

Banham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120782
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313736
Inspection dates	5–6 December 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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Rout
Headteacher	Mrs A Cullum
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2004
School address	Crown Street Banham Norfolk NR16 2EX
Telephone number	01953 887293
Fax number	01953 887293

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school serves a largely working rural community in and around Banham. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, but the number with a statement of special educational need is above average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A handful are from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom begin school with little English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or English as an additional language in each class varies from year to year. Children's attainment on entry also varies although it is usually close to national expectations. Small numbers joining the school other than at the usual time have a noticeable impact on the profile of the year group they join. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

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 pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. A positive ethos contributes to pupils' good personal development and well-being so that they develop into responsible and considerate individuals who enjoy learning. As one parent commented: 'My child is eager to get to school. She arrives with a huge smile which is still there at the end of the day'.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, enabling pupils to make good progress. Current standards are a little above average in Year 2. They are above average in Year 6, signalling good progress for pupils from their starting points. Standards throughout the school are particularly strong in science. They are usually above average by Year 6 and sometimes well above. This is because pupils have good opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences and practical activities that make science meaningful. Whilst pupils use a good range of vocabulary when writing, standards in writing are lower than in other areas due to weaknesses in spelling, grammar and handwriting.

A good curriculum and consistently good teaching provide stimulating opportunities for pupils' personal growth and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The use of drama in lessons makes a good contribution to pupils' social skills as well as enhancing the quality of their ideas when writing. Nearly a third of pupils play a musical instrument. Pupils enjoy sporting activities and make good efforts to eat healthy foods.

The school provides a caring and supportive environment within which pupils feel safe. Teaching assistants are well used to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, hence promoting their good progress. The school is making good inroads in developing strategies to help pupils assess their own work and most pupils have a reasonably clear idea of how well they are doing. However, pupils are not always sure about how to improve their work because marking does not always provide clear enough information on the next steps in learning.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher sets a clear direction for development which is well informed by self-evaluation activities. For example, the school has identified, and is beginning to tackle, the issues in pupils' writing. The headteacher is well supported by her deputy. Governors provide a good oversight of the school's work. The roles of subject coordinators are developing well and they are increasingly involved in evaluating provision in their areas of responsibility. However, the focus on pupils' learning and achievement is not always sharp enough in the school's self-evaluation. This makes it more difficult to identify precisely how much more the school could challenge itself to improve. Nonetheless, an improvement plan focused on the right priorities, good teamwork and an openness to change amongst staff, coupled with effective analysis of data and good progress since the last inspection mean the school has good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and current standards are a little above average. They are developing their skills of early reading and writing well. The good provision for personal and social development means that children's personal development is good. They

