

Freethorpe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120808
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313748
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Milton

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	124
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	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Charlie Hall
Headteacher	Miss Rachel Quick-Gunning
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Freethorpe Green Freethorpe Norwich NR13 3NZ

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school with five classes that serves eight village communities. The number of pupils has fallen since the last inspection. This is because no pupils now join in Year 4 because of a reorganisation of local schools. When children join the Reception class, their skills and knowledge are below the expectations for their ages. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need,, is above average. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work including the Football Association's Charter Standard, Investors in People, National Healthy Schools' Award, Eco-Schools Bronze Award and the Activemark. The school is part of school-centred initial teacher training scheme.

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. It has some outstanding strengths as well as some areas for improvement. Parents are very pleased with the school and one wrote, 'It is a busy, happy place and I am impressed with all that the children and staff achieve together.' Very good leadership and management by the headteacher have secured the strong commitment of all staff. As a consequence, all pupils have the widest possible range of learning opportunities and a high level of care. The leadership and management are founded on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses alongside high aspirations for the pupils.

During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress because of consistently good teaching, the interesting curriculum and their excellent behaviour and attitudes to work. Since 2006, standards have risen at the end of Year 2 and now match national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In both key stages, pupils' reading standards are appreciably higher than their writing standards. This is because pupils' use of their writing skills in other subjects is not yet raising their standards in writing. A weaker aspect of pupils' mathematics standards is their use and application of their mathematics knowledge and skills because many do not confidently understand the language of mathematics. The majority of pupils who need additional learning support make good progress. Pupils' standards are above national expectations for physical education and information and communication technology (ICT).

Adults provide extremely high levels of care for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable. One parent wrote, 'All the staff know the children well and the children respond with respect and kindness.' A central focus of the school's work is the needs of each pupil. Outstanding provision for pupils' emotional health ensures relationships are very good and they have very good self-confidence. Good systems are in place for setting pupils' personal targets but younger pupils are not always clear about these. There is excellent support and guidance for pupils as they leave for secondary schools. Pupils feel safe and live healthy lifestyles. The majority of pupils take part in the wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities, many of which are sports clubs. Their attendance rate is above average. Pupils make excellent contributions to the school and local communities through, for example, the class and school councils.

The good teaching provides enjoyable activities that secure pupils' interest and involvement in their learning. There is a good system for marking pupils' work although this is not used consistently to ensure that all pupils know their next steps of learning. The staff work hard to provide a good, enriched curriculum that has some excellent features. Partnerships with schools and local clubs provide pupils with outstanding sporting opportunities, as on the community football day during the inspection. Additionally a substantial number of Key Stage 2 pupils are learning the recorder. Parents give good support to their children's learning through the homework packs and reading folders, with parents commenting that 'parental involvement is strongly encouraged.'

Governance is good. Governors make frequent visits to the school and are successfully involved in strategic planning. Subject leadership is effective. The school's development plan is linked to subject development plans and is helping the school to improve. However, some of the actions to secure higher standards and some success criteria are insufficiently precise. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. It has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to Reception, children's skills and levels of understanding overall are below those expected for their ages especially for reading, writing and calculating. Children have made good progress during the EYFS for the past two years because of continued improvements to teaching, the curriculum and assessment. By the time they join Year 1, a large majority achieve the expected standards but few work beyond the Early Learning Goals in reading, writing and calculating. All adults contribute to the good teaching in both large and small groups and there is an effective balance between child-initiated and adult-led tasks. There are occasional weaknesses in teaching such as not ensuring all children were involved fully in a brief discussion activity. There is a good system for assessing children's progress and this is being improved. The information gathered is used to identify children who need additional learning support, to adapt lesson planning to children's differing learning needs and to plan work for individual children.

Learning is often fun and the children enjoy the contribution of Bob the Builder who helps them to understand what they have to learn in each lesson. There is an excellent system for collaborating with parents to introduce children into the Reception class. As a result, children quickly develop good relationships with the adults and their peers and settle to working and playing. A reading file provides a daily opportunity for home-school communication. The parent support adviser and school nurse are available to support parents as required. As a consequence of the good leadership of the EYFS, the recent national changes have been implemented effectively. Since the last inspection, the outdoor play area has improved significantly and is used effectively for children's learning although it does not include a sheltered area for use in all weathers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards in writing and in using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Secure greater consistency in the quality of marking and individual target setting so that all pupils know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school sets challenging targets for English and mathematics and these are helping to raise standards. The targets were achieved in 2007 but provisional results show they were missed for mathematics in 2008 because pupils did not apply their skills and understanding effectively to solve problems. The Year 2 pupils who took the national assessments in 2008 made good progress from below average standards when they started in Year 1. Standards have risen in Year 2 over the last two years. When Year 6 started Key Stage 2, their standards were below national averages and since then, they have made good progress and provisional results show their standards now match national averages. There is careful tracking of the progress made by pupils who need additional learning support. This helps to ensure that targeted intervention programmes taught by very well qualified teaching assistants are well matched to pupils' learning needs. Most gifted and talented pupils make good progress and reach high standards because work is well planned to challenge them. Pupils reach good standards in ICT because of expert teaching and the very good progress made in using the school virtual learning environment to

