of the sound progress made in the Foundation Stage where provision is satisfactory. However, a good proportion of pupils with above average ability did not reach the higher levels expected in 2006, particularly at the end of Year 6, and for these pupils progress was inadequate. While there are some extenuating circumstances as to why a few pupils' results were lower than predicted, this is not enough to explain the whole picture.

While teaching is satisfactory overall, there are aspects of its quality that the school needs to improve. Too often lesson activities do not motivate pupils highly enough to increase their rate of progress. Challenges that really stretch pupils, particularly the more able, happen in the well-planned lessons but these are too dispersed for good learning to be consistent across the school. Assessment is not always used effectively to plan demanding tasks or to identify appropriate targets for pupils to achieve. Therefore, teaching is frequently not well placed to focus sharply on all pupils achieving the levels of which they are capable.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive and they behave well in lessons and in their free time. They find the motivation readily to contribute generously in school and beyond. The school cares for its pupils well and they are kept safe. The good curriculum promotes personal development and healthy lifestyles. However, pupils are not as well supported in their academic progress, although they are prepared soundly for the future.

The school's effectiveness is impaired because of inadequate leadership and management. While many parents expressed positive views of the school, a minority had concerns about the progress made by their children and about school leadership. The school's approach to checking its effectiveness is inadequate and has led to inaccurate evaluations. This has hindered leadership in setting a clear direction for the school, focused on high standards and achievement. Neither the observation of teaching nor the tracking of pupils' performance is managed systematically and rigorously. As a result, too little progress has been made in eliminating the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the provision for more able pupils, highlighted by the last inspection. This combination of inadequate self-evaluation and lack of progress on

key areas for development means that the school is currently not demonstrating sufficient capacity to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the school's leaders set a clear direction and high expectations by using systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's work to identify accurately its priorities for improvement.
- Improve achievement and raise standards by setting challenging targets for all pupils based on comprehensive use of rigorous analysis of their performance.
- Strengthen teaching and learning by ensuring all lessons set high expectations for all pupils and provide them with work that stimulates them to learn effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils' progress is satisfactory. The very small minority of pupils with learning difficulties make sound progress as a result of the close support they are given. In 2006, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing and mathematics were above average and were average in reading. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was just average overall, but slightly better in mathematics. However, in reverse of the national trend, Year 2 boys out-performed girls by a considerable margin, achieving above average standards in all areas, although the reasons for this have not been analysed by the school. Standards were average by the end of Year 6 in English and science and above average in mathematics. However, more able pupils did less well in achieving the higher Level 5 and this underachievement is due to school targets which lack sufficient challenge and also to some teaching and learning where expectations are not high enough, especially for more able pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is slightly better than in most schools. They develop a good sense of social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness through many activities in lessons, and through special events, visitors, trips and weeks. They say that there is very little bullying. Many help in school as monitors for the library or by recycling paper. A lot of pupils make their views known as members of the school council and improve the environment through their work on the Eco-Committee. Pupils understand well how to lead a healthy lifestyle, which is very well reinforced by the personal and social curriculum, by many physical activities in and out of school hours, and by events that focus on aspects of healthy eating. Pupils feel well prepared and are confident that they will settle successfully in their next school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school, but is satisfactory overall. The variability is largely as a result of insufficient monitoring of lessons and the lack of development of more consistent and effective practice. In some lessons, pupils are faced with good challenges in well planned and organised activities. They are stimulated by this and the good rapport with the teacher ensures learning is exciting. Sometimes, however, work is not planned with sufficient thoroughness to sustain good pace and real interest in learning. Furthermore, as the use of targets is not developed sufficiently, pupils are not always being fully stretched, particularly those who are potentially higher-attaining pupils. This results in some inadequate teaching and learning which leads to small pockets of unsatisfactory progress. Teachers sometimes talk for too long, although, on many occasions, they get pupils to work in small groups or pairs, which improves their interest and enjoyment.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development and it is adequate in promoting academic progress, in literacy and numeracy in particular. Work and activities are generally good because of strong links made between subjects and the additional activities, including French in Years 5 and 6. The high quality of art work is very evident in many areas of the school. Computing skills are often broadened and practised as part of many lessons.

Many pupils attend the wide variety of clubs at lunchtimes and after school. Learning in various subjects is made enjoyable by numerous trips away from school. Visitors, including the church rector, and several theatre groups, add to pupils' learning in many subjects. Special weeks and days help to break up the routine of learning with activities that have focused on, for example, healthy living, thinking skills, and the school's environment.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Overall, pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school meets current government requirements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils are safe and they say they feel secure in school. They know who to talk to if they have personal problems, and feel confident to do so. Teachers and classroom support staff know their pupils well and do much to support them in personal matters. This contributes much to pupils enjoying school.

Pupils' academic progress is assessed satisfactorily. However, assessment is not used well enough to set challenging targets. Many pupils are not clear about what they

need to do to improve their work. Although the school knows which pupils are particularly talented, too little is done to motivate them to work harder or to provide activities that would truly stretch their abilities.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher and his senior leaders have been effective in supporting pupils' pastoral care and personal development. Furthermore, the wider curriculum has been developed well. However, this is not always so in setting clear direction for raising achievement and standards. The expectations in many parts of the school in relation to pupils' achievement are not set high enough. The work of monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance and educational provision, especially the quality of teaching and learning, are currently ineffective. The headteacher and senior leaders, as well as those with responsibility for subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy, are currently not decisive in taking action on raising standards. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate in key respects and has failed to highlight key priorities.

The governors have not always been provided with the information on pupils' performance to enable them to ask searching questions. They have not followed up with sufficient rigour the school's progress on improving teaching and learning. This was an issue highlighted by the previous inspection for the school to improve. Governors are, however, capable of challenging the school and, where they can, do this robustly.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
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	3
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

7 February 2007

Dear Pupils

St Botolph's Church of England Primary School, Back Hills, Botesdale, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1DW

Thank you for your very warm welcome when we visited your school. We really appreciated your interest and friendliness. We also enjoyed talking with you and greatly appreciated the discussion with members of the school council.

These are the things we found were best about your school:

- In your work, most of you achieve the standards expected for your age
- You all behave well in lessons and are prepared to work hard
- We were impressed by how many of you very willingly help out in school and with good causes, like paper recycling
- All staff look after you well and keep you safe
- We thought it was good that you have many extra activities, which most of you take part in, offering you are a good choice of interesting and enjoyable things to do.

This is what we have said your school should do to improve:

- We have asked the headteacher to give more attention to how much progress you are making because there are areas where it could be better
- We asked teachers to look at ways of making all of your lessons as good as the best so that you gain more enjoyment from learning, get more from your work and make better progress
- We thought these two points to be very important and, therefore, urgent, so arrangements have been made for inspectors to return in a few months time to see how well your teachers are dealing with them.

Many thanks for your friendly welcome and help during the inspection.

Best wishes

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector