

Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124592
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	302141
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Arundel
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Fryer
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 1999
School address	Hogg Lane Ilketshall St Lawrence Beccles Suffolk NR34 8ND
Telephone number	01986 781315
Fax number	01986 781739

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over two days.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a rural area. There is little pupil mobility, most are White British and none are learning English as an additional language. No pupils have statements of special educational need and fewer than usual have learning difficulties. Half the teachers and 70% of governors have joined the school in the last two years. There is a pre-school facility on site which shares accommodation and resources with the school's nursery class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school, providing satisfactory value for money.

Following the previous inspection there was a period of decline in the quality and effectiveness of the school's provision. The current headteacher has been in post for almost two years. Her appointment followed a time of instability for the school with significant staff changes, including a period without a headteacher and then two different temporary headteachers. Over the last two years the school has steadily improved, and pupils receive a sound basis for their future learning and well-being.

Children join the school with a broadly expected range of skills across the areas of learning. Most pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress here and throughout the school; including pupils who find learning difficult and the most confident children who find learning easier. A significant minority of parents expressed concerns about children's progress in Key Stage 2, but this is not substantiated by the school's data. There is no consistent pattern of underachievement for any particular group of pupils, although there are examples of individual pupils making insufficient progress in reading and mathematics during Key Stage 2.

Pupils' satisfactory progress is a direct reflection of the satisfactory teaching evident in the school, its satisfactory curriculum, and its satisfactory leadership and management. The headteacher and chair of governors share a vision for improving the school and have introduced several important systems and increased staff accountability. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are tackling the right priorities. However, the improvements to the curriculum, the introduction of systematic tracking of pupils' progress, increased expectations of teachers' planning and use of assessment are too recent to have had a full impact upon pupils' learning. Staff and governors are developing their understanding of the school but subject leaders remain too dependent on the headteacher for taking the school forward. Consequently, the school's capacity for further improvement is currently judged still to be satisfactory despite the steps forward the school has taken.

Staff and pupils enjoy good relationships which make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school, their good behaviour, and their readiness to learn. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to become involved in evaluating their own learning are often missed. While satisfactory, the pace of lessons and expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough to accelerate learning. The curriculum is increasingly matched to pupils' interests and abilities. They particularly enjoy learning outside and the special curriculum weeks. Much work has been done to plan for links between subjects and this adds interest for pupils. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to use key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils receive good support and guidance as they move from this stage of their education to the next and links with partner schools are good.

Pupils are well cared for. They feel safe and parents value the school's family ethos. This helps older pupils to make good progress in caring for younger pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. They have a good understanding that there are 'not so good' and 'brilliant' moral choices and satisfactory cultural understanding. When afforded the opportunity pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities such as being a peer buddy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure key literacy and numeracy skills are strengthened by consistent use in other subjects.
- Involve children more in knowing what they are achieving and how to make their work even better.
- Increase the pace and level of challenge in lessons, including raising expectations of pupils' independent learning.
- Ensure that subject co-ordinators increase their role and accountability and initiate and lead change as the school develops.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to school is close to that expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage and join Key Stage 1 with broadly expected levels of skill across the areas of learning. Satisfactory progress continues in Key Stage 1 and pupils reach average standards by the end of the key stage. There are examples of individual pupils making good progress within Key Stage 1. Pupils at different ability levels in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress overall, although progress varies between subjects and between year groups. There are examples of individual pupils making insufficient progress in mathematics and reading recently. Nevertheless, there is no consistent pattern of underachievement for any group of pupils and standards reached are average overall in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with some strengths. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted soundly overall. The headteacher and chair of governors recognise that preparation for cultural diversity needs to be improved. The school has effective systems to manage pupils' behaviour, ensuring it is good. Pupils enjoy many of the activities they do in school, especially when they are learning outdoors. This is reflected in their good rate of attendance. They willingly participate in physical activity but their personal choices do not reflect a clear understanding of the principles of healthy eating. Pupils enjoy their roles as 'buddies' or school councillors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. There are strengths in teachers' management of pupils' behaviour which is helped by the good relationships between pupils and staff. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and teachers usually have sound expectations of what pupils should be learning. Teaching is best when expectations are high and a good pace of learning is sustained. This type of teaching accelerates learning but does not happen often enough to raise standards and progress over time. Teachers' marking sometimes specifies

what pupils have achieved and what they need to do next but is not consistent in this respect. There are too few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning, and for them to develop their own ideas and learn through them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including activities in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory and improving; it is making a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning overall. The school has made considerable improvements to the curriculum over the last two years and it now meets national requirements. Work has focused on ensuring that pupils' skills are developed sequentially and adding interest to activities by making more links between subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy special activity weeks, such as 'monster writing' and 'grounds' week. While opportunities for pupils to use key literacy and numeracy skills in the full range of subjects are now planned for more often, this is still inconsistent, and least effective in numeracy, which reduces the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement and standards. Pupils' personal development is supported well through the strengths in relationships in the school. The structured teaching time for this area is currently being developed. There is good provision for extra-curricular clubs and enrichment work for pupils of all abilities, which includes plenty of sports and a Latin club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care and pastoral support for all pupils are good. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate the school's ethos. Pupils understandably feel safe and valued in this nurturing environment. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress over time, and identifying any potential underachievement, are good. However, teachers' use of this information varies. Consistent target setting for individual pupils or groups of pupils is an area for continued development. Guidance for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. The school makes effective use of links with other professionals in order to support these pupils. Strong links between the nursery and pre-school, help to ease children's smooth transition into school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. Concerns raised by some parents during the inspection about their child's progress have not been substantiated; however, the inspection agrees with those parents who expressed some disquiet about the pace and clarity of explanation pupils receive in some lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, strongly supported by the chair of governors, has a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. This is reflected in the well structured plan for school improvement. Under their leadership much improvement has taken place over the last two years. Parents write that they are 'very confident' in the headteacher's leadership and that they appreciate her 'considerable efforts and hard work to successfully move the school forward'. An accurate assessment of the school's strengths, weaknesses and stage of development is shared with staff. Subject leaders have made a good start to developing their roles and have begun to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Nevertheless, they are not yet undertaking a full leadership role.

The headteacher sets challenging targets for pupils and for whole school development, but staff remain dependent on her to do so.

Governance is satisfactory overall. The chair of governors provides a robust steer for fellow governors and is supported increasingly effectively by some. However, several governors are new to their role, and it is too soon for them to play a full and active part.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary, Beccles, NR34 8ND

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed speaking to you, watching lessons and seeing your work, very much. A special thank you to the pupils who met with me on Tuesday, and helped me find out about the school. You are lucky to attend such a happy school. Here are some of the good things about your school:

- you behave well and work hard in lessons
- you enjoy learning, so you are not often away
- you enjoy the activities you do especially when you are learning outdoors or during special activity weeks
- teachers and teaching assistants are friendly and helpful, so you feel safe in school;
- all the staff care about you
- you look after each other well
- your headteacher, and the chair of governors, have good ideas about how to make the school even better.

I have asked your school to make some things even better. The most important things are to:

- make sure you use your mathematics and English skills more in other subjects
- help you to be more involved in recognising what you have learnt and how to make your work even better
- make sure the work is always challenging to you, that explanations from the teacher don't go on too long and you get more chances to learn through your own ideas and research.

I have also asked all the teachers to share more ideas for how to keep the school getting better and better.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin (Lead inspector)