develop home-working. For example, this enhances the learning of older pupils by providing homework tasks and opportunities for shared writing. Pupils' standards are above national expectations in physical education because of the wide range of sports taught, the strong links with local sports clubs and the benefits from working with other schools in the sports partnership.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Relationships are very good because Year 5 pupils are trained as peer mediators, there are playground play leaders and all classes have a weekly R-Time when pupils work on particular tasks with different partners. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their local culture through teaching about the Broads and their considerable involvement in the local community. They have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures through the curriculum, special enrichment days and the active links with schools in other countries. For example, eight pupils will visit a school in Shanghai next summer. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe on the Internet. They understand the environmental problems faced by the world and explain how they are helping to reduce these. Pupils' preparation for their economic futures is exceptional because of their good progress with key skills, their excellent social skills, their involvement in an Aspirations Day about careers and work education and their contribution to fundraising events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved since the last inspection because of effective monitoring and evaluation combined with a good programme of professional development. Classes are well managed. In lessons, pupils know what they are going to learn and how they will know that they have achieved this. Lessons provide both sequences of well structured and challenging activities that meet pupils' differing learning needs effectively. Well qualified teaching assistants make effective contributions to pupils' learning during all parts of lessons by ensuring that pupils are engaged fully with the learning activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are engaged in learning throughout lessons. There are good examples of pupils assessing the work of their peers. However, whilst pupils' work is regularly marked, teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to comments on how to improve their standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well planned curriculum is enriched effectively by themed days and weeks and a wide range of visits including a residential outdoor pursuits course. Good links are made between subjects such as English, history and ICT. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are well motivated in their learning. The high quality personal, social and health education has a strong impact on pupils' personal development and progress, featuring on BBC Radio 1. The partnerships with local secondary schools and sports clubs help give pupils an outstanding range of sporting opportunities and the school has competitive teams in six sports. These partnerships have also led to improved provision for science. Outside of normal lessons, there is a good range of provision to raise standards further. These include the use of Norwich City's study support.

The curriculum is not yet effective enough, however, in helping pupils make good progress with their writing and the application of their mathematics skills to new problems.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive extremely high quality pastoral care from all adults. As one parent said, the children 'are loved, valued and treated equally.' Several parents commented on the valuable support they received when their children faced particular difficulties. The school is particularly good at involving outside agencies in providing this support when necessary. Pupils value the drop-in sessions provided by the school's nurse. There is excellent support for pupils' emotional development and this has a positive impact on lessons and learning, especially for those pupils facing emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school and there are rigorous systems to follow up any absence. Parents value the opportunities to ask questions or raise any concerns about their children and one wrote, 'Staff always have time for parents and we are always welcome'.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet requirements. The progress of each pupil is tracked carefully against challenging end-of-year National Curriculum level targets. Pupils are set good short-term challenging targets to help them progress to these end-of-year standards but younger pupils are not always sufficiently clear about these and consequently could make even better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. An excellent aspect being for example, that all staff are very highly committed to putting the needs of pupils at the heart of the school's work. The school knows its own strengths and weaknesses well. However, there are times when the development plan to raise standards further in mathematics is not precise enough about the changes needed. The English plan gives a good range of actions to improve pupils' writing but is not sufficiently clear about how the school will know that the improvement has been achieved successfully. The school effectively involves all pupils in its life and uses its resources to break down any barriers to achievement. As one parent wrote, 'The school is highly inclusive.' There are strong partnerships with a wide range of local organisations, including being a stakeholder in the improvement of the community's resources. Consequently, it knows its local community well and makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. This can be seen in its work with three parish councils, contributions to community events such as harvest and the Christmas Fayre, through its links with local churches and its involvement with local sports clubs. It effectively involves parents in their children's education and includes a parents' forum to work on particular school tasks such as reviewing the relationships and sex education policy.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freethorpe Community Primary School, Norwich NR13 3NZ

I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting Miss Quick-Gunning, the staff and many of you. Thank you for making me so welcome. I could see how much you enjoyed working with members of the local community and secondary school students as well as playing football on the wonderful village pitches.

It was interesting to hear from you that you receive help from both the nice teachers and your friends, that there is no bullying, and you can help make decisions through the class and school councils. It is good that the Year 6 pupils enjoyed being peer mediators last year and it must have been great fun for them to learn the jitterbug dance as part of their history work.

This is a good school. You make good progress in English, mathematics and science because of good teaching, the interesting work you are given and your own excellent behaviour and enthusiasm to learn. By the time you leave school, your standards in these subjects are in line with national averages. You do even better with your standards in physical education and information and communication technology. However, your standards in reading are higher than those in writing, and you are not so good at using your mathematics skills to solve new problems. I know that Miss Quick-Gunning and the staff will help you to improve at these.

All adults take excellent care of all of you. The school is excellent at helping you develop as people. You are set targets to help you improve your reading, writing and mathematics and I have asked the school to make sure that these are always clear so that you know exactly what you need to do to learn more.

The headteacher, the staff and governors want the school to improve and I know you will play your part by continuing to behave so well and by working hard. Also, you can help by thinking carefully about your targets and teachers' comments in your books, and then taking action to make sure your work improves.

Yours sincerely

Mike Milton

Lead inspector