

# Elsworth CofE VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110830
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310431
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	132
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gaynor Clements
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Theresa Thornton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Broad End Elsworth Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB23 4JD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01954 267272
<b>Fax number</b>	01954 268003

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small rural primary school serves the villages of Elsworth, Boxworth, Conington and Knapwell, although at least half its pupils come from further afield through parental choice. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage and children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is generally above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very low. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has the Healthy Schools awards and the Eco School Bronze Award. A new headteacher took up post in January 2008. A rebuilding programme is currently underway to provide an additional classroom and shared outdoor area for the EYFS and Key Stage 1. There is a pre-school on the school site but it is not managed by the governing body.

## 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 that is very popular with parents. Many wrote to express their appreciation and made comments such as 'the school provides a caring and loving environment' and 'we are very lucky to have found such a good school'.

The school has a strong Christian ethos and its motto, 'loving, trusting, sharing', underpins the excellent quality of care it provides for its pupils. Staff know and value pupils as individuals and this contributes significantly to their outstanding personal development. A high level of parental support is also a key factor in pupils' excellent attitudes to school and their eagerness to learn. Pupils say that they 'have lots of good friends and lots of nice things to do', and they enjoy school a great deal. They learn and play in an environment where they feel very safe, and their own consideration for others makes the school, in their words, 'like a big family'.

Teaching is good. The school has a strong team of staff who are mainly very experienced. They instil in pupils the need to work hard, concentrate, and present their work with care. Lessons are therefore purposeful and pupils take their learning seriously. Most make good progress in lessons but despite many strengths in teaching, teachers do not always make full use of information from assessment and tracking to match work to the steps in the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. Lower-attaining pupils are supported well; teachers sometimes have insufficiently high expectations of the more-able pupils.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils left school with standards that were exceptionally high and the achievement of the oldest pupils was outstanding. In 2007, Year 6 test results dipped to just above average and these pupils made only satisfactory progress during their time in Key Stage 2. Standards have begun to rise again and 2008 test results showed an improvement on the previous year. Standards are now above average, and well above average in speaking and listening, and achievement is good overall.

The school is led and managed well. Senior leaders are appropriately focusing on raising achievement and the new headteacher has led important improvements in assessment, the tracking of pupils' progress and target setting. These measures have begun to have a positive effect on achievement. In particular, the school has developed effective strategies for identifying pupils who are doing less well than they should, and put in place good quality support programmes. Data analysis is thorough and the school has a wealth of data for use in evaluating its own effectiveness. However, other monitoring by senior leaders and subject leaders is limited and there is no coherent system of self-evaluation in place. There is a strong commitment, shared by senior leaders and governors, to raise achievement but the lack of a coherent system of self-evaluation reduces the school's capacity to make rapid improvements. The school has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and begun to recover from the dip in standards in 2007. It has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The EYFS is led and managed well and this ensures that children get off to a good start during their time in the Reception class. They make good progress in all areas of learning so that they reach, and many exceed, expectations by the end of the EYFS. Teaching is good, with some outstanding features, and expectations are high. Skilled questioning encourages the children to think carefully and express their ideas, and the staff provide an extremely caring environment

that promotes children's personal, social and emotional development exceptionally well. The teacher manages the joint EYFS and Year 1 class very well and matches work to the needs of the different groups of children effectively. Very good use is made of teaching assistants, and the staff provide a good balance of activities led by adults and those where the children make choices for themselves. Sessions are lively and well structured. The children concentrate well and clearly find learning fun. Staff regularly observe them to find out what they know, understand and can do and to identify their emerging interests. Assessment procedures are effective and parents are becoming increasingly involved in reviewing their children's progress. The outdoor area is very restricted at present, so that it provides fewer learning opportunities than it should, but a new outdoor area is being developed as part of the current rebuilding programme.

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

- Introduce a coherent system of self-evaluation and monitoring that fully involves senior leaders and subject leaders in school improvement.
- Ensure that teachers make consistent use of assessment and tracking information to match work to the next steps in pupils' learning, especially to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In 2008, the Year 2 test results were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. The 2008 test results in Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science at Level 4, which is the level expected for all pupils by this age, and above average in reading and mathematics at the higher Level 5. However, too few pupils gained the higher level in writing: girls did well but the boys did less well than expected. The school has accurately identified the need to raise the achievement of boys in writing and to provide more support for a small group of girls in mathematics. An effective programme of support has been introduced to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have been identified as underachieving. This has begun to make a positive impact on pupils' achievement and these pupils are making good, and occasionally outstanding progress. Throughout the school, pupils are generally making good progress in lessons. Standards in pupils' work and in lessons are above, and in places well above, average. Standards in speaking and listening skills are particularly high: pupils are articulate and offer perceptive comments in class.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and pupils are very responsive to the many opportunities the school provides for them to reflect, to express their feelings and to understand the feelings of others. Attendance and behaviour are outstanding, and pupils show an unusual level of maturity for their years. They respond exceptionally well to the school's efforts to promote healthy living. Involving parents in encouraging healthy eating, the very good take-up of physical activity and emphasis on emotional well-being all contribute to this. Pupils readily take responsibility, for instance as members of the school, class and 'eco council', and they are involved in some important decision-making. For instance, they took part in interviewing prospective candidates when the new headteacher was appointed. Pupils gain an

