

Two Village Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132234
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	293995
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trudi Swettenham
Headteacher	Mrs Pat Blackwell
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Mayes Lane Ramsey Harwich Essex CO12 5EL
Telephone number	01255 880268
Fax number	01255 886325

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average size primary school with the majority of pupils coming from the villages of Ramsey and Little Oakley. The Tendring area in which the school is situated is recognised as an area of rural deprivation. Pupils come from families representing a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage receiving free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies quite considerably year on year. Many, but not all, enter school with knowledge, skills and understanding below that frequently seen in four-year-olds. Currently, the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average and one pupil has a statement for their needs. Nearly all pupils come from White British background, although one or two pupils each year speak English as an additional language. The school moved to its current new building two years ago following the closure of the two schools in Ramsey and Little Oakley.

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 where the excellent personal development and care for each child are central to the work of staff and governors. It is a calm, happy place where pupils do well. Parents show that they are pleased with what the school offers, summed up by a comment, 'This school really proves that 'Every Child Matters''. Excellent improvements since the last inspection, together with outstanding leadership by the headteacher and the commitment of staff, governors and parents, indicate that the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and pupils' learning builds successfully from this. Pupils achieve well and make good progress so that by the time they leave school, they typically reach average standards and sometimes beyond. Standards in mathematics are not as high as in other subjects, particularly in Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils achieve well because teaching is good and they respond well to the challenges set. Learning builds systematically over time because the good range of stimulating activities helps to maintain pupils' interests and the work matches their capabilities. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should learn are high but fall slightly in relation to pupils' handwriting and how they present their work. Consequently, the work in pupils' books is not always as good as it should be.

The good curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy and make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Full use is made of the school, its grounds and resources so that many tasks involve activity beyond the classroom. Because pupils thoroughly enjoy what they are doing, they behave exceptionally well and develop particularly good attitudes to learning. They make good friends and support others by taking on a good range of responsibilities. Pupils feel well looked after and confident in their own abilities. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Good leadership, management and governance ensure that the school provides good value for money. The exceptional commitment of the headteacher in developing Two Village School on a new site, together with the hard work of staff and governors, has served pupils and the community well. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school because self-evaluation, especially that undertaken by the headteacher and her deputy, is exceptionally good. Priorities for development are accurate and appropriate. They closely match with inspection findings.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This helps to prepare them for their future economic well-being. Children respond enthusiastically in Reception and, by the time they enter Year 1, many reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Over recent years, results of the Year 2 national teacher assessments have been at least average in reading, writing and mathematics and sometimes higher. In 2006, Year 2 standards were above average in writing, which reflects the school's work in this area, slightly above in reading and broadly average in mathematics. There was a lower than average percentage of Level 3s in reading and mathematics.

