

Shelton and Hardwick Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120850
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313764
Inspection date	6 June 2008
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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	16
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacancy
Headteacher	Mrs Elva Chilton
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Low Road Shelton Norwich Norfolk NR15 2SD
Telephone number	01508 530331
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small, two-class school situated in a rural area with the majority of pupils coming from the village of Hardwick nearly two miles away. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. Due to the very small number of pupils, overall attainment on entry for each cohort varies considerably from year to year, but is frequently below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is high, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. Currently, there is no chair of governors and individual governors take turns to chair the meetings.

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 support for the individual pupil lies at the heart of its work. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and attendance is excellent. The tranquil yet stimulating atmosphere together with good teaching help pupils to achieve well. By the time they leave school, standards are typically average and sometimes above. Standards are higher in mathematics, where pupils make particularly good progress. Standards in writing improved significantly last year following the successful introduction of new ways of teaching, but staff recognise that this is still work in progress. Parents show by their comments that they are pleased with what the school offers. One said, 'My children always come home with tales of fun and adventure and quite often don't realise that they have been learning on the way'. Good improvements since the last inspection, together with good leadership from the headteacher, the commitment of staff, and support from parents demonstrate the school has good capacity to improve.

Teaching is good. Classes are very small and teachers and teaching assistants know pupils particularly well. This helps adults to provide appropriate challenge and support so that learning develops systematically over time. Work is matched well to pupils' abilities so they gain confidence and feel able to succeed. Staff are particularly successful at supporting those pupils who experience difficulty with their learning and need extra help. Care, guidance and support are excellent, as the following pupil comment indicates, 'Everyone is helpful; teachers make work fun and if you don't understand they explain'. Excellent support during lessons ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of how to do well and improve their work. The curriculum is stimulating and frequently provides pupils with 'hands on' experiences.

Pupils' personal development is good and results in excellent behaviour and a very sensitive attitude to others. The successful personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme ensures that pupils understand clearly how to keep safe and healthy, and how to get on with others. Pupils care for others and this helps to create a harmonious atmosphere. They make a good contribution to the school community and beyond.

Effective leadership and management by the staff and satisfactory governance result in the school providing good value for money. The headteacher gives good direction to school improvement. Good self-evaluation procedures help staff to reflect on how well the school is doing and judgements match well with the inspection's findings. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's effectiveness by keeping a check on how pupils are doing; they are aware of the need to plan for the long-term future of the school in order to maintain the good standards and realise the importance of appointing a chairperson to lead this.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are good in Reception. Expectations are high in their mixed-age class and work effectively challenges these younger children. By the time they enter Year 1, most are working at the levels expected for their age. Children settle well because of the welcoming atmosphere and helpful routines. Their personal, social and emotional education is particularly well developed because of the excellent levels of care and support. The standards they reach underpin their good progress in other areas. Children quickly develop very good attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well. Good planning and organisation result in

a range of interesting activities that stimulate children's interests and encourage them to realise that learning is fun. Staff gain a good understanding of what children know and achieve through regular observations and assessments, so tasks are well matched to their abilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that they match those in other subjects.
- Improve the leadership and work of the governing body so that they are fully involved in the long-term future of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, achieve well. In 2007, Year 2 standards in national assessments were above average and showed considerable improvement on previous years. They were high in mathematics, above average in reading and slightly above average in writing. Year 6 national test results also showed improvement on the previous year with standards being average overall but above average in mathematics. Last year, the school broadly met its challenging targets. Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average and pupils have made good progress from their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their behaviour is excellent and supports their learning particularly well. This reflects the positive school ethos. There is a strong sense of 'community' that results in pupils readily making friends, and playing and working together very well. Older pupils in particular care for the younger ones by taking responsibility and acting as 'buddies'. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community and beyond through their work on the school council, where they help to improve the school and through raising funds for charities and becoming involved in local community events. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of life in a diverse society. Pupils' good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy influences what they eat and encourages their involvement in activities to increase their fitness levels. Pupils' good personal and social skills, together with the good progress they make in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The excellent relationships between staff and pupils provide a particularly supportive environment where pupils attempt new work with confidence and enjoyment. Teachers assess pupils' learning and achievement well and use information gained from this to plan interesting and often practical lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of what they want individual pupils to learn in each lesson and share this with them. Consequently, pupils are clear about what is expected of them, and feel able to succeed. Teachers plan work that challenges all abilities well but recognise that providing work that matches all pupils' capabilities continues to be a key challenge for them in the very small mixed-age classes. Teaching assistants play an active role in ensuring that the pace of learning is nearly always good and pupils' individual