outstanding set of personal skills and develop good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and teachers manage behaviour exceptionally well. They have consistently high expectations for the way pupils should apply themselves and the importance of behaving responsibly. Pupils respond extremely well: they are highly co-operative and responsive, eager to contribute and they want to do well.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively and often make good use of practical resources. They provide very good opportunities for pupils to talk to one another, as 'talking partners', to explore and share their ideas. Teachers use teaching assistants very well and they make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Teaching is good and at times outstanding in the intensive support sessions provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who need extra help to keep up with their peers. Assessment has improved recently; for example, pupils now have clear individual targets which are shared with them by being displayed in the front of their books or in the classrooms. However, teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they expect different groups to achieve in lessons or how their success will be measured.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The promotion of pupils' personal development and the school's personal, social and health education programme are outstanding. The curriculum places good emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and pupils have opportunities to write at length in other subjects. For instance, in history, the very interesting reports pupils produced about their grandparents' experiences during World War II extended their literacy skills and provided good opportunities for independent learning. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, including lunchtime clubs, school productions, educational visits and opportunities to learn a musical instrument. Pupils praise in particular the residential trips. Special events, such as science week and a multiple-intelligence day, broaden pupils' learning experiences. The school is involved in the Schools Sports Partnership and it has very close links with a local secondary school. The school is working well to increase links between subjects and to make the curriculum more exciting and relevant to pupils' individual interests.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well. The school instils in them a sense that they matter and staff show them great sensitivity if they are hurt or worried. Pupils receive outstanding personal guidance and the school sets very high standards for behaviour. It has strong links with other agencies and specialist teachers in support of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils are thorough. Arrangements are very good for settling younger pupils in and preparing older ones for moving on to secondary school. Marking is generally informative and teachers spend time assessing

pupils' work with them, so that they are clear about what to do to improve. Pupils know their targets and are able to talk about what they mean in practice. They are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own and others' work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and deputy work well together in providing direction for the school and the new headteacher has the confidence of most parents. Provision for pupils' personal development, care and support is led exceptionally well and the school has a very positive ethos. The curriculum is well directed and pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. The school works well with other schools, the church and local community, though it does not yet have any international links. It is an inclusive establishment, where all pupils have the opportunity to thrive and develop. The school promotes community cohesion well, working closely with its local population. Data is analysed carefully and the headteacher has involved more staff in evaluating effectiveness through the use of tracking data. Teachers have undertaken a careful check of pupils' work in science and interviewed pupils about their learning in mathematics. There is, however, insufficient monitoring of lessons and of other aspects of the school's work to provide a continuous check on how teaching is impacting on standards and progress in individual subjects. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school. They bring valuable expertise to their role and parents are strongly represented on the governing body.

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## Annex A

**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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elsworth C of E VA Primary School, Elsworth, CB23 4JD

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to some of you and seeing the interesting work you have been doing. I am writing now to let you know what I found out.

Elsworth is a good school and many of your parents wrote to tell me how pleased they are with the school's work. You told me that you really enjoy school, that you have many good friends there and that the school is like 'a big family'. There are many good things about the school. These are some of the most important:

- Your teachers and teaching assistants know and value you as individuals, and they are very kind to you if you are hurt or need help.
- Your behaviour is excellent, you attend school very regularly and show consideration for others.
- You readily take responsibility, for example, as members of the school council and the eco council, and you help to make the school a friendly community.
- Your teachers encourage you to work hard and you usually make good progress in lessons.
- You enjoy the activities the school provides, especially events like science week, multi-intelligence day and going on trips.

The headteacher, other teachers and governors want to make the school even better for you. To help them do that, I have asked them to:

- check more carefully what is working well in the school and what could be improved
- make sure that you are always given work that helps take you to the next step in your learning and that you are clear about what you need to do to succeed.

Keep working hard and enjoy the rest of your time at Elsworth C of E.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild

Lead inspector