The 2006 Year 6 national test results were above average overall but slightly weaker in mathematics than English and science, where fewer pupils gained a Level 5. The school sets very challenging targets for English and mathematics and almost meets them. Work of pupils currently in Years 2 and 6, and records of their achievements, indicate that their good progress has led to average standards from a lower than average baseline when they started school. Mathematics and handwriting are not as strong as other areas of learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who experience difficulty with their learning make good progress and frequently reach higher standards than seen nationally for these groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The strong school ethos creates a calm environment in which pupils feel happy and do well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a particularly high standard. Excellent relationships are a result of high expectations and the respect shown for pupils and between adults. Pupils learn from what they see around them and how they are treated. They are involved in developing the class rules, follow school routines well and act sensibly and safely. Older pupils readily care for younger ones, for example at playtime, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 run the daily Healthy Tuck Shop. Members of the gardening club grow vegetables and take them to the kitchen for cooking. The focus on healthy eating and pupils' involvement in suggesting lunch menus have resulted in a significant increase in the number of pupils eating a healthy school lunch. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and having a good diet. They are very aware of the needs of others and recognise unacceptable behaviour and the impact their actions have on others. They contribute very well to the community, for example, by working with the local authority country parks officer to develop a local country park, representing the school in local team sports and by performing in the school choir and band. Overall attendance is good. However, despite good work by staff to encourage regular attendance, a significant minority of parents take holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A key strength of teaching is the way in which staff develop enjoyment and excitement in pupils' learning. Pupils agreed, saying, 'Teachers make you want to learn you do fun things here'. Teachers' planning of lessons is good so work builds systematically on previous learning and expectations are high in lessons. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they will do and learn, and develop confidence as they succeed in their work. Teachers' questioning is of a high standard and particularly effective in developing pupils' thinking. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), for example, the interactive whiteboards as a teaching aid and the computers and video cameras as tools for learning. Staff use a good range of teaching styles. The presentation of pupils' work is not always as good as it should be because teachers' expectations are not high enough and they do not always clearly indicate in their marking what pupils should do. However, the way teachers assess pupils' work is good overall.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A major strength of the curriculum is reflected in the way pupils find learning fun and enjoy their time in school. Teachers frequently use the school grounds, visits and visitors very effectively to stimulate learning and pupils respond very well. The activities presented are aimed at different learning styles, for example the use of multi-media resources to stimulate interest in writing, particularly that of boys. However, staff have not been as successful in developing the mathematics curriculum to ensure consistently good progress. Many of the enrichment activities develop pupils' spiritual and cultural development as they learn about ways of living different from their own. Music is a strength of the school with many extra-curricular activities encouraging performance in the community. Pupils' social development is also enhanced through taking part in team building activities, residential visits and playing competitive games. The successful personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. Improvements in provision and resources for ICT have been instrumental in raising standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding guidance, support and care given to pupils help them to develop into confident and happy learners. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Those who find learning challenging are well supported by class teachers who provide appropriately demanding work, and by teaching assistants who use their expertise well to help pupils overcome their difficulties. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Staff know the pupils extremely well and are quick to identify any who are failing to thrive. Their concerns are quickly acted upon and additional expertise is sought when necessary. Targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy, help pupils to develop their existing strengths and show them the next steps in learning. These have been particularly successful in raising standards in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has shown excellent leadership and management in developing the school on its current site. Pupils and staff have settled well, and a stimulating learning environment has been quickly established. Staff work well as a team and morale is high. They clearly share the headteacher's vision for the school and the desire to continue to improve their practice and raise standards further. This is helped by their good systems for regularly checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. They respond well to the extremely good lead in self-evaluation set by the senior staff. The new system of tracking pupils' progress and setting targets has proved effective in raising standards in English and is now being applied to mathematics. The views and ideas of all members of the school community are taken into consideration and acted upon, when appropriate. Governors provide good support and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. Their effective monitoring helps them to ask informed questions and contribute well in committee meetings. The effective leadership and management of the deputy headteacher and subject leaders has resulted in a stimulating curriculum, better teaching and assessment and pupils' good achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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?	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	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.

Annex A

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

9 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Two Village Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Ramsey, Harwich, Essex CO12 5HP

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I recently visited your school and for speaking to me about your work. I was very pleased to see that you enjoy school and are happy there. I think you go to a good school and I have listed below some of the things I particularly like.

- You try hard and make good progress in your learning.
- You like school and behave exceptionally well because you are interested in what you are doing.
- You take part in lots of activities and particularly enjoy the clubs, sports, music, art and ICT.
- You get on well with each other and make good friends.
- Most of you come to school regularly and on time. Well done! Perhaps you can remind those who look after you how important this is so you do not miss any lessons.
- All the staff work well together as a team and teaching is good.
- Staff look after you extremely well and you feel safe in school. I was pleased to hear that you know how to deal with any unacceptable behaviour and would talk to a member of staff if you had problems.

Mrs Blackwell leads and manages the school exceptionally well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They are all keen to make the school even better and have agreed to help you to improve your mathematics. They will also be expecting you to present your work better and improve your handwriting. I know you will respond well to their efforts and do as well as you can.

I left your school feeling sure that it will continue to improve, and I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith Lead inspector