settle into school quickly and develop good social skills, learning to work with others and to take turns. Most develop good levels of concentration so that they are able to sustain interest in activities for a good period of time. Teaching is good and lessons are well planned and organised. There is good input into teaching of letters and letter sounds. However, learning is sometimes over-directed, reducing the opportunities for pupils to participate more actively. Pupils are benefiting from a new purpose-built outdoor area although its use has yet to be fully developed. Pupils' work is well assessed, enabling the next steps in learning to be identified clearly. The school provides good oversight of this stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by improving pupils' spelling, grammar and handwriting.
- Develop expertise in monitoring further so that there is a sharper focus on evaluating the quality of learning.
- Ensure that pupils have sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Given the small numbers in each year group, results at the end of Years 2 and 6 tend to fluctuate. However, pupils achieve well from their starting points. In 2007, overall results were above average at the end of Year 6, although average in English largely due to weaker performance in writing. Results were average overall for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2007. They were average in writing, above in reading and close to above average in mathematics. Progress overall is strongest in Years 3 to 6, although it is accelerating in Years 1 and 2 as a result of smaller classes. High expectations and challenging work underpin the good progress made by pupils. New pupils often join the school between Years 3 to 6, arriving with a wide range of prior attainment. They settle in quickly and achieve well. Able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Pupils who join the school at the early stages of learning English make rapid progress in learning it. This is due to good support but also because the positive and welcoming atmosphere gives them confidence to speak.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a strong sense of community and belonging. Older pupils take care of those who are younger. Pupils grow in confidence and self-assurance as they move through the school. They make good contributions to their local and school community through fund-raising activities and the school council. Good attitudes to school mean that pupils enjoy their work and participate fully in the many activities offered. However, some boys are less fond of writing and find it difficult. Attendance is satisfactory. It was slightly below average last year partly due to illness but also because of some holidays during term time. Good behaviour contributes to pupils' sense of safety. Pupils get on with one another well and are genuinely interested to learn about the backgrounds of those who come from different countries. However, their understanding of cultural diversity, where they have little first hand experience, is limited. Given the good progress pupils make in their learning, they are well prepared for the next steps in education and future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good with some that is close to outstanding. Teachers organise their classrooms and resources well. Lessons are well planned and work is effectively matched to the needs of individual pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support different groups of pupils and are often very effective in asking pupils probing questions to support their understanding. Occasionally, lessons are over-directed either limiting the time pupils have to complete their own individual work or opportunities for more active participation. The outstanding features seen in some lessons enable pupils to build new learning on strong foundations. These include very high expectations resulting in excellent challenge for pupils of all abilities and outstanding use of varied and stimulating teaching methods.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In Years 1 to 6, provision for reading, mathematics and science is good and new initiatives in writing are beginning to impact positively on pupils' written work. Cross-curricular topics such as 'The Rainforest' and 'Recycling' stimulate pupils' interest. A new and improved curriculum for information and communication technology, focusing on using computers in subjects, is being rolled out this year. Whilst good teaching ensures that able pupils achieve as well as others in English, mathematics and science, the school is at an early stage of developing wider provision for those who are gifted or talented in a particular area. Good provision for personal development and an interesting range of visits and visitors inspire positive attitudes. A strong arts curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Many participate in extra-curricular musical and drama activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and looked after and attention to health and safety is good. Good pastoral care makes the school a warm and happy place. Pupils know they can turn to staff for help when needed. Good links with external agencies and professionals ensure that pupils, especially those who are more vulnerable, are well supported. There is good liaison with parents who are very supportive of the school. New systems for assessing on-going learning and setting targets are impacting positively on helping staff and pupils to assess progress. Whilst most pupils know their individual learning targets they are less sure about how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets high expectations of staff and pupils. She has established clear and commonly understood goals that focus well on improving pupils' achievement and standards further. A number of new initiatives, such as self-assessment for pupils and topic-based approaches to teaching, are having a positive impact on learning. It is to the school's credit that it has continued to develop and improve despite the disruption of building work over the last year. Subject coordinators are becoming increasingly involved in school self-evaluation

and taking a more strategic view of their areas of responsibility. A wide range of regular self-evaluation activities supports school improvement planning well. However, pupils' learning is not always as central within evaluation as it should be. For example, some lesson observations focus more on what the teacher is doing rather than the impact on pupils' learning. Governors manage finances well, making well informed financial decisions. Their investment in teaching assistants, for example, is paying good dividends in improving pupils' progress.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Banham Community Primary School, Banham, NR16 2EX

I would like to thank you very much for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. I particularly enjoyed visiting classrooms and talking to those of you on the school council in detail about your work and views of the school.

The school provides a good education and you make good progress because of good teaching. Some of the most important features that are good include the following.

- You enjoy school particularly the drama activities and topic work.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- You work hard and achieve well, especially in science.
- Support staff provide good help to pupils who find learning difficult or are new to the school.
- Staff are very caring and make the school a happy place.
- The headteacher leads the school well and works successfully with other staff to make sure that the education provided is always improving.

There are some things that could be better.

- Helping you to improve your spelling, handwriting and grammar so that you can reach higher standards in writing.
- Making sure that when staff are checking the quality of the school's work, they take a closer look at how this affects your learning.
- Making sure that you have clear guidance on how to improve your work.

You can certainly help by continuing to work hard and, in particular, knowing and understanding the next steps you need to take to make your work better.

I wish you all well in the future.

Yours truly

Gulshan Kayembe Lead inspector