needs are met. ICT is used skilfully as a teaching aid to motivate pupils and get important learning points across, and by pupils themselves to gain information and record their work. Staff guide and encourage pupils very well through their comments in lessons and when marking their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A key strength of the curriculum is the way it engages pupils' interests so that they find learning fun. It also reflects pupils' needs and relates well to their surroundings and experiences. Good outside facilities extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of this very rural location and results in their enthusiasm for spotting birds and other wildlife. Frequently, subjects are taught successfully through a topic, which makes learning easier and more relevant. Joint projects with other local schools encourage staff to work together, sharing their ideas and expertise, which benefits all pupils. Staff are never complacent and are currently reviewing the curriculum in Key Stage 2 to ensure a greater focus on creativity and enjoyment. Work here is promising, following similar successful work in Key Stage 1. The effective PSHE programme, and sports and physical education activities, result in pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lives. Popular clubs, visits, visitors and activities help pupils to develop new interests and extend skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent support, care and guidance help to develop pupils into happy and confident learners. The caring ethos and high ratio of adults to pupils means that pupils feel very well supported, as their comments indicate: 'We help each other', and, 'This is a small school and we are like a family'. In addition, features such as the 'worry box' provide pupils with the opportunity to raise any concerns privately. Pupils who find learning difficult or have found it difficult to settle in other schools do well due to the very effective work of teachers and teaching assistants, and good links with outside support agencies. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, reporting incidents and health and safety are all secure. Academic guidance is also particularly good in lessons. Pupils are very well aware of what they are expected to learn and know how they can improve their work to meet their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows strong commitment to the school, pupils and their families. She provides a good lead to colleagues, who work as a strong team sharing her vision to provide a good education for this small rural community. Staff strengths are recognised and their expertise is used well to take on a variety of responsibilities. All are flexible in their approach and adapt to meet the challenges of management. However, most key leadership and management tasks are undertaken by the headteacher, with help from some committed governors. Governance is satisfactory, but not all governors are sufficiently involved in planning. Good systems are in place to check how well the school is doing and identify what it could do better. The headteacher has a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning but there is scope for more monitoring of these areas and a more formal way of recording findings.

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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	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?	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	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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 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	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

9 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Shelton and Hardwick Community School, Shelton, NR15 2SD

You may remember that I recently visited your school to talk to you about what you do and what you learn. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I agree with both you and your parents and think that Shelton and Hardwick is a good school. If you read on, you will see some of the things I found out.

- You work hard and make good progress. Your maths work is particularly good and standards are above those I sometimes see in other schools.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and behave exceptionally well because you are interested in the work. You particularly like using the computers and other ICT equipment.
- You get on well with each other and make good friends. The older pupils look after others very well.
- You come to school regularly and on time. Well done!
- You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and enjoy working and playing outside. Nearly all of you particularly like P E and swimming.
- All staff work well as a team and teaching is good. Those of you who sometimes find it difficult to learn are helped a lot, so do well.
- You feel secure in school. I was pleased to hear that you talk to a friend or member of staff and use the 'worry box' if you have problems.

Mrs Chilton manages the school well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They have all agreed to focus on two things to make the school even better. They will help you to continue to improve your writing. You could help by checking your punctuation and spelling more often and by making sure that you use interesting words. I know you will respond well to their efforts and try as hard as you can. Governors are also going to find ways to make sure that the school continues to be as good as it can be.

I left your school with good memories and wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Additional